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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CHURCH PLANTING

A fresh expression of the Church

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IS GOING DIGITAL!**

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DR. TIMOTHY C. TENNENT
Editor in Chief

DEB ADAMS
Managing Editor

WES WILCOX
Graphic Designer

SHEILA LOVELL
Staff Writer

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A community called to prepare *theologically educated, sanctified, Spirit-filled* men and women to *evangelize* and to spread *scriptural holiness throughout the world* through the *love* of Jesus Christ, in the *power* of the Holy Spirit, and to the *glory* of God the Father.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03 Letter from the President
Dr. Timothy C. Tennent
- 04 For the One in Love
Dr. W. Jay Moon, Dr. Thomas F. Tumblin, and Dr. Gregg A. Okesson
- 06 10 Questions to Ask Yourself About Planting a Church
- 10 Faculty Highlight: Dr. Brian Russell, Florida Dunnam Campus
- 11 Current Church Plant Emphasis Student: Andrea Abrahamson
- 13 Faculty Highlight: Dr. W. Jay Moon, Kentucky Campus
- 14 Alumni Church Plant: Lyndol Loyd
- 15 Alumni Church Plant: Stephen Joseph
- 16 Asbury Seminary Receives \$5 Million Gift to Help Serve the Global Church
- 17 The Word in the Trees
Howard Snyder
- 19 Publications
- 20 News
- 22 The Hub 2.0
- 23 Tennent Tour

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A Bold Church Planting Initiative

at Asbury Theological Seminary

One of the central features of Asbury Seminary's 2023 Strategic Plan is our commitment to unleash new networks of church planting movements across the world, including right here in the United States. Specifically, Asbury Seminary has made a commitment to train 800 new church planters over the next twenty years. This is a bold, even audacious, goal! This issue of the Herald is dedicated to exploring this goal for the broader Asbury Seminary community. Let me begin this exciting issue by exploring the "what," the "why," and the "how" of this goal: What do we mean by a "church planter"? Why would we set this as a major goal? And, finally, how do we plan to do this?

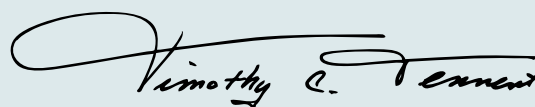
First, a "church planter" is someone who starts a fresh expression of the Church. For many, this will involve starting additional services in existing churches to connect with new groups of people who are not being reached with the gospel. For example, if you are living in an area with a growing number of Chinese or Hispanics, then it might be strategic to organize a special expression of the church to target this group. Globally, there are over 5,000 distinct people groups with little or no access to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to bring the gospel to these groups, as well as recognize the growing ethnic diversity of our own country which requires a robust Christian engagement. Since our founding, Asbury Seminary's mission statement has committed us to "evangelize" and "to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the world." Church planting is nothing more than evangelism with a community in mind.

Second, why would Asbury Seminary begin new churches, especially when so many churches seem to be struggling and declining? The fact that many churches are struggling is precisely because we are entering a new era in the history of Western civilization. This period is sometimes called post-modernity. For many in this new era, the Christian faith and the claims of the gospel have gone from being "plausible" and "probably true" to being "implausible" and "probably not true." We know, of course, that the gospel is just as true in 2014 as it has ever been. However, it requires a different kind of cultural engagement to evangelize a new generation of Americans who tend to be highly skeptical, authority-resistant, and pluralistic. In short, the United States is today one of the fastest-growing mission fields in the world. We have to start looking at America as a mission field rather than as the traditional heartland of Christian faith for the world. It takes new expressions of the Church with a clearer

message than existing churches, more missional members, and which model Christian community in more distinct ways than many existing churches which were birthed at a different time in American history.

Third, how is Asbury Seminary going to train these church planters? We will train these new church planters in many ways. For example, we will offer a non-degree certificate program which will enable dozens of existing pastors to "re-tool" and learn how to start fresh expressions of the Church using their current facilities and the homes of their members more strategically. We will be bringing dozens of international leaders to campus to be trained through Asbury Seminary's new church planting degree. These leaders will return to their home countries and unleash new networks of churches, resulting in thousands of new Christians. We are identifying dozens of effective church planters around the USA and the world, whose churches can serve as field training sites so new church planters can be mentored and networked. Asbury Seminary will also be forming a Global Advisory Board which will help to identify where churches need to be planted, which groups need to be targeted, and which emerging young leaders need to receive scholarships.

In conclusion, God is doing a mighty work at Asbury Seminary. I see it in the faces of our students. I see it in the dedication of our world-class faculty. I see it in you, our friends, who long to see the gospel of Jesus Christ flourish in this country. One of our donor families is so excited about Asbury Seminary's church planting initiative that they have pledged five million dollars to support this initiative, including providing scholarships for students interested in church planting and helping to create a church planting certificate program here. I rejoice in the wonderful grace of God in this church planting initiative. Through the eyes of faith, I see thousands of men and women, both here and around the world, who will hear the gospel and will stand with us in eternity worshipping our blessed Redeemer!



Dr. Timothy C. Tennent
President
Professor of World Christianity

FOR THE ONE IN LOVE

Dr. W. Jay Moon, Dr. Thomas F. Tumblin, and Dr. Gregg A. Okesson

To describe the necessity of church planting, one African student shared the following proverb with a group of African pastors, “For the man in love, the road to his fiancé’s house is not far or steep.”

A smile crossed each face and heads bobbed in approval, as the pastors replayed in their minds their own engagement period.

“When I was engaged,” he explained, “people warned me that the long journey to my fiancé’s house was dangerous with lions along the way. I told them, ‘What lions? What long journey?’ There was no thought that I would not go see her!”

With a gleam in his eye, the Pastor then commented, “Did you know

that God has a fiancé?” The reflections turned from their own personal stories to the story of God in Scripture.

“Yes, the bride of Christ is the Church,” one pastor’s eyes widened as he quickly connected the dots in his mind. “God was willing to take the long road from heaven to earth and even climb the hill called Golgotha for her! God knew the long journey but said ‘What road?’ God knew the hill of the cross and said ‘What hill?’ There was never a thought that Jesus would not go for

his bride. That is the compelling love of God for the Church!”

This conversation illustrates the heartbeat of church planting. Church planting is necessary because, like a groom who leaves heaven and lays down his life for his fiancé, this longing rests in the heart of God. This same love compels church planters to take risks - going places and meeting with people that are outside of the church. Church planters respond, “What road? What hill?”

Church planting is a natural continuation of the overarching story of God in the Bible. Like a lover searching for his fiancé, God searches for humanity throughout Scripture. Genesis begins the search in a garden with a promise in Genesis 3:15 to restore humanity after the fall. Genesis 12:3 describes the continuation of this search for all humanity through Abraham. Exodus

19:6 reveals that the search continues through the nation of Israel, and the prophets later provide details of the Messiah to come usher in the kingdom. Jesus fulfills these promises as he announces the arrival of the kingdom (Matthew 10:7). Then, Jesus reveals the “bride-to-be,” as he proclaims, “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:18). While waiting for the final wedding day in Revelation 19:7, Christ followers are sent into the world to make disciples (Matthew 28:19). These disciples then form church communities, which are meant to be, as Lesslie Newbigin describes, a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the kingdom of God. The Church then continues the search that God started long ago (1 Peter 2:9).

