

THE ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# HERALD

Vol. 126 no. 2 Fall 2015

## ATTEMPT SOMETHING **BIG**



*Faith*



*Finance*



*Mission*







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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.

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# Money:

## *Filthy Lucre or Kingdom Investment*

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The publication of this edition of the Herald takes place on the 500th anniversary of the ordination of William Tyndale. It was in 1515 that Tyndale was ordained but, surprisingly, he refused to enter the monastic life. Instead, he entered the world of higher education and scholarship. His dream

was to learn Greek and Hebrew so that he could put the Bible into the English language. We must remember that in the 16th century it was against the law to translate the Bible into popular, vernacular languages. However, William Tyndale was so committed to giving the Word of God to ordinary people, he fled to Germany and secretly translated the Bible from Greek into popular English. He completed his work by 1526 and the Bible was then smuggled into England and Scotland in defiance of the law. A few years later Tyndale was captured, sentenced to death by strangulation and burning at the stake. But nothing could stop the spread of God's Word amongst the English-speaking people. Renewal took place and within four years of Tyndale's martyrdom, the English Bible was permitted to be printed. We are able to read our Bibles in English today because of the sacrificial commitment of William Tyndale.

Tyndale's translation made an enormous impact on the English language. William Tyndale is the one who first coined the phrase "filthy lucre" in his translation of I Timothy 3:3 which is still retained in the King James Version: "not greedy of filthy lucre." It is also found in Titus 1:7 where we are commanded to be "not given to filthy lucre." This phrase (as modern translations emphasize) refers to an unhealthy attitude towards money. The New Testament commands us to not use money for "dishonest gain" or to become a "lover of money." If we trust in money for our security, that money can become "filthy lucre." If we hoard money, it can become "filthy lucre." If we fall in love with it, it can become "filthy lucre." The

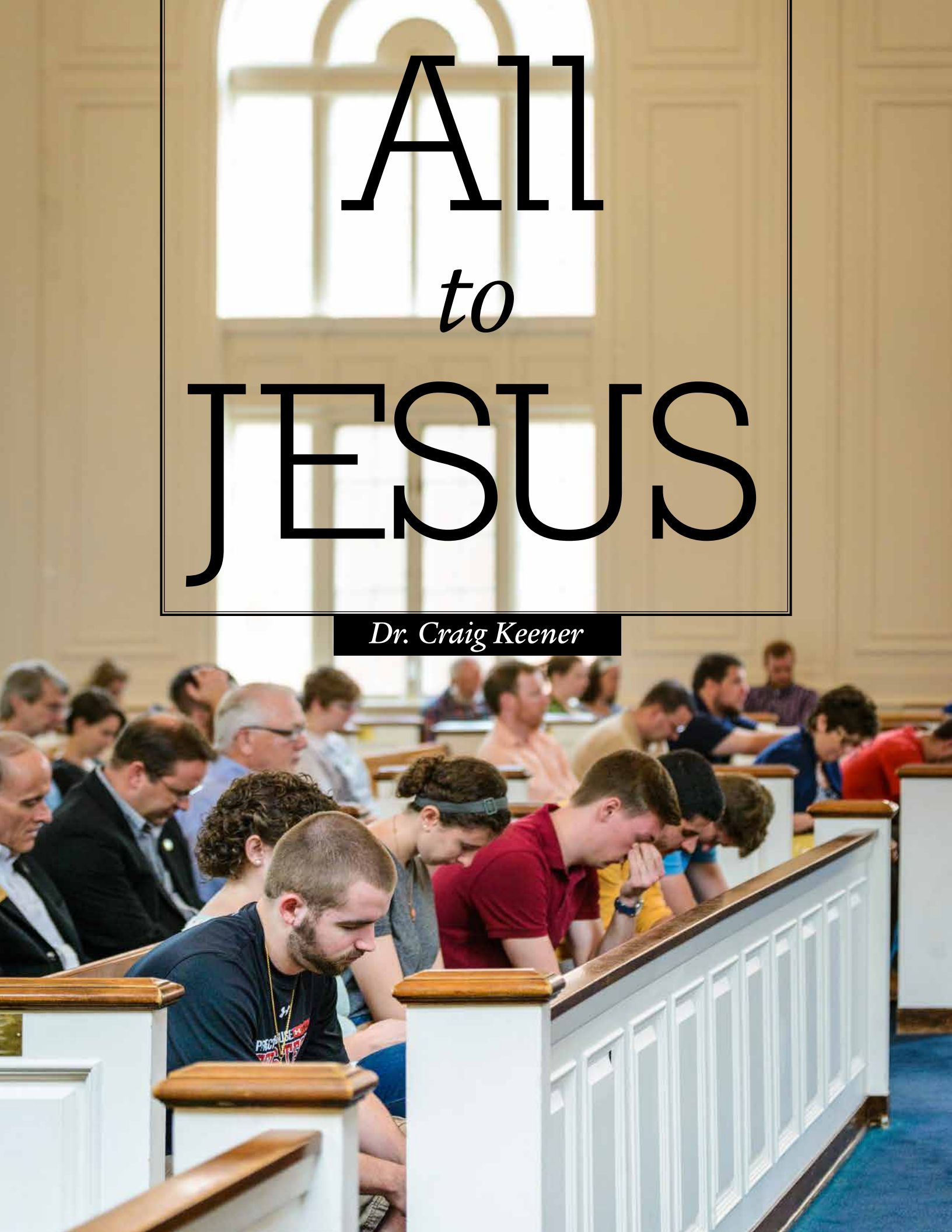
Bible is filled with admonishments about the danger of money if our attitude towards it is not godly.