Church planting is a natural continuation of the overarching story of God in the Bible.

Make no mistake—church planting is difficult, risky, and exhausting. It forces us out of our comfort zones and makes things “messy.” It requires us to ask challenging questions as we consider how the Church is to be both relevant to contemporary contexts and biblically faithful. Like grooms in search of their brides, church planters are compelled by the love of God as demonstrated by the metanarrative of Scripture.

Fortunately, we are living in a generation where global partners are eagerly joining in this search. Worldwide, Christianity is experiencing explosive growth, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, South East Asia, and South America. Many men and women are very eager and zealous to

plant churches. Asbury Seminary is privileged to have partner institutions, alumni, mission organizations, networks, faculty, students, and friends not only nationally but also worldwide. Asbury Seminary is excited to collaborate with others to nurture church planting leaders who will both revive existing churches and plant new churches. Our focus is on self-reproducing movements, especially among the least reached, whether they exist internationally or in the pluralistic Western world. We are looking for eager partners to join us in the following main areas:

1 Training: This will be practical as well as theologically deep and spiritually formative. Utilizing the vast experiences of Asbury Seminary faculty and friends, courses will be offered for a wide range of student backgrounds. Some students are considering church planting for the first time; others are in the midst of a church plant; while still others are called to coach other church planters. Flexible programs will be offered that include a Certificate as well as the M.A. in Church Planting. While the initial courses are offered on the Wilmore campus, the goal is to gradually make the courses more accessible to church planters in the field via a hybrid delivery option.

2 Customized programs: Since every church plant is unique, the church planting initiative will address the ever-changing cultural contexts in which students will find themselves, both globally and locally. Students will select internships and immersion experiences to gain “hands on” experience. Immersion experiences are already being planned for diverse contexts such as U.S. cities, a Native American reservation, and international locations that include least reached people groups.

3 Networking: An African proverb reminds us, “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” Asbury Seminary has been blessed with a wide network of friends that are passionate about church planting. By joining with existing networks of church planters, we hope to do more together than anyone could do alone. Our goal is to foster on-going learning in both directions amidst a network of co-learners.

4 Research: We desire to explore, study, and develop innovative answers to the tremendous needs facing global church planters in today’s rapidly changing world. The Asbury Seminary doctoral program is ideally situated to carry out this research, thereby strengthening the overall goal of training domestic and international church planting leaders in the process.

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING!

The 2023 Asbury Theological Seminary Strategic plan anticipates that, by 2023, forty percent of the student body will include church planting as a significant, if not primary, focus of their ministry. To realize this goal, we are eager to collaborate with others who have a passion for church planting. If you are interested in being a part of this church planting initiative, we would like to hear from you. While the ever-changing global contexts require new contextual approaches for church planting, one thing is unchanging - God is passionate about the Church. Scripture demonstrates and church planters can testify that, “For the man in love, the road to his fiancé’s house is not far or steep.”

10

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF ABOUT PLANTING A CHURCH

We asked several Asbury Seminary alumni, planters of churches, what kinds of questions they sought answers to as they went about their task of planting a church. We distilled their responses into ten categories. Their advice is both practical and wide-ranging.



1. Why do I want to plant a church? Is this my idea or God's plan? Do I have to be specially called into church planting?

Rosario (Roz) Picardo: “First, there is an inward calling where you feel God speak to your inner being, much like the prophet Jeremiah who said the Word of God was like fire shut up in his bones. And then there is the outward call where people in the community confirm your gifts and graces for it.”

Matt LeRoy: “If it's because you're frustrated with your current church, don't do it. If it's because you think this is the trend, then please don't do it. If it's because your heart is breaking for a people or a place, this might be your calling. If you have heard God calling you to go, then gather your courage and go in His strength. If you answer this question well, then you have set into motion the solution for every other question you will face.”

Adam Weber: “For me, the question of whether this was my idea or God's idea ended up being the single most important question that I asked before starting Embrace. Knowing that Embrace was the Lord's idea, not my own, encouraged me to keep going when I felt like giving up. Knowing it was the Lord and not you will keep you grounded and humble.”

2. Is it important to have a team to plant a church? Who should make up my team and how do I go about building one?

Matt LeRoy: “You have to have a team. Don't even think about trying this alone. But be obsessively picky when you choose your core team. Who embodies the DNA of the church you want to plant? This team will set the framework for who you will become. Resist the temptation to gather warm bodies so it looks like you have momentum. Who gets it? Who lives it? Who has the passions and gifts that complement your weaknesses? Who would you want beside you for the most difficult, testing, threatening, and rewarding adventure of your life? That's your core team.”

Maggie Mraz: “Are you willing to empower people who might make mistakes? Who will hold you accountable to act with integrity?”

Ken Werlein: “Who will coach me? Who will encourage me? To whom will I be accountable?”



Rosario Picardo, pastor and founder of Embrace Church in Lexington, KY

3. How do I choose a specific target to plant the church?

Bryan Collier: “Church planters often wrongly assume they can reach all of the unreached people--they need to be target specific.”

Adam Weber: “Who is your specific target? What do they look like? What do they enjoy? What are their needs? How do they talk? When we started Embrace, our specific target was young adults, young families, and the young at heart. A majority of people here in Sioux Falls grew up Lutheran or Catholic. They were baptized as infants, went through catechism or confirmation, and then they ‘graduated’ from church... most likely, without ever hearing about a relationship with Jesus. Being a South Dakota kid who grew up Lutheran (with half of my extended family being Catholic) I knew well the people we were trying to reach. It was people just like myself.”

Roz Picardo: “Embrace, I believe, was needed because it reaches the people who ‘nobody else wants.’ This was my prayer from the beginning and be careful when God actually answers those prayers! We have seen hundreds of people who were either divorced from the church or have never been to church call Embrace their home!”

Ken Werlein: “What do I believe God wants this church to look like? Describe it to someone over coffee, and convince them their life would never be the same unless they become part of it with you.”



4. Which aspect of church planting leads -- location or vision?

Carolyn Moore: “This was a critical question for us in the first months after we were located. The particular neighborhood we were given was not the right fit for our vision. In our case, it seemed right to let vision lead. The initial target area was a new development for middle and upper income families. By moving into a more central area of the community, we were situating ourselves in a more middle-income area, with greater access to other audiences. In the end, we’ve become a church for those who fall through the cracks in our county. Our folks are working class and some middle-income folks. The key was getting to a more accessible area, where the mix of people was greater. Same community, but different neighborhood, different culture, broader base of people to draw from ... which allowed us to speak to those in the margins. In another situation, it may be that by necessity location leads. In either case, it is a good question to clarify before jumping in.”

Roz Picardo: “The issue of space is crucial to church planting. From my experience a temporary location introduces the thought to people that you may not be around long. It also creates circumstances where you could be asked to leave. In our post-Christian culture non-traditional spaces are being redeemed for worship like theaters, bars, and

malls. While many post-moderns want the luxury of a non-threatening space I have found they still want the resemblance of ‘amenities’ like adequate children and nursery space. Space is arbitrary and yet it is everything.”

5. Which model of planting works best for the community in which you’re locating?

Carolyn Moore: “When I planted, our trainers were teaching one model (multiplying small groups). If you didn’t use that model, they didn’t offer another option nor were they very encouraging about your prognosis. Research now shows that not every model works in every context so understanding context and fitting the right model to it is critical for success. Vision, location and model must all be in agreement.”

6. What is my game plan – pre-launch and post-launch? How will the church plant identify and address needs in the community?

Adam Weber: “At every point in the history of Embrace, we’ve always had a game plan of where we’re headed. It has changed COUNTLESS times, but we’ve always tried to be incredibly intentional. Strategy is something the business world does... and frankly the Church should do even better.”

Bryan Collier: “How do I involve myself in the community in a way to connect to unreached people?”

For me, I knew this was a real calling when I embraced the reality of possible failure, and knew I had to do it anyway.

-Matt Leroy

Maggie Mraz: “Have you written a plan of action? How far out can you imagine? How will you survey your community so you’ll come alongside rather than impose ‘ministry’ on them?”

David Goss: “My wife, Tracey, and I felt specifically called to go to Isla Vista, next door to Santa Barbara, known as a ‘party area’ for the University of California campus at Santa Barbara, as well as for its numbers of immigrants and homeless people.”

7. Is a “critical mass” necessary for the launch of a new church? How do I gather people in?

Ken Werlein: “I thought of people as either signing on in ‘pencil lead’ or ‘ink’ or ‘blood’ (Tom Sawyer/Huck Finn reference). I very much disciple each group differently, and thus essentially started three churches at one time. This is where a lot of planters mess up and pull close to themselves anyone with a pulse, only to be sorely disappointed and disillusioned.”

David Goss: “The purpose of Light and Life Goleta is to ‘build bridges to the church through relationships and service.’”

8. What will be my “Plan B” if I don’t succeed? Do I give myself a deadline?

Ken Werlein: “Yes: [my deadline was] till I ran out of money (which gratefully never happened). But my mantra was, that if this thing goes down in flames, it won’t be because I left money sitting in the bank. . . How will I measure success (or failure), beyond numbers of people joining me and dollars contributed?”

Matt LeRoy: “I’ve heard some church planters repeat the mantra, ‘Failure is not an option!’ They’re wrong. Failure is a very real possibility. The numbers are staggering proof. For me, I knew this was a real calling when I embraced the reality of possible failure, and knew I had to do it anyway. When I got over what others would say if it didn’t work, grow or last. When I gave up on the fear of what a failure would mean to my future prospects and how that would look on my record. When I was willing to obey even if it meant failure, that’s when I realized that there is NO failure when I move in obedience to His will. Even if the launch falls flat or the people don’t come or the doors close.”

David Goss: “We began a church plant in a specific

area. Our numbers rose during the first five years of our ministry and then began to decline. On the first Sunday in January, 2012, the church experimented with serving a taco picnic lunch outside, following the morning service. This ‘People’s Park taco lunch’ grew and we realized we needed to move our church to where ministry was taking place. Those attending the inside services were a different crowd from those coming later to the lunch, and a larger, more diverse congregation began to develop outside.”

9. What are the natural barriers I will face as a church planter in this context, and how can I best lead past those barriers?

Carolyn Moore: As a woman planting in the very birthplace of the Southern Baptist Convention, I experienced a gender barrier. Recognizing that natural barrier and learning how to lead past that is a key to both fruitfulness and avoiding burn-out. For others it may be a cultural barrier or a language barrier. I notice that the best planters are able to adjust and adapt quickly as barriers are discovered. No one is helped by ignoring them; everyone is empowered when we acknowledge and lead past them.”

Bryan Collier: “What are the major barriers that these unreached people give for not having a relationship with Jesus or a community of faith? How will I address these barriers?”

10. How do you handle your own personal and spiritual life in the midst of a church plant?

Maggie Mraz: “How will you respond to personal/family crisis in the midst of church planting? What will you do if you realize you’re in over your head?”

Ken Werlein: “Is my spouse 100% excited about this? What about my kids?”

Many other questions were suggested – far too many for the space allowed. Adam Weber summed up his feelings on church planting like this:

“Are you ready for the craziest, most challenging, wonderful adventure ever?... I wasn’t, but God’s grace has carried me through.”



FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: DR. BRIAN RUSSELL

*Dean, School of Urban Ministries
Professor of Biblical Studies*

A challenge from a prominent missional thinker a few years ago prompted Dr. Brian Russell to look closely at how he could be a “relevant seminary professor” when he had never planted a church. Russell describes it as a “catalytic moment” when he sensed a fresh calling of God to think intentionally about what his discipline of biblical studies had to do with church planting in the 21st century. “This quest led me to begin to reflect and construct a missional hermeneutic for reading the Bible as a map or guide to God’s mission,” he recalls. “Missional hermeneutics has become my primary academic interest and the focus of my writing.”

In 2005, along with some friends and seminary students, he began a house-based church plant, and the same group became involved the next year in attempting to revitalize a severely declining denominational church. “Since then,” he says, “I’ve worked and consulted with church planters and pastors of churches in decline to shape a missional ethos in their communities.”

Russell describes Orlando as a “gateway city that serves as a provocative context for theological education. If I were planning to plant a church in an urban area or do any cross-cultural ministry, Orlando is an ideal location for study.” Living in Orlando, he says, offers the opportunity to see the diversity of the world in terms of language, ethnicity, religion, secularization, culture, and urbanization. “I get to live in a dynamic environment that forces me to consider the emerging world where our graduates will serve.”

Asked whether a person needs to have a call to church planting, Russell responds, “I think that every Christ follower has the DNA to plant a church. All Christians are called to ‘make disciples.’ This is the mission of the Christ following movement. This includes multiplying communities of faith.”

As to what makes for a successful church plant, Russell reflects, “Prayer. Deep, rich, and generous theological/biblical training. A committed team. A clear vision. A sustainable economic plan that frees the team to focus on ministry. A focus on engaging primarily ‘outsiders’ rather than starting with a large core of Christians.”

For those considering this area of ministry and/or working in it now, he advises, “Read widely. Always remember the ‘other’ and make/keep as many non-Christ following friends as possible. Learn to exegete your social context/location and speak ‘human.’ Make sure that your preaching/teaching declares the good news of God’s kingdom. Keep mission on the front burner by planning for the launching of a new community out of your church plant.”

Russell graduated with a BA from the University of Akron in 1991 and an MDiv from Asbury Seminary in 1994. A John Wesley Fellowship (1996-2000) from A Foundation for Theological Education enabled him to work on his PhD, which he earned from Union Theological Seminary in 2002. He came to the Florida Dunnam campus in 2000 to teach in Biblical Studies, and has been named Dean of the School of Urban Ministries there.



Andrea Abrahamson

CHURCH PLANT EMPHASIS STUDENT

"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

-Luke 10:2

Andrea Abrahamson represents well the type of student coming to Asbury Seminary to prepare to be a church planter. She is in the M.Div. program, specializing in church planting. Courses in this area, and in the newly-launched Master of Arts in Church Planting (MACP), according to the academic catalog, "will train students in the theological, theoretical, and practical literatures of church planting. Students who complete this course of study will be equipped to plant churches in whatever culture to which God calls them."