However, money is never viewed in the Bible as inherently bad or evil. On the contrary, your bank account is nothing more than an embodiment of your labor in seed form. When you work, investing your time and efforts into a job, you receive money. That money embodies that work or effort you have given. This money, in turn, allows you to, for example, purchase food, which honors someone else's work who labored to plant and raise that food, and so forth. In short, when you give \$100 or \$1,000 dollars, you are, in effect, transferring your life energy to another. You are allowing your life to flow to another. Your money can feed the hungry. Your money can clothe the naked. Your money can construct buildings to serve God's people. Your money can help train someone for ministry. Your money can help bring the gospel to the ends of the earth. Money does not need to ever become "filthy lucre" for us. Money represents the means through which we extend ourselves into Kingdom investment.

As President of Asbury Theological Seminary, I have the wonderful privilege of working with hundreds of our friends who sacrificially give to this ministry. I have seen first-hand the joy which comes to a family when they decide to invest in a scholarship which allows someone they have never even met to be trained for ministry. I have seen the joy which takes place when a family decides to use their resources to construct a building on our campus, or purchase books for an international student who needs help. This issue of the Herald explores the relationship of faith, finances, and the mission of Asbury Theological Seminary. It is here at Asbury that we have the joy of daily witnessing how men and women, out of faith, invest money and it becomes, not filthy lucre, but a kingdom investment in the mission of Asbury Theological Seminary, which is to train men and women to "spread scriptural holiness throughout the world."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy C. Tennent". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'T'.

Dr. Timothy C. Tennent  
*President, Professor of World Christianity*

A photograph of a church interior. In the foreground, several people are seated in white pews with wooden tops, looking down in prayer. The background shows more people seated in pews, and a large, arched window with a cross design. The text 'All to JESUS' is overlaid on the image in a large, black, serif font. The word 'All' is at the top, 'to' is in the middle in a smaller, italicized font, and 'JESUS' is at the bottom in a large, bold font.

# All *to* JESUS

*Dr. Craig Keener*



**P**eople have often criticized as unrealistic my dear friend Ron Sider, author of *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, or as legalistic Charles Finney, John Wesley, or Saint Francis. Somehow these critics have overlooked someone even more radical.

Jesus urged his disciples to pursue the business of the kingdom and depend on their heavenly Father for provision (Luke 12:22-32). Lest we suppose that such ideals challenge only our culture, some rich people in Jesus's day thought they had too much to give up; many poor people assumed they didn't have enough to spare.

Happily, the first time I read these passages, I was more than ready to embrace Jesus's call to give up possessions. I didn't have much to give up. Trusting him to supply my need came with greater difficulty, as I left for a Bible college without enough funds to pay for my first semester.

Although Jesus's teaching about sacrifice appears in all the Gospels, it's a special emphasis in Luke, perhaps ironic in view of some people of means in his audience (Luke 1:3). For example, people of means often invited respectable guests to banquets to increase their own honor; Jesus instructs them to invite instead the poor and disabled (14:13).

Jesus praises both the poor (21:2-3) and the rich who sacrifice. Zaccheus was a high-level tax collector in Jericho, where many wealthy priests lived. He could've gotten rich without cheating, but he cheated anyway. After encountering Jesus's grace, however, he volunteers half his possessions for the poor and, honoring biblical restitution teaching, he repays fourfold (19:8; cf. Exod 22:1). Jesus's response? "Today salvation has come to this household!" (Luke 19:9).

Was stewardship really part of one's relationship with God? Certainly Luke seems to think so. The "good news" that Jesus came to preach to the poor (4:18; 7:22) includes God's kingdom being theirs (6:20). Likewise, God heard Cornelius's prayer partly because of his care for the poor (Acts 10:4, 31)—not a surprising idea to anyone who has read the Old Testament (Deut 15:9; 24:15; Prov 19:17; 21:13).

Stewardship comes up when people ask how to be right with God. When people ask John the Baptist how to express their repentance (Luke 3:10), he admonishes

whoever has two cloaks to share one with those who have none (3:11). When a ruler asks him how to inherit eternal life (18:18), Jesus instructs him to sell everything and give to the poor, so he may have heavenly treasure (18:22). As Dietrich Bonhoeffer points out in his *Cost of Discipleship*, we expend more time trying to get around this instruction than trying to learn from it.

Works don't save us, of course. When hearers ask Peter how to be saved (Acts 2:37), he summons them to repent and receive Christ (2:38). We do not wait long, however, to see that the repentant share resources (2:44-45). (This genuine fruit of the Spirit among them also recurs in the next revival in Acts; see 4:31-35.) When Paul's jailer asks how to be saved (16:30), Paul simply commands him to trust in Jesus (16:31). This faith, however, is again expressed in a radical way. The jailer shares food with Paul and Silas (16:34), even though such generosity toward a prisoner outside the cell could risk the jailer's life (cf. 16:27).

Jesus's call to surrender possessions wasn't only for the rich ruler. Luke notes that Jesus summons all his followers to sell their possessions and lay up treasure in heaven (Luke 12:33). In fact, in the context of counting the cost, Jesus warns that no one can be his disciple without surrendering all possessions (14:33).

Jesus often used hyperbole, rhetorical overstatement; his early followers understood this, sharing possessions rather than becoming homeless. Nevertheless, the point of hyperbole is to challenge us—not to let us say, "Oh, that's just hyperbole." As Finney pointed out, we may not lose all our possessions at the moment of conversion—but we do lose our ownership of them. We don't want to be like the rich fool whose biggest concern was what to do with his earthly possessions instead of having heavenly treasure (12:16-21).

Through various means, and despite my fears, the Lord did supply my need not only for my first year of college but through my PhD. The discipline of living very simply that I meanwhile learned, however, proved helpful also for my subsequent life. In my last years of singleness I lived in an efficiency apartment that doubled as my office; the final year I was able to sacrifice 90 percent of my income. My life with a family is admittedly different, but there's a freedom in not being bound by possessions or caring about status symbols. There's a blessing in being a blessing to others. And Jesus promises more rewards to come.

# ATTEMPT SOMETHING | BIG

FAITH + FINANCES + MISSION



BY BOB LANDREBE

When the board of trustees and faculty unanimously approved the 2023 Strategic Plan, Asbury Theological Seminary embarked on a journey to “attempt something BIG” that only God can achieve. Early in our journey to implement the 2023 Strategic Plan we realized that we did not have the economic model sufficient to realize the vision of this God-sized plan. As a result, at the November 2013 Board of Trustees meeting, the board passed a resolution that called on the administration and faculty to develop a plan that “demonstrates how Asbury Theological Seminary will re-align its resources and redesign its educational model to achieve the approved goals of the 2023 Strategic Plan with financial viability.”

By God’s grace and his provision, the Seminary is not in a financial crisis. We are blessed to have a strong enough financial position that allows for necessary adaptive changes to take place in a collaborative manner with faculty, trustees, staff, and students. The following four building blocks represent the foundation upon which we

can more confidently create an economic model that is missionally vibrant by 2023:

## SELECTIVELY ABANDON THE PAST



**OBJECTIVE:** our challenge is to selectively abandon policies, structures, programs, past strategies, and mindsets that no longer serve their original purposes so that margins are developed with sufficient financial and personnel capacities to create the future that God is leading us towards. Through collaborative teamwork of trustees, faculty, and administrators, we have identified and are in the processes of selectively abandoning old policies that no longer work as effectively as they did in the past, developing new structures to support new areas of growth, and phasing out under-enrolled degree programs and their related costs. This building block is essential for the long-term, wise stewardship of the school’s resources.



NOT BY MIGHT,  
NOR BY POWER,  
BUT BY MY SPIRIT,  
SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS.

Zechariah 4:6



## EMBARK ON A RESIDENTIAL RENAISSANCE



**OBJECTIVE:** to raise sufficient donor funding necessary to fully cover the costs of building exceptional “married student” and “single student” housing on the Wilmore campus so that the Seminary serves increasing numbers of full-time students who experience the community and spiritual formation benefits of a residential education. This objective has been achieved with the investment of more than \$40 million of donor-funded housing. With God’s blessing, this new housing helped trigger new student enrollment on the Wilmore campus in 2012 that continues to grow each year.

## DEVELOP A MORE STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT PLAN



**OBJECTIVE:** to develop an institution-wide, five-year strategic enrollment management plan so that the Seminary achieves the optimal recruitment and retention of students consistent with our mission and the long-term goals of the 2023 Strategic Plan. The implementation of seven new enrollment initiatives began in 2015 with new pilot program designs completed in 2015 in time for Fall 2016 new student enrollment. These new designs are intended to continuously improve learning outcomes, reduce the cost of education to students, reduce student indebtedness, and increase access of theological education for residential students as well as part-time, post-traditional students who are working full-time.

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We are trusting God to continue leading us as we attempt something BIG through the 2023 Strategic Plan – always desiring to be in step with his greater purposes.

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## SERVE THE CHURCH THROUGH SEEDBED



**OBJECTIVE:** To establish Seedbed designed to become a movement catalyst and a creative developer of discipleship resources for the twenty-first century Church so that Seedbed resources people, communities, and movements who sow together for a great awakening. Since the launch of Seedbed on January 6, 2012, the response by Wesleyan-oriented churches, pastors, and lay persons has been beyond expectations. For example, Seedbed has had 540,000 video views, 85,000 resources downloaded or purchased, 7,600 Facebook fans. Revenues tripled from 2014 to 2015. There is now a grass-roots call for Seedbed to launch a related New Room Association of like-minded churches.



These board-approved components are integral to our new emerging Enterprise Model. The positive financial results of the new enterprise model will help us achieve a number of our 2023 Strategic Plan missional goals. A short list of examples include: Developing new global partnerships and networks;

**1. DEVELOPING NEW GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS.**

**2. LAUNCHING THE NEW CHURCH PLANTING INITIATIVE.**

**3. BUILDING ON EARLY SUCCESSES OF OUR LAY MOBILIZATION INITIATIVE.**

**4. MORE EFFECTIVELY SERVING THE HISPANIC CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.**

**5. DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS AND SERVING NEW CONSTITUENCIES.**

We are trusting God to continue leading us as we attempt something BIG through the 2023 Strategic Plan – always desiring to be sensitive to be in step with his greater purposes.



# GRADUATE SEMINARY DEBT-FREE



heological education is undeniably expensive. Is there any way for students to attend Asbury Seminary without having to go into debt? The answer is a resounding YES. Asbury Seminary offers several ways to help students leave seminary debt-free.