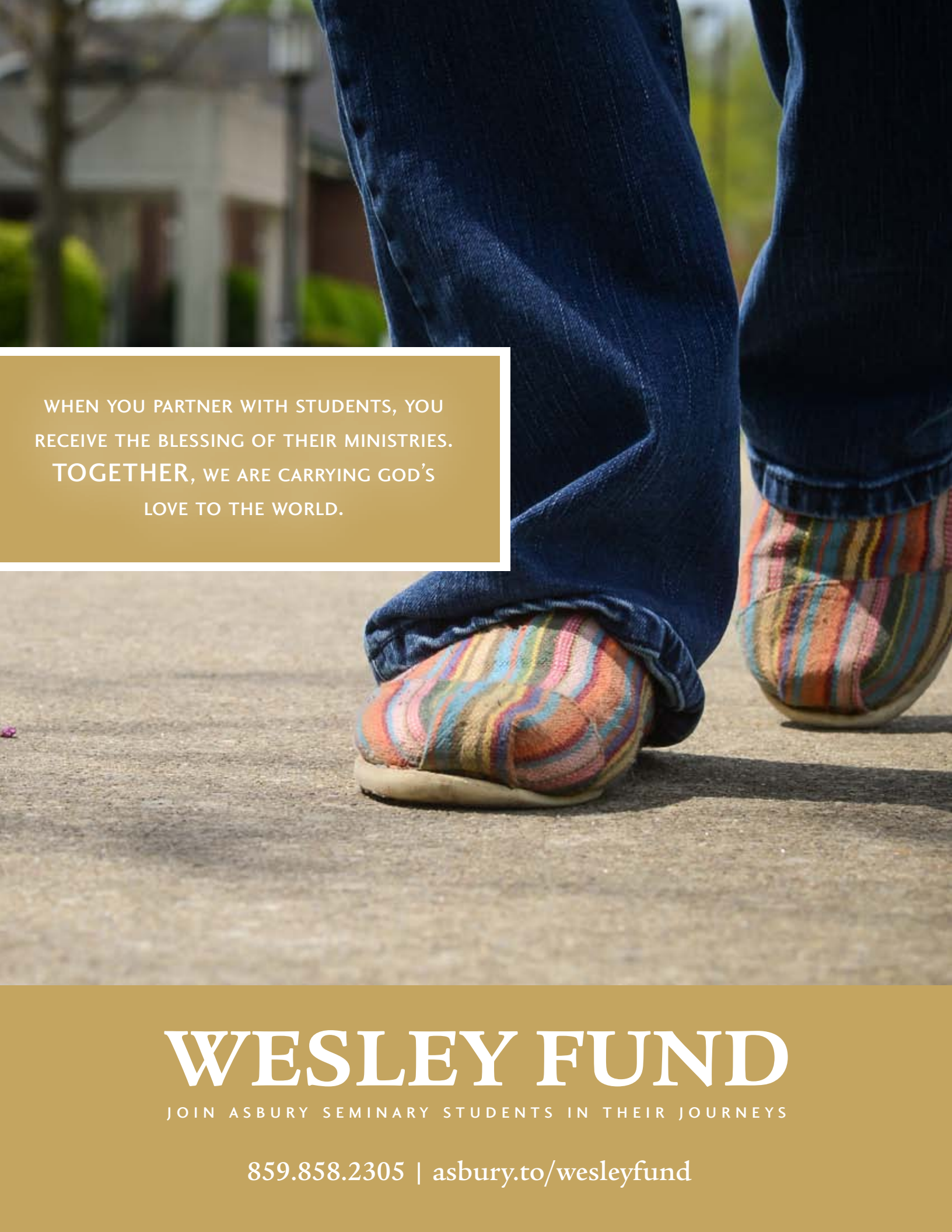
Andrea reports a nagging feeling that, before coming to Asbury Seminary,

she was not where God wanted her to be, despite her work as an admissions counselor at her alma mater, Cornerstone University, her ministry in Worship and Creative Arts in her church, and her pursuit of a graduate degree in Business Management. A conversation with her pastor, who subsequently became the Director of Church Multiplication for the Wesleyan Church, encouraged her to explore church planting, and "it was as if something clicked in my spirit," Andrea remembers. The affirmation of several other unconnected people bolstered the feeling, and she applied to Asbury Seminary, which, not so coincidentally, had just launched the

MACP. "God provided emotional support where I didn't expect it, financial aid to the exact dollar amount needed, great conversations and open doors in my denomination, and a new desire in my heart," she said. As further affirmation of her coming to Asbury Seminary, Andrea was awarded a Kern scholarship, funded by the Kern Family Foundation. This initiative funds full-tuition scholarships and gives a generous housing stipend to young, evangelical men and women who are called to lifelong pastoral ministry in the United States.

Because Andrea is still in the early stages of her degree, she is not yet taking specific church planting courses. However, she has been able to plug into the E. Stanley Jones School, where the MACP degree is housed, and has been in on several conversations to talk about church planting.

Her past and current involvement in church plants has helped to strengthen

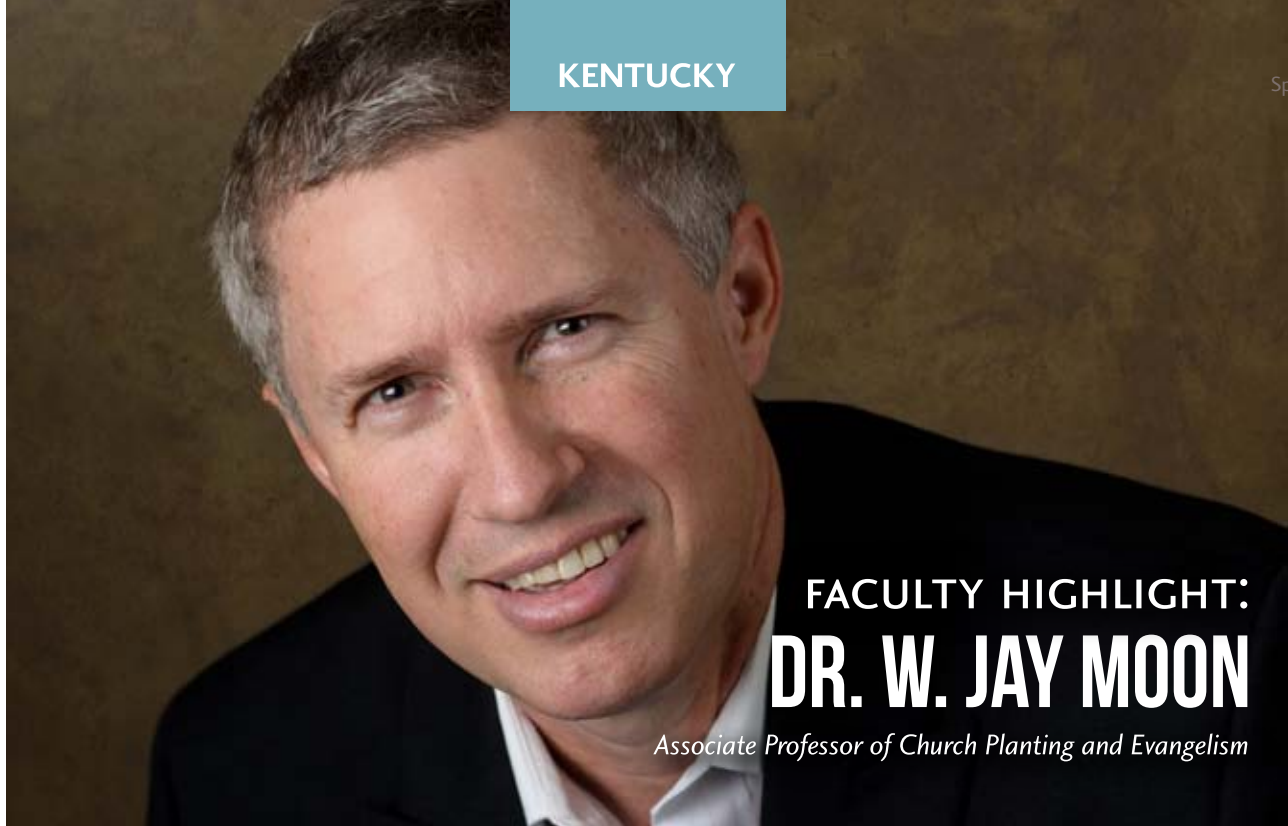


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FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: DR. W. JAY MOON