Through Asbury Seminary's Ministry Partners Program (MPP), students can graduate seminary debt-free by partnering with their local church and with individuals, who give a set yearly and/or monthly amount in support of their theological education. Partner donations are deposited into a pool of funds gathered for all Ministry Partner Scholarships. The Seminary identifies other donors who contribute additional monies that are sufficient to provide the full tuition scholarship to these students. All donations are tax-deductible and go into the Asbury Seminary MPP Scholarship program. Not only do students in this program graduate seminary debt-free, they also receive an education in biblical stewardship and in fundraising. These are skills that will help them to lead their congregations in joyful giving and in the judicious use of their financial resources to further God's Kingdom on Earth.

New students taking part in the Ministry Partners Program must make a good-faith effort to come to Asbury Seminary supported by a sending church, which agrees to give at least \$500 per year to their student's support. In addition, students must identify a minimum of 12 individual donors who will give a minimum of \$45 per month. The minimum goal to strive for is \$6,980 per year, which includes the church's commitment.

Students in the Ministry Partners Program will complete stewardship training during their seminary years, write news updates for those giving them prayer and financial support, send occasional personal handwritten notes to their supporters, attend financial planning seminars and support-raising training events, and observe the Community Life statement. The Ministry Partners Program coordinator will serve to orient students to their responsibilities and the administrative details of gathering pledges, will monitor the students' progress, and will provide any other support needed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 >

## MINISTRY PARTNERS PROGRAM



*You with your network  
of friends and family*



*Asbury's network of  
donors*



### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Full tuition scholarship



### PRAYER SUPPORT

Ongoing connections with friends and family plus new tools for ministry



### FULFILL YOUR CALL

Earn your Master of Divinity or M.A. in Intercultural Studies with Church Planting Emphasis and graduate **debt-free**



## FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: DR. RICHARD L. GRAY

*Professor of Christian Leadership and Christian Ministry*

**A**fter completing degrees at the MDiv, ThM, and PhD levels in Christian Leadership and serving as National Director for Ethnic Leadership Development and serving as National Director for Ethnic Leadership Development for both the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and World Vision US Ministries, Dr. Richard (Rick) Gray came to Asbury Seminary's Kentucky campus in the fall of 1999. He serves as Professor of Leadership and Christian Ministry and spearheads the Leadership Department on the Florida Dunnam campus, where he is now based.

While studying at Fuller Theological Seminary, Dr. Gray, his wife, Coral, and Dr. William (Bill) Pannell began dreaming of what would become The Obsidian Society, an organization of African American evangelical scholars. Dr. Gray incorporated the organization, developed its programs, and serves as its Executive Director. Dr. Pannell remains the President and Coral the Secretary. Today, conversations are underway with Fuller Seminary to incorporate the Society into the newly-formed William E. Pannell Center for African American Church Studies at Fuller.

On the Kentucky campus, Dr. Gray helped establish the Master of Arts in Christian Leadership degree (2002), a program which is enjoying great success. For example, in 2006 Asbury Seminary was the institution of record for the Catalyst Conference. Founded by John Maxwell's Injoy Ministry, Catalyst is an annual 10,000-participant event held in Atlanta. Asbury Seminary offered academic credit for participation in the conference; Dr. Gray taught its Christian Leadership class. This same year, Asbury Seminary also began talking with the Willow Creek Leadership Summit about the possibility of being responsible for the training of their leadership interns. It was reported that nearly 100,000 people across the world took part in the Summit. Dr. Gray and the Leadership department would guide the training of those interns in an academic understanding of leadership.

On the Florida Dunnam campus, Dr. Gray helped found the Harry Hosier Institute (2012) and serves as its Director. The Institute seeks to make known the life and legacy of Harry Hosier, a Black founding father of American Methodism. Though illiterate, Hosier had the capacity to memorize long passages of scripture and became known for his preaching abilities, while traveling with Francis Asbury. The Institute also serves as Asbury Seminary's platform for its Black Studies programs.

In addition to his teaching duties in Orlando, Dr. Gray offers workshops to the Black church community. An initial workshop involved working with Black church leaders in a month-long series of training events in the area of Christian leadership development and Black Religious Studies. He continues to follow up with training events in churches throughout the greater Orlando area. Although he is an ordained pastor himself and has served several churches, Dr. Gray notes, "The church experiences helped me to understand that we serve the Kingdom of God best when we flow in the strength of our spiritual giftedness. My spiritual gift is teaching and I do that better than I do anything else in the world."

Dr. Gray has received numerous community service awards, including awards from the City of Pasadena, the California State Assembly, and the United States Congress. In 2008 Dr. Gray received the Asbury Seminary Graduate Faculty Discipleship and Mentoring Award.

He has produced numerous manuscripts, articles for religious journals, Sunday school commentaries, professional presentations and addresses, and seminars and workshops. He also developed a course on Christian Leadership for Asbury University.

He and Coral have two children, Andrew and Erica.





## STUDENT HIGHLIGHT: DONALD WILLIAMS

Donald Williams, a student at the Memphis extension site of Asbury Theological Seminary, is grateful for the opportunity he has to study near home while continuing to work at his full-time job. To him, “The biggest advantage is the classes are on the weekend.” He has taken 16 classes so far through a combination of ExL (Extended Learning online courses) and Memphis courses. He describes his cohort at the Memphis site as being made up of men and women of all ethnic backgrounds from all around the region – Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas.