Associate Professor of Church Planting and Evangelism

While in college, Dr. Jay Moon felt the call of God to missionary service. A graduate of the civil engineering program at Virginia Tech, specializing in water development, he was able to use that aspect of his training while planting churches under Serving in Mission (SIM) in northern Ghana in 1992-2001. SIM proclaims its mission as responding to need, proclaiming the Gospel, and equipping the Church. Moon worked in water development, erecting church buildings, church planting, and teaching and mentoring indigenous church planters under SIM. He uses these varied aspects of his life and work as an example of how God can call Christians to serve the basic needs of people while presenting them with the Gospel. He defines “ordinary Christians” to mean that missionaries (and church planters) are not in a category by themselves but simply Christ-followers taking steps in faith. Churches planted under such an overarching idea, he says, are both viable and relevant, whether they are set in rural Ghana or in the middle of an American city. There are differences, of course, but he feels that Christians in both domestic and international situations can learn from each other while bringing together words and deeds. “Ordinary people” can and should be involved in church planting, Moon says; some are called to plant the church itself, while others can be participants in the process.

In 2005 Moon graduated from Asbury Seminary with a PhD in Intercultural Studies. He has been an affiliate

professor here since then, while serving on the faculty of Sioux Falls Seminary (South Dakota) as Professor of Intercultural Studies and Director of Wesley House of Study. In Sioux Falls, Moon continued putting his intercultural skills into practice, forming a missionary community with seminary students in an urban “at risk” neighborhood and initiating a partnership on the Rosebud Native American Reservation with the North American Institute of Indigenous Theological Studies (NAIITS), where he worked with Asbury Seminary alumnus Richard Twiss to promote cross-cultural understanding and contextualization. He has also led immersion experiences and work projects in Niger, Haiti, and Winnipeg, Canada, as well as several locations in the U.S. Moon came to Asbury Seminary in 2013 as Associate Professor of Church Planting and Evangelism.

Asbury Seminary has launched its M.A. degree in Church Planting, located within the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism, as well as the church planting specialization within the MDiv degree. Moon notes that the ESJ School enjoys a fine reputation worldwide and has a unique program of integrating words and deeds, heart and mind, as well as local and international perspectives. He has taught in a wide range of areas, including evangelism, intercultural studies, church planting, cross-cultural discipleship, community development, and practical intercultural ministry. His calling and experience have prepared him well to help Asbury Seminary prepare its graduates to plant churches in whatever culture God calls them into.



LYNDOL LOYD earned two degrees, M.Div. (1993) and D.Min. (2000), from Asbury Seminary. As a member of the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, he has planted two churches, and is currently senior pastor of Life Song United Methodist Church in Orlando.

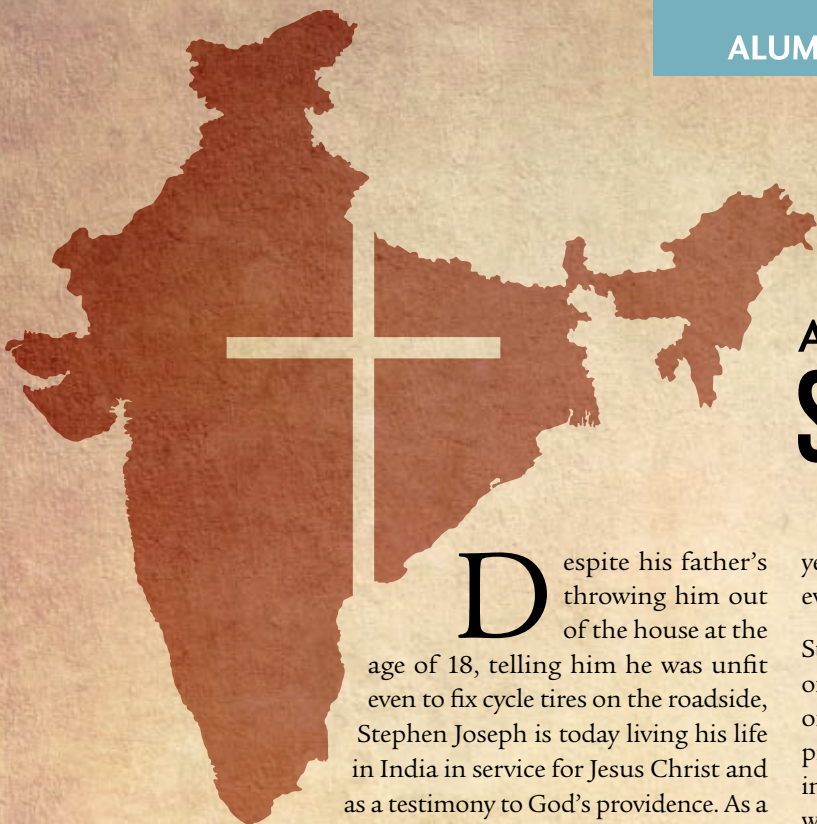
ALUMNI CHURCH PLANT: **LYNDOL LOYD**

Asked how you begin a church plant, Loyd wrote, “You start with prayer and then more prayer. After that, building relationships is the next step. You want to touch base with as many people as possible that you can draw to the vision for the new church. You are assessing which people can help you in leadership capacities and how to assimilate them into the team.” He suggested some questions a church planter should seek to answer before beginning the work: Am I a match to the area in which I’m being asked to plant a new church? Do I have a passion for the people of this area? “You are working as a student of your local culture,” he says, “You have to understand the people group you are called to reach and employ strategies that will connect with that group.” Other questions include: What are my motives for church planting? In the case of those connected to denominations, what is the commitment that the denomination is making to me as the church planter?

“I have planted two different churches,” he reports. “My first church plant was a ‘parachute drop’ model: I was sent to an area and expected to go out, meet people, and start a church without the assistance of or connection to an existing congregation. My second church plant used the ‘mother/daughter’ model. We had a group of people from an existing congregation who came as part of the launch team to help start the church. By design, after the launch some of the people stayed on and others returned to the mother church. In both cases my location was selected for me by the denomination. I had to decide if I felt called to those areas as a planter.” Asked which model worked best for him, he replied, “I don’t know that one model worked better than the other. The parachute model allows for lots of flexibility on the part of the church planter, but can be an isolating experience, especially in the early stages. The mother/daughter model has the advantage of built-in people from the beginning but requires that the leadership of the mother church is unwavering in their support and backing of the new effort. No model is perfect. I would say knowing which model is best has to do with context.”

He went on to note, “It was very important to have critical mass to launch a new congregation. Premature launch of a church can kill a church plant quickly.”

Loyd says that a church planter should also seek to answer questions such as: How can I leverage my relationships to grow the church plant? How can I continue to draw new people after the launch happens? What structures do I need in place to enable the church’s future growth?



ALUMNI CHURCH PLANT: STEPHEN JOSEPH

Despite his father's throwing him out of the house at the age of 18, telling him he was unfit even to fix cycle tires on the roadside, Stephen Joseph is today living his life in India in service for Jesus Christ and as a testimony to God's providence. As a homeless teenager, he found a subsistence living delivering newspapers and working in a small school. One day, while delivering newspapers, he met with an accident that should have killed him, but a shout of "Jesus, save me!" from his heart was miraculously answered. His motorcycle was destroyed but he emerged unhurt. That proved to be the turning point of Stephen's commitment to the Lord. Through his own hard work, often at the most menial of tasks, and through God's provision, Stephen, a formerly indifferent student, was able to achieve his Bachelor's and Master's of Theology degrees and to become a part of Asbury Seminary's Beeson International D.Min. program, graduating in 2008. His dissertation topic was on the evaluation of the preaching skills of lay pastors in India. This study is enabling him to train village church planters to plant churches and to preach effectively.

"Asbury Seminary taught me how to hear God's voice and how to discern His will," Stephen declares.

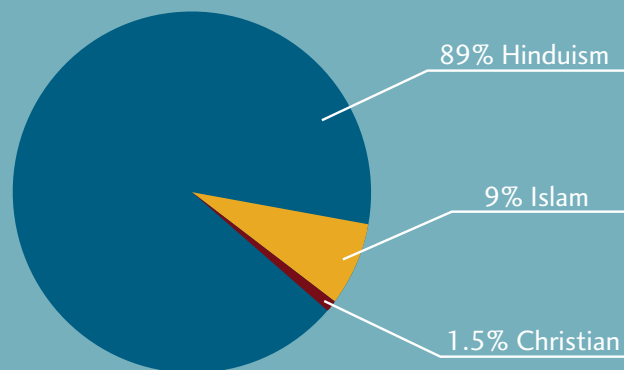
He was bishop-elect of his denomination, but left that position and the denomination in 2010 to form Grace Endearment Mission Services (GEMS), a church-planting organization also involved in socio-economic issues. GEMS' motto is "empathize, educate, empower" the needy, the destitute, and the unreached. The GEMS Center for Theological Studies has been founded, where Tribal men and women as well as village church planters are trained. In three years' time, his organization has trained 47 village church planters who have planted 47 churches. GEMS' goal is to plant 100 churches in ten

years, as they are training 10-15 village church planters every year.

Stephen's group works among the plains and Tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh. In the plains areas, he faces problems of caste and class as well as social issues such as dowry practices and local politics. The Tribal areas hold remote interior villages that need to be reached. Making friends with village heads is key for entry into these villages, and leaders need to be trained to carry on the work among their own people. Political and religious opposition are common, even to the extent of death threats.

Stephen's guidelines for church planting begin with prayer and personal intimacy with God, followed by a plan of action and finding a "person of peace" who will open the door for the Gospel. Perseverance, selecting the people to reach, and instituting a place of worship are also vital, as are developing a core group who share the responsibility with the leader, developing relationships with the people, and providing pastoral care. "The ultimate goal of most church-planters," Stephen says, "is to glorify the Lord in a community by founding an autonomous, self-propagating body of believers; once it is done, they move on planting another and another."

THE WORLDVIEW OF ANDHRA PRADESH





ASBURY SEMINARY RECEIVES \$5 MILLION GIFT TO HELP SERVE THE GLOBAL CHURCH

In our 2023 Strategic Plan document, the first of our ten core values declares that Asbury Seminary “will be committed to serving the global Church.” That commitment led to a time of prayer and spiritual discernment within a donor family which resulted in their gift of \$5 million as a way to operationalize the church planting and global partnerships components of the Strategic Plan. This will help achieve Asbury Seminary’s goal of becoming a center of training and collaboration for church renewal and lay revitalization, as well as the training of church planters and the stimulation of new church planting movements.

The Strategic Plan calls for 40% of our student body to receive training in church planting as either a part or an entire focus of their anticipated calling. One of the intended outcomes of the Plan is the training of 800 church planters. The donors’ significant gift will not only train church planters, it will fund the development of a non-degree certificate in church planting. The certification is designed to be achieved entirely online or through short intensive sessions, training clergy, lay, and bi-vocational leaders for effective church planting.

The donors consider this a launch gift, focused on the church planting initiative, and other donors will be invited to participate so the full vision of the initiative will be

funded and made operational. Other strategies envisioned include the offering of supplemental missiological training to global partners, the identification, training and empowerment of a network of church planting mentors, and the sponsorship of church planting conferences and training events.

As funding for the full vision is realized, Asbury Seminary will establish three new positions on campus: an Instructional Designer to design courses for online delivery for church planters and appropriate for a potential global audience; a Church Planting Coordinator to plan cohort residencies and identify and place students in field internships with our global network partners; and a Cross-Cultural Immersion Program Coordinator, who will be involved in the support and logistics of students as they are immersed in other cultures during their degree program. As well, scholarships will be provided through a collaboration among Asbury Seminary, the donor gift, and sponsoring churches to fund the training of the church planters.

Asbury Seminary is grateful to God and to this donor family for their vision of helping us embrace strategies to identify those who need the gospel and find ways to make it accessible to them within their cultural context.



THE WORD IN THE TREES

Dr. Howard Snyder

A couple of startling facts: if you fill your car's gas tank with the ink from printer cartridges, it will cost you \$100,000. A single mature tree produces enough oxygen to give life to two people.

We're not going to fuel our cars with printing ink, of course. But you get the point. A healthy world needs more healthy trees and less ink. It needs ecological responsibility at every level—both to honor God and to protect and nourish people and God's other creatures. Globally, deforestation is one of the world's biggest problems—a main contributor to drought, famine, and devastating floods. Mountains are being deforested to meet growing demand for paper and packaging.

Within this picture, producing magazines electronically rather than on paper is a small step with big benefits over time. Electronic publishing does less damage to the Creation.

It's also a good witness.

The first mission given in Scripture is to tend the garden (Gen. 2:15). As Adam and Eve represent all humankind, so the garden in Genesis 2 represents the whole created world of which God has made us stewards.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything to the glory of God." This is part of the Apostle Paul's "all things" theme throughout his writings. Today "all things" certainly includes communications media, from printing presses to Facebook. Glorifying God in all things, it turns out, is good environmental stewardship.

THE BOOK OF NATURE

John Wesley and other church leaders of the past spoke of "The Book of Nature." God has revealed himself through two books: The Bible and the complex world he created. We learn from both books—they reinforce and don't contradict each other.

If we care for the trees, we care for the birds. If we care for the birds, we control the insects. Controlling insects protects the plants. Thriving plants enrich the soil. Enriched soil yields healthy crops, reducing the need for chemicals. Then we and the trees and everything else flourish.

The Book of Nature is full of such nourishing and renourishing cycles—what Wesley called "the wisdom of God in creation."