The Memphis program, described as “a micro-expression of the Asbury Theological Seminary experience” offers the hybrid educational model, blending face-to-face class time with online learning. Classes on the Memphis site are hosted by Christ United Methodist Church and are taught by regular Asbury Seminary faculty, from both the Kentucky and Orlando Dunnam campuses. Students and professors meet face-to-face for two full weekends – Friday night and all day Saturday – during the 8-week class; usually these weekend classes occur a month apart. Each weekend features a special chapel service and new students attend a spiritual formation retreat at the start of each academic year. The rest of the time the classes are conducted online. Ten classes are hosted by the church over a two-year period.

For students in the Master of Divinity degree, most of the residential requirements may be met at the Memphis site by attending classes offered there. To fulfill the

required 32 hours of residential credit for the Master of Divinity program, students must still complete two additional three-hour courses on either the Kentucky or the Florida Dunnam campuses. The remaining courses may be obtained through ExL and/or intensives offered on the Kentucky or Florida Dunnam campuses.

Donald recalls that he came to Christ at the age of 17. “I was inspired by a group named AGAPE who shared the dangers of secular music. I was the typical rebellious youth involved with rock and roll.” He received his call to ministry at age 20, while a Marine stationed at Camp Pendleton, California. The call came while he was serving as a junior deacon in a local church. “I felt an irresistible urge to ministry,” he says.

Asked how the program is enabling his preparation to answer that call, he notes, “Asbury-Memphis has equipped me with a deeper understanding of the Scriptures which in turn allows me to be better prepared when I preach and teach.”

Donald’s wife and his three adult children support him in his goal of a theological education. “I believe Asbury-Memphis has had a positive effect on my family,” he says. “They see me doing something I love and they support me wholeheartedly.” Asked if he would recommend the program to others, he affirmed, “Yes, I have recommended Asbury-Memphis to many of my friends and fellow laborers in Christ.”



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**FACULTY HIGHLIGHT:  
DR. BRYAN SIMS**

*Associate Professor of Leadership & Lay Development*

**D**r. Bryan Sims is the Associate Professor of Leadership and Lay Development, and the Director for the Center of Lay Mobilization within the Beeson Center. A graduate of West Texas A & M University (BA, Music Ed 1998), and Asbury Seminary (M.Div, 2003), Bryan earned his PhD in Organizational Leadership from Regent University in 2009.

Since 2001 he has worked as a Leadership and Organizational Change Coach with Spiritual Leadership, Inc. (SLI), where he has trained and coached leaders, teams, churches, and organizations over extended periods of time to bring about spiritual awakening and missional effectiveness to them and through them. He describes his passion for discipleship as “growing leaders and leading change.” His emphasis on team leadership – the development of systems for transformation – is fulfilled in his classes and through his students, who take what they have learned into the local church context, thereby multiplying their efforts.

Through SLI, he has worked in several United Methodist conferences, where significant transformation is occurring in leaders, churches, and communities, and in the conferences themselves. Bryan has also led groups of business leaders through WorkLife Incubators, through which leaders grow in Christ and learn new ways to integrate their faith into their professions.

Bryan has co-authored *Leadership Incubator Materials* developed in partnership with Discipleship Resources and SLI as well as audio CDs. He also co-authored an article in the *Journal of Religious Leadership* (Fall 2011) entitled “Spiritual Leadership and Transformational Change Across Cultures: The SLI Leadership Incubator,” and is currently writing a chapter in a Wesleyan Leadership textbook and co-authoring a book with Dr. Stephen Martyn about transformation in the local church.

Asked what excites him most about his ministry at Asbury Seminary, Bryan replied, “There are three things that immediately come to mind. First, it is my great joy to direct our Lay Mobilization Institute (LMI) where we are walking alongside churches through a transformation process.” The LMI process creates a team of people within a congregation, both clergy and laity, working together in covenant discipleship, discerning God’s dreams and direction, and developing/implementing disciple-making systems in their communities. This initiative works to fulfill one of the key elements of the Asbury Seminary 2023 Vision: Asbury will be committed to empowering and equipping of the laity.

“The second thing that excites me is getting to work with our students, who are leaders with a strong call to embody God’s Kingdom on the earth.” It is a glorious privilege, he says, to train them in equipping and mobilizing the laity, leadership development, and leading in complex and challenging circumstances. “I am continually amazed and overwhelmed at how the Lord is shaping and using them, and it is my great joy to be part of it.

“The third element that excites me is working alongside other faculty, staff, and administration in this important season in theological education. It is a joy to be in a place that is proactively working toward God’s vision in a changing world rather than simply trying to survive. Our ability to model what it looks like to follow Jesus as true disciples empowered by the Holy Spirit in the will of the Father is crucial both for Asbury Seminary and for others. We are experiencing deeper levels of trust and collaboration, and I am convinced that our best days are yet ahead of us.”

Bryan is married to MyLinda and they have four children.



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: HEIDI LYDA

Director of Love Your Neighbor House (LYN) - Indianapolis, IN

M.A. in World Mission & Evangelism, Asbury Theological Seminary 2008



A native of Oregon, Heidi Lyda taught preschool special education in Oregon and in Chapel Hill, NC, and spent a summer in mission work in Kazakhstan. Her interest in missions prompted her to seek more education. “My pastor at the time, Benji Kelley, had attended Asbury Seminary,” Heidi says, “and then three other members of my small group felt called to attend Asbury at the same time.” She came also because it seemed very few seminaries offered a focus in World Missions in the way that Asbury Seminary does.

Heidi says that the class in Cross-Cultural Leadership helped her determine where and to whom she wanted to minister. “From that point on I found myself taking classes focusing on issues of race in an American context. I was very slowly feeling God’s pull to be an agent of reconciliation here in America, and to be a part of a diverse community working together on issues of poverty.” Taking a class on the Ethics of Hospitality defined “how” she wanted to do ministry – by creating space to welcome the stranger into a believing community and together grow closer to Christ.

Heidi has found her calling through LYN (Love Your Neighbor) House in the Eastside of Indianapolis. “When I graduated in December of 2008,” Heidi recalls, “I knew that I had a heart for racial reconciliation, the marginalized, and community. I felt that God was calling me to the inner city, working cross-culturally with the poor.” LYN House’s mission statement is “demonstrating Christ’s love through compassionate hospitality and transformational care,” and, after a summer internship there, in September of 2009 Heidi became its director.


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*“I daily worship and minister alongside neighbors and friends who help take care of me; the ones I am there to help give to me more than I could ever give to them.”*

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“Now that I have been at LYN House for six years,” Heidi reflects, “one of the most rewarding aspects is watching our teens develop into leaders. We have one young girl who joined us our second year for tutoring. We were able to help her get into a good private school and get on the honor roll at her school. Last year, she no longer needed tutoring and she volunteered to tutor one of our younger students. This summer she has been active in helping us lead some of our summer programming. She recently said that when she graduates college she wants to come and take my job! I would gladly hand over the reins to her someday.”

Working almost exclusively with volunteers, Heidi develops and directs the LYN House program, which includes such aspects as after-school tutoring and job readiness training. “Almost half of our neighbors are living at or below the poverty line,” she says. Unemployment is high and the rates of high school graduation are low. “Statistically we are in the heart of what many would consider to be ‘the least of these.’ Yet, I would also argue that we are in an area of committed loving groups of organizations and churches dedicated to working together to help their neighbors to rise above economic poverty. I daily worship and minister alongside neighbors and friends who help take care of me; the ones I am there to help give to me more than I could ever give to them. We are growing into a community of believers dedicated to seeking God’s will and transformation for our community.”

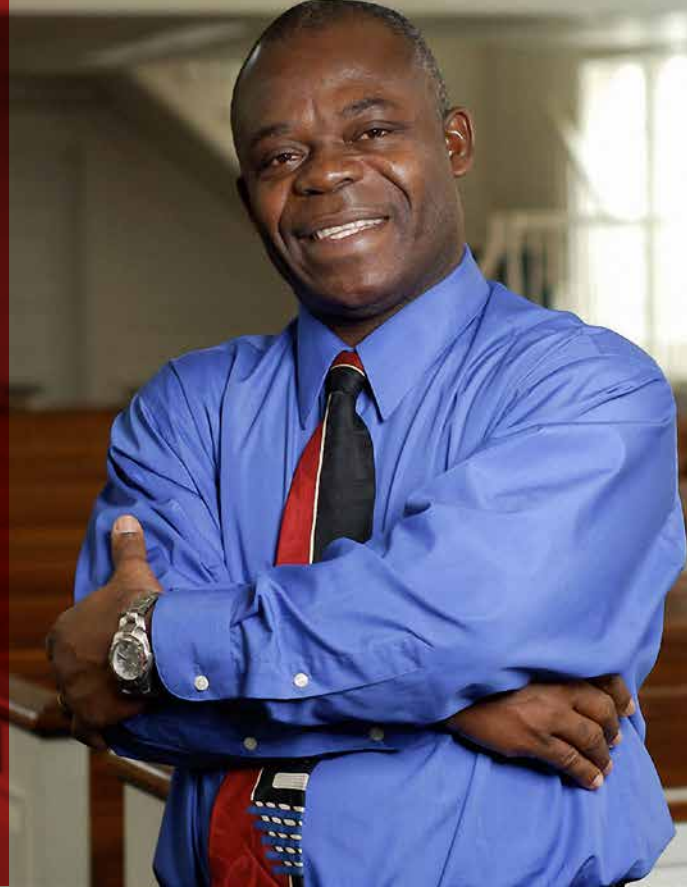
 Visit [asbury.to/voices](http://asbury.to/voices) to see more of Heidi's story and learn how other alumni are Attempting Something BIG



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: DR. JERRY P. KULAH

*Dean of the College of Theology of the  
United Methodist University - Liberia, Africa*

Doctor of Ministry  
Asbury Theological Seminary 2010



Dr. Jerry P. Kulah, a 2010 Doctor of Ministry graduate of Asbury Seminary, is currently Dean of the former Gbarnga School of Theology (GST) now the College of Theology of the United Methodist University in Liberia. He has formerly served as a local church pastor, instructor in several seminaries, District Superintendent of Monrovia, and Conference Evangelist of the United Methodist Church.

The challenges that the Church in Liberia faces are nothing short of daunting. Liberia has been slowly working its way out of the aftermath of two civil wars encompassing the years 1989-2003, in which over 250,000 people died, only to be hit with the West African Ebola outbreak in 2014, which has left over 3,000 dead in Liberia alone.