Biblically based creation care in every angle of our daily lives honors God's Word and respects God's world. We learn that little things add up to big things in the plan of God.

THE ASBURY HERALD IS GOING DIGITAL!

Sign up now to continue to receive your copy, but in an eHerald format.

In an effort to be good stewards of both God's creation and Asbury Seminary we have decided to move forward with an electronic Herald format. You'll still receive the same great articles and information you always have, you'll just receive it in your email box instead of your home mail box.

Be sure to send us your email address through the business-reply insert in this issue of the Herald. Email us at eherald@asburyseminary.edu or sign up now at asbury.to/eherald by giving us your email to continue to receive your copy. Those who wish to continue to receive hard copies, let us know that too, and we will be sure to continue to send you your printed copy of the Herald.

Certainty in an uncertain world.

Today more than ever, people need reliability, certainty, and accountability when planning for their financial future. We are all looking for ways to invest that are stable, solid, and firm. For many of us, it means a return to classic financial values and enduring ideals. One of these values is the **charitable gift annuity (CGA)**.*

*A CGA is a simple agreement between you and Asbury Theological Seminary, where you agree to donate a sum of money to the Seminary. In return, we agree to pay you a fixed dollar amount every year for as long as you live.

To learn more about charitable gift annuities, visit asbury.to/leavealegacy.

leavealegacy@asburyseminary.edu | 706.217.5193

Publications



Collins, Kenneth J. *Volume 13 of the critical edition of Wesley's Works, Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises II* Abingdon Press Fall 2013



Edgar, Brian "God is Friendship: A Theology of Community for an Isolated Age" Seedbed Publishing Fall 2013

Edgar, Brian *A Tale of Two Cities: understanding the relationship between Christ and culture.* Zadok Papers Fall 2013



Gatobu, Anne K. *Female Identity Formation and Response to Intimate Trauma: A Case Study of Domestic Violence in Kenya* Pickwick Publications Fall 2013



Headley, Anthony J. "Getting it Right: John Wesley's View of Christian Perfection" Seedbed Blog Fall 2013

Headley, Anthony J. (Editor) "Life's Great Choice" Goodpreacher.com/Lectionary Homiletics Fall 2013



Long, Fredrick J. "Major Structural Relationships: A Survey of Origins, Development, Classifications, and Assessment"

The Journal of Inductive Biblical Study Spring 2014

Long, Fredrick J. *Speak Koine Greek: A Conversational Phrasebook* Wilmore, Ky.: GlossaHouse Spring 2014

Long, Fredrick J. *Paul's Prophesying Isa 28:11 in Context: The Signs of Unbelievers and Believers in 1 Corinthians 14* Wipf & Stock Fall 2013



Marmon, Ellen L. "Mezirow's Transformative Learning and Christian Education" *Christian Education Journal* Fall 2013



O'Malley, J. Steven *Methodism and the Miraculous: John Wesley's Idea of the Supernatural and the Identification of Missions in the Eighteenth Century* Emeth Press Fall 2013



McPhee, Art *The Road to Delphi; J. Waskom Pickett and Missions in the Twilight of the Raj and Dawn of Nationhood* Fall 2013



Peterson, Michael L. *The Encounter between Atheistic Naturalism and Christian Theism*, Oxford University Press January 2014

Peterson, Michael L. (Editor). *Evolution and Christianity: The Power of a Worldview* John Templeton Foundation Press Fall 2013

Peterson, Michael L. (Editor) *The Problem of Evil* Oxford University Press Fall 2013

Peterson, Michael L. (Editor) *Soul-Making Theodicy* Acumen Press Fall 2013

Peterson, Michael L. (Editor) Debate: "Do Science and Faith Conflict? Atheistic Naturalism versus Christian Theism" Fall 2013



Seamands, Stephen A. (Editor) "Preparing for Ordination" Seedbed Fall 2013



Sims, Bryan D. (Editor) "5 of the Most Counterintuitive Pieces of Advice on Leadership" Seedbed Fall 2013

Learn more about the world-renowned faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary. Find their pictures, bios, and education background online through

asbury.to/faculty

Suggested Church Planting Reading List from Dr. Art McPhee

Cray, Graham *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions in a Changing Context* NEW YORK, N. Y.: SEABURY BOOKS, 2009

McNeal, Reggie *Missional Communities: The Rise of the Post-Congregational Church* SAN FRANCISCO: JOSSEY-BASS, 2011

Murray, Stuart *Planting Churches in the 21st Century: A Guide for Those Who Want Fresh Perspectives and New Ideas for Creating Congregations* SCOTTDALE, PA: HERALD PRESS, 2010

Ott, Craig, and Gene Wilson *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* GRAND RAPIDS, MI: BAKER ACADEMIC, 2011

Shenk, David W., and Ervin R. Stutzman *Creating Communities of the Kingdom New Testament Models of Church Planting* SCOTTDALE, PA: HERALD PRESS, 1988

Stetzer, Ed *Planting Missional Churches* NASHVILLE, TENN: BROADMAN & HOLMAN, 2006

Events

Alumni Council Meeting in India
September 1 – 11, 2014

Faithwalking, Kentucky Campus
October 6 – 8, 2014

For more information visit:
www.faithwalking.us

Asbury Alumni & Friends Cruise
October 23 – November 1, 2014

News

Keener featured Speaker at 2014 Biblical Studies Lectures at Beeson Divinity School

Dr. Craig Keener was the featured speaker at the 2014 Biblical Studies Lectures at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama this past February 4-6, 2014. Past speakers have included N. T. Wright, Gordon Fee, D. A. Carson, and others. According to Samford's website: "Guest speakers committed to the proclamation of Holy Scripture are chosen because they pursue their study of the Bible with the utmost academic rigor and integrity. Their scholarship serves as an example of the faithful and diligent attention to the study of Scripture that we hope to instill in our students."

Asbury Seminary Alumnus Reverend Dr. Tory Baucum Appointed as One of Canterbury Cathedral's Six Preachers

Dr. Baucum will be installed as one of the Six Preachers during Evensong at Canterbury Cathedral in the next few months. The Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral unanimously approved the nomination of Dr. Baucum shortly before Christmas. The College of Six Preachers was created by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer in 1541, forming part of his plans for a new foundation to replace the dissolved Priory. Canterbury was unique in this; no other cathedral had a group of preaching priests and was a reflection of Cranmer's determination to give greater prominence to preaching. Today, the Six Preachers are called to preach on various occasions at Canterbury Cathedral, the Mother Church of the Anglican Communion. The preachers serve five-year terms, which can be renewed.

Academy of Homiletics

Dr. Michael Pasquarello III, Granger E. and Anna A. Fisher Professor of Preaching, participated in the Consultation on Homiletic Theology at the Academy of Homiletics which met on Dec. 5 – 7, 2013 in Louisville, KY. The Consultation on Homiletic Theology is part of a four-year Homiletic Theology Project directed by Dr. David Jacobsen, Professor of Worship and Preaching, Boston University School of Theology. Dr. Pasquarello was invited to participate in the consultation on the basis of the theological emphasis of his work on the practice of preaching. He presented a paper, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer: On Becoming a Homiletic Theologian" and also responded to a paper.