Jerry describes scenes of families decimated by Ebola, widows and orphans bereft, entire families and emerging leaders wiped out. He has had to comfort those who are heartbroken that their loved ones who died in the Ebola outbreak cannot even have a Christian burial in the churches they worked so hard to support, but must have their bodies burned to prevent the spread of the deadly disease. But he has hope. “God, in his mercy and grace,” he has said, “has shown up, and the Ebola virus is fast becoming history. We will continue to pray until all of Western Africa can celebrate the total eradication of the Ebola virus.”

The theological college is in need of physical facilities

like water, electricity, transportation, and good sanitation, as well as books for its new library. Along with these challenges, Jerry has pledged himself to make spiritual awakening one of the major parts of his administration. “Learning at GST will no longer be about grades alone, but a Spirit-filled campus life will be essential,” he has said. He is currently implementing Wesley Small Group Ministry to enhance the spiritual revitalization of the faculty and student body and the Kindle project, sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), to provide needed e-reader textbooks to students.

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*“God, in his mercy and grace has shown up,  
and the Ebola virus is fast becoming history.  
We will continue to pray until all of Western  
Africa can celebrate the total eradication of  
the Ebola virus.”*

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Since taking over the leadership of the College of Theology in April, 2014, Jerry and his team of department chairs have been working assiduously to recruit pastors and students for training from across the 20 districts and one Circuit of the Liberia Area of the United Methodist Church and at mobilizing resources both locally and internationally to support these students.



DEAN KULAH TEACHING

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*“Learning at GST will no longer be about grades alone, but a Spirit-filled campus life will be essential”*

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In 2008, Jerry and his wife, Ruth, founded Vision Liberia 2027, a non-denominational organization which is working with the Christian church, community, and partners worldwide with the goal of envisioning and establishing a Christ-centered Liberia in half a generation. Christian servant-leaders are being trained and equipped to serve both the Church and society, through providing educational funds for needy children of both pastors and laity, to reach out to specific communities in need, and to build a home/mission center which missionaries, evangelists, visiting pastors, and leaders can use as a base to minister to the nation and people of Liberia.

In 2006, Jerry was instrumental in leading the Christian community across Liberia toward observance of Liberia’s National Day of Fast and Prayer, thus enhancing spiritual revival in the land. He was also instrumental in bringing the medical mission Mercy Ships to Liberia at the close of the Liberia Civil War in 2005, thereby blessing hundreds in need of medical services that would otherwise be out of reach. At the level of the Central Conferences of Africa, Jerry has recently mobilized key lay and clergy leaders to organize the UMC Africa Initiative. Endorsed by the

African College of Bishops, this movement is committed to fostering partnership, network, and fellowship among United Methodist Annual Conferences in Africa in order to facilitate training in cross-cultural evangelization and missions, discipleship, leadership development, prayer revivals, and resource mobilization for the sustainable growth and development of the United Methodist Church in Africa. According to him, “the rapid growth of the Church in Africa necessitates the formation of such a movement to aid in the process of quality leadership development of the Church.

“In addition to my pastoral services and leadership role in the United Methodist Church,” Jerry says, “I have been called by God to do ministry with several national and international development institutions. As part of my ministry activities, I provide services to Liberian grassroots organizations as well as to members and leaders of the national government through leadership conferences, seminars, workshops, and national prayer events. The ultimate goal of these activities is the sociopolitical and spiritual transformation of post-conflict Liberian communities at both national and grass roots levels.”

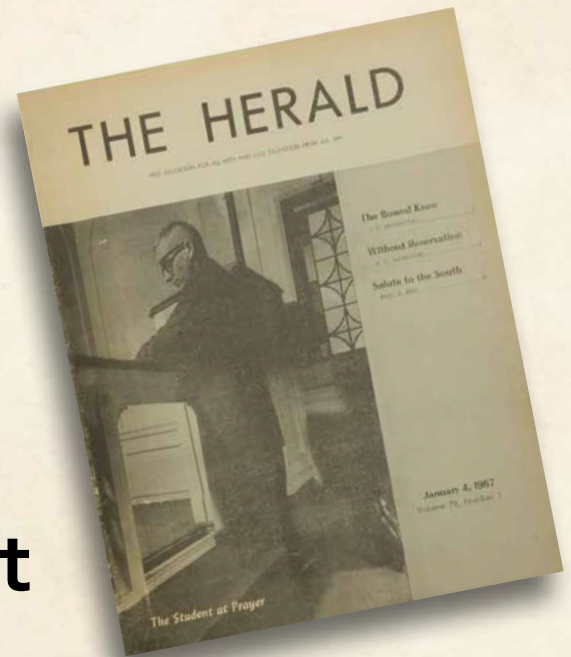


GATES OF THE UNITED METHODIST UNIVERSITY CLOSED DURING THE EBOLA OUTBREAK



## FROM THE ARCHIVES:

*This article from January 1967 reminds us of our heritage, our mission, and our future. Look for more throw back articles in subsequent issues.*



# Whatever is Excellent

By Frank Bateman Stanger  
President, Asbury Theological Seminary

*“Whatsoever is excellent and admirable—fill all your thoughts with these things.”*  
(Philippians 4:8 N.E.B.)



Our thoughts help to determine our health. May the following words influence our thoughts constructively so that, in turn, wholeness of our personality will result. Let us love the Lord with all our heart, our mind, and our strength.