The Journal of Inductive Biblical Studies

Inductive Bible study has been a major emphasis at Asbury Theological Seminary for seven decades. Dr. David Bauer and Dr. Fred Long have launched a new journal in connection with FirstFruits Publishing: *The Journal of Inductive Biblical Studies*. It will appear twice yearly (January and July) and is available on-line and in print on demand. Each issue will feature five to six articles dealing with biblical and exegetical studies, Bible study methods, and the history of inductive Bible study, all written by significant junior and senior scholars. The journal can be found at: <http://place.asburyseminary.edu/jibs/>

The Vicar of Baghdad at Asbury Seminary

The Reverend Canon Dr. Andrew White, Vicar of St. George's Anglican Church, the only remaining Anglican Church in Iraq, spoke at Asbury Theological Seminary on Friday, March 21, 2014. Canon Andrew has led St. George's since 1998. St. George's has suffered significant bomb damage over the past three years, but still welcomes hundreds of Iraqi Christians each week to its services. The church also runs an extensive food relief program from its compound in the Red Zone of central Baghdad, distributing food relief parcels to over 500 Iraqis each week. St. George's medical clinic sees around 2,000 patients each month at no cost, offering medical treatment, a dentist, pharmacy and laboratory. Their staff includes Christians and both Sunni and Shia Muslims.

Host to one of the Largest Collections of Rare Biblical Texts and Artifacts

Asbury Theological Seminary hosted an exhibit of the Green Collection, Tuesday, March 18 through Saturday, March 22, 2014. The Green Collection is one of the largest private collections of rare biblical texts and artifacts in the world. Asbury Seminary was thrilled to offer this unique opportunity to the central Kentucky community.

Highlights included:

- A leaf from the first bible printed in the Western Hemisphere (1663), translated into the Natick Native American dialect
- Gutenberg Bible leaf (1454)
- 14th century Latin illuminated manuscript
- A leaf from the earliest nearly-complete manuscript of Psalms in the world, written in Greek on papyrus (circa 3rd-4th Century AD)
- Coverdale Bible (1550)
- Cuneiform tablets dating to the time of Abraham
- Jewish Torah scroll
- Illuminated manuscripts

The exhibit was accompanied by experts from The Green Collection to help interpret the relevance of the artifacts and put them into historical context.

— Announcing — Rev. Jessica LaGrone as New Dean of Chapel



Asbury Theological Seminary is pleased to announce the appointment of Rev. Jessica LaGrone as the next Dean of the Chapel. Rev. LaGrone is currently an Associate Pastor of the 10,000-member The Woodlands United Methodist Church near Houston, Texas. One of her key responsibilities was the oversight of the weekly worship services, including liturgical, blended and contemporary services. Working closely with a staff of over twenty worship personnel as well as numerous volunteers, Rev. LaGrone has been well equipped and prepared for her new role at Asbury Seminary. She is also an excellent preacher and teacher. Not only did she preach regularly at The Woodlands and as a guest preacher around the United States, but she coordinated sermon series with the preaching pastors at The Woodlands and is the founder and teacher of the Radiant Bible Study, which brings together nearly 400 women every week for the study of God's Word. Dr. Doug Matthews, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, commented, "After completing an exhaustive national search, the Dean of Chapel committee, comprised of faculty, staff and students, is thrilled with the selection of Rev. LaGrone. Her acceptance of this position is a blessing to the entire Asbury Seminary community."

In 2005 Rev. Jessica LaGrone became an ordained elder in the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. She is a 2002 M.Div. graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary, where she was awarded the 2002 Stanger Preaching Award. President Tennent remarked, "I am so delighted that Jessica LaGrone is joining the ministry of Asbury Theological Seminary. At its heart, Asbury Seminary is a worshipping community and our daily chapel and Eucharist services are the deepest reflection of that identity. To have someone like Jessica LaGrone leading us speaks well for our future. Jessica's life and ministry have been forged in the local church and we will be deeply blessed by her leadership in helping to spiritually form this community."

Rev. LaGrone holds a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX. She is married to Jim LaGrone and has two children, Drew and Kate, aged four and one. She is the author of two books, *Namesake* and *Broken and Blessed*. Rev. LaGrone states, "The Chapel is the heart of Asbury Seminary, undeniable holy ground. I'm thrilled to return to a place that formed me for ministry in such a powerful way to serve and invest in the lives of those in the community."

Rev. LaGrone will move to Wilmore and begin her ministry here in June. At that time, Rev. Bob Stamps will retire as Dean of the Chapel, but will continue, along with his wife Ellen, to minister to the students at Kalas Village. A formal commissioning service for Rev. LaGrone will take place in the Fall of 2014.

COMING SEPTEMBER 2014



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Watch for HUB 2.0 Coming SOON!

ANDREA ABRAHAMSON, continued from pg. 13

►► her calling. “My church at home (Impact in Grand Rapids, MI) is a church plant, now ten years old,” Andrea notes. “There are ten churches planted out of our congregation. It has been really eye-opening to be a part of planting from that end.” Under the Mentored Ministry program at Asbury Seminary, she is currently working with the Wesleyan Church to serve at three different church plants in different stages of growth. Last semester she explored a variety of congregations in the area, some of which were church plants or revitalization projects, and looks forward to settling into a church community at the start of spring semester.

Asked about what she thinks her future holds, she muses, “I do feel called to reach young professionals in a large North American city. At this point I am praying about Chicago, but have not committed to anything yet. I do plan to work under the Wesleyan Church. They have a great heart for planting and I am delighted to be a part of their work to reach the world with the Gospel.”

Dr. Steve Offutt, Assistant Professor of Development Studies, had Andrea Abrahamson in his class on Missional Formation recently. He notes:

“God is moving in urban contexts around the globe. Metropolitan and cosmopolitan cultures that have long seemed resistant to the gospel are now home to local congregations that are alive with the excitement of Christ’s love. Andrea is a vibrant young woman who has felt God pulling her into this part of His mission for the world. She has been gifted with the intellectual and entrepreneurial skills necessary to plant churches in fast-moving urban areas, and she has a contagious joy that will facilitate her efforts to build local bodies of Christ. I’m excited to see how God will use her vocational call into such strategic areas of ministry.”

Tennent TOUR

Please join President Timothy C. Tennent as he shares the Asbury Seminary vision in your area. Tennent Tours are well under way, so mark your calendar now! At each of his stops, Dr. Tennent is honored to be speaking at various Saturday evening and Sunday morning services.

2014 Dates:

April 4–6
First Methodist Houston
Houston, Texas

September 12–14
Asbury UMC/First UMC
Tulsa, Oklahoma

November 14–16
Centenary UMC
Lexington, Kentucky

2015 Dates:

April 10–12
St. Luke UMC
Columbus, Georgia

May 29–31
First UMC
Huntsville, Alabama

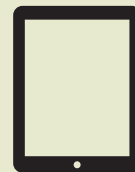
For event schedule, reservations, and information, please contact Major Events by phone, 877.PRAY.ATS (772.9287) or email, major.events@asburyseminary.edu.

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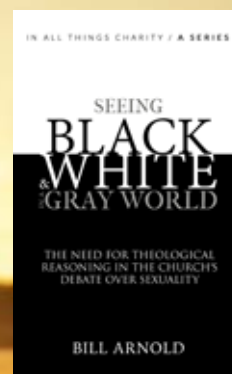
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