In Jesus Christ, men have found a new freedom—from the tyranny of the impossible. Again and again men have found themselves helpless, defeated, hopeless. But Christ has made it possible for men to meet the impossible with God. Then God acts and delivers men from the tyranny of the impossible.

H.C. Moule, Bishop of Durham, England, expressed this truth thus:

I dare to say that it is possible for those who are willing to reckon on the power of the Lord for keeping and victory, to lead a life in which His promises are taken as they stand and are found to be true. It is possible to cast all our care upon Him daily and to enjoy deep peace in doing

it. It is possible to have the thoughts and imaginations of our hearts purified, in the deepest meaning of the word, through faith. It is possible to see the will of God in everything, and to receive it, not with sighing, but with singing. It is possible, in the inner life of desire and feeling, to lay aside all bitterness, and wrath, and evil doing, every day and every hour.

It is possible, by taking complete refuge in divine power to become strong through and through; and where previously our greatest weakness lay, to find that the things which formerly upset all our resolves to be patient or pure or humble, furnish today opportunity—through Him who loved us, and work in agreement with His will and a blessed sense of His presence and His power to make sin powerless.

These things are divine possibilities, and because they are His work the true experience of them will always cause us to bow lower at His feet and to learn to thirst and long for more. We cannot possibly be satisfied with anything less than—each day, each hour, each moment, in Christ, through the Power of the Holy Spirit—to walk with God.

# *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)**.\*

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# Faculty Publications

ASBURY SEMINARY HAS A WORLD-RENOWNED FACULTY. FIND THEIR PICTURES, BIOS, AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AT [ASBURY.TO/FACULTY](http://ASBURY.TO/FACULTY).

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# News & Events

## Asbury Seminary Faculty Speaks at Princeton Theological Seminary

Dr. Angel Santiago-Vendrell, Assistant Professor of Evangelism at Asbury Seminary, recently spoke at the eighth annual Herencia Lecture at Princeton Theological Seminary on October 9, 2015. In honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month, lecturers explored the theme of "Tales of Mutual Influence: Mackay, Shaull, and the Protestant Origins of Liberation Theology."

## Latino studies program certified for master's degree option

Asbury Theological Seminary has announced a Certification of Bible Institutes for its Latino/a Studies Program (LLSP) on the Florida Dunnam Campus. This certification allows students to apply for a master's degree program at any school accredited by the Association of Theological Schools after completing the 60-hour bachelor's degree in the LLSP program. This certification is a collaborative effort between the Association of Theological Schools and The Association for Hispanic Theological Education. The Seminary's program is one of the first to receive this certification.

## Dr. David Gyertson, New Dean of the Beeson International Center for Biblical Preaching and Church Leadership

Dr. David Gyertson has assumed the position of Associate Provost and Dean of the Beeson International Center for Biblical Preaching and Church Leadership, effective August 12, 2015, at Asbury Theological Seminary. Dr. Gyertson is a well-known speaker and writer in the areas of Christian leadership, theology, applied theology, biblical studies, history, and higher education/leadership studies. Gyertson has served as the president of three evangelical universities, including Asbury University, and served previously at the Seminary.

## Asbury Inn & Suites Awarded 2015 Trip Advisor Certificate Of Excellence

Asbury Inn & Suites (on the Kentucky campus of Asbury Theological Seminary) has received its fourth consecutive TripAdvisor® Certificate of Excellence award. Now in its fifth year, the award celebrates excellence in hospitality and is given only to establishments that consistently achieve great traveler reviews on TripAdvisor. Certificate of Excellence winners include accommodations, eateries, and attractions located all over the world that have continually delivered a superior customer experience.

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## GRADUATE SEMINARY DEBT-FREE continued from pg. 9

**The program of Advanced Standing** is another way for students to more easily avoid student debt and minimize time spent in their education. Under this program, graduates who majored or minored in Bible and theology at accredited colleges and universities can request that academic credit in certain courses be counted toward their program at Asbury Seminary. In order to be eligible, students must have earned a grade of “B” or higher in each course. Up to 18 hours of seminary credit can be attained in this way, resulting in a 78-hour Master of Divinity or 48-hour Master of Arts degree taken through the Seminary. This is one way in which Asbury Seminary is working to reduce educational expenses for students, helping them expedite their degree by utilizing appropriate past undergraduate courses, and providing students an easy pathway to move from seminary into the ministry to which God has called them.

*Master of Divinity*

96 / 78

CREDITS

WITH ADVANCED STANDING

*Master of Arts*

60 / 48

CREDITS

WITH ADVANCED STANDING

**Scholarship support** is the most crucial method through which students can leave Asbury Seminary debt-free. A major goal of the Seminary is to raise enough scholarship support that no student will have to take on federal loans and thereby leave seminary burdened by student debt. Asbury Seminary is not supported officially by any denomination. Although some denominational conferences and churches, as well as foundations, do give scholarship help, we depend primarily upon individual donors to provide scholarships for our students, through endowed, restricted, or general scholarships. In this way, our donors sow into our students’ lives and ministries, an investment that reaps immeasurable dividends in God’s Kingdom on Earth.

Asbury Seminary strives in every way possible to lower the cost of a theological education for our students. Our goal is for our graduates to leave with little or no student debt. In this way, they are free to answer the call of God upon their lives, no matter where that call may take them and regardless of the level of remuneration they may receive.



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.

### 2016 Dates:

February 19-21

Seattle, WA

March 18-20, 2016

St. Luke United Methodist Church  
Columbus, GA

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





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