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THE GRACE-FILLED LIFE

LIVING OUT THE MEANS OF GRACE IN DIFFICULT TIMES



The theme for this year at Asbury Seminary is the Means of Grace. We have spent the year helping our community to grow in the means of grace. The “ordinary” means of grace are all the things we explored in our previous issue on this theme; namely, prayer, receiving the Eucharist, reading and hearing God’s Word, and so forth.

I think of these means of grace like bridges which connect us to God. Christ is, of course, the only “bridge” between God the Father and his church, but Christ himself uses a wide range of “means” to communicate his grace to us. In the same way, the church has always understood that Christ is really the only true “means of grace.” But, God uses many “means” to communicate the grace of Christ to us. It is Christ himself who uses prayer to convey his hope and healing to us. It is Christ who speaks to us through the Scriptures. It is Christ who comes to us with his “real presence” through the Eucharist, and so forth. So, all the means of grace are intended to communicate more of the fullness of Christ into our lives.

But these “ordinary” means of grace are not the only means of grace at God’s disposal. There are also the “extraordinary” means of grace. This is where God requisitions for his use the various “challenges” and “crises” and “disasters” which we encounter as a part of a fallen world. The Scripture teaches us that Adam and Eve’s sin, known as “the Fall” did not simply result in their personal guilt, but had cosmic ramifications. Paul teaches us in Romans 8 that the “creation was subjected to futility” and that the “whole creation is groaning” (Rom. 8:20, 22). This means that devastating earthquakes, destructive hurricanes, powerful tornadoes, and, yes, viruses like the COVID-19 are all signs of a broken world. The world is out of kilter with its original design. This means that we will face hardships, setbacks, and, someday, even death itself. God will someday overturn them all when he returns and sets things right again. But, we live in the “in-between” time. We live in the gap between what is and what will someday be. We live in the gap between the original design and the current brokenness. Yet, Scripture teaches us that God is able to use everything to advance his purposes in the world. In Ezekiel God even uses the evil divination of a wicked, unbelieving king to direct his purposes to the nation of Israel (Ezek. 21:18-23). God used the storm on the Sea of Galilee to

reveal to the disciples the true glory of his Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ (Mark 4:35-41). God used Paul’s imprisonment. This is why Paul would later write to the Christians in Rome (who were suffering under persecution, famine and disease) that God causes “all things to work together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). When Paul says “all” he truly does mean all. This is what is meant by the “extraordinary” means of grace. God even uses global pandemics which disrupt the whole world for his greater purposes.

Beginning in early 2020 the Coronavirus began to sweep across the world. By March much of the world was on lockdown and we were all experiencing a crisis unlike anything we have experienced in many years. It is remarkable how all the things we would have been thinking about like March Madness, the 2020 Presidential election, the Kentucky Derby, a trip to Disney World, or even something as simple as going to a movie or a restaurant were suddenly wiped off the “front page,” or our calendars. We were suddenly facing new realities. Many of us found ourselves unable to leave our homes. It seemed like overnight our homes also became our offices, our schools for our children, our only place to receive meals, and even the place where we worshipped, as our services were broadcast into our homes through livestream. It seems like overnight we were all having to learn to do everything in new ways.

The “extraordinary” means of grace are given for times like this. God imparts a special measure of grace which enables us to walk through “once-in-a-lifetime” type situations. One example of this which Wesley taught was what he called “dying grace.” This is an expression of God’s grace which meets us at the time of our death. We cannot fully prepare for every aspect of death, so God sends a special measure of grace to help us in that hour which can only come to us in that moment of need. So, by extension, God can use calamities or disappointments in our lives to extend grace and to summon us back to himself in new and vibrant ways.

What are some ways God met us through this crisis? We have all learned how important fellowship and physical touch is in forming Christian community. Yes, we have learned about how to use Zoom, Facebook, SKYPE and WhatsApp in more creative ways. But, have you also noticed that deep longing inside you to meet face-to-face and to reach out and touch someone out of love and compassion? You never know what you have until it has been taken away. With all the benefits of technology, there is no real replacement for personal embodiment. That’s at the heart



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.

of the doctrine of the incarnation. John 3:16 does not say, “For God so loved the world that he...sent us an email.” It does not say, “that he... gave us a ‘thumbs up’ on Facebook” or he “sent us a Zoom invite.” No, the incarnation is about God sending us his one and only Son, the word becoming flesh and walking among us (John 1:14). During this time, we have also been taught by the Lord to learn afresh how to be people of faith, not fear. It is easy for fear to grip us, but God grants us a special measure of faith to discern his presence with us during these difficult days. God has also used the COVID-19 virus to vividly remind us that the church is not a collection of buildings, but the redeemed people of God in the world. From the biblical perspective, you cannot “cancel church,” you can only close buildings. It is important to remember that the coronavirus first hit the USA during the season of Lent. This is the 40-day period when the church traditionally asks believers to “give up” something. My wife and I decided to “give up” red meat during Lent this year. It was a small thing to give up, but it helped to keep us mindful that we were in Lent. Little did we know that things would rapidly unfold in the world in such a way that we were going to give up a lot more than red meat. We ended up giving up a lot more than we could have imagined in those early days. But, the new losses, and the laments which accompanied those losses, have drawn us closer to the heart of God and more aware of the pain and suffering of the world.

So, let's receive God's “extraordinary” means of grace in these tumultuous days. We often think of God's presence in the calm, but He is also the God of the storm. He is the Sovereign Lord over the whole earth. The promises of God are just as true in the storm as they are in times of peace.

Above the tumult of uncertainty stands the God of certainty!

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

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Living a Life of Grace

Asbury Seminary faculty and staff reflect on the Means of Grace:



Prayer: Dr. Steve Martyn

Prayer is listed as the first means of grace because it's what the Lord gave us as an example of how a living, loving and growing relationship with God the Father unfolds. We pray because it connects us with God, allows us to be part of His work in the world, and strengthens our relationship with other believers. Through prayer, we receive and return love to the Father, and prayer allows us to grow as individuals and a community.

Challenge: *Take a three-minute prayer retreat with our Jesuit brothers. This is downloadable as an app.**



Scripture: Dr. Ruth Ann Reese

Scripture reading is one of the main ways we can learn more about God, His character and how He would have his followers live. It's so important that we learn and memorize scripture because as the heart is, the mouth speaks. The Holy Spirit is the means of knowing and understanding scripture. We can open ourselves to the Holy Spirit's leading through study, meditation and memorization. These practices allow us to fully engage in this means of grace throughout the day.

Challenge: *Read the Bible every day. The Bible Project offers a Read Scripture app for download.+*



Fasting: Dr. Mike Voigts

Jesus directly addresses fasting in Matthew 6 and assumes that His hearers have already incorporated fasting into the rhythm of their lives. We don't fast because it's healthy or good for us. The focus is not on what we're giving up, but on how God provides for us. If you choose to include this practice into your life, you may find that as you break the fast, you come to appreciate God's blessings even more.

Challenge: *Choose something to give up for a day, a week or a month. It could be social media, a type of food or a show. Use the extra time to draw closer to God with prayer and scripture reading.*



Banding: Donna Covington

A band is a group of 3-5 people who meet regularly to pray, read, and hold each other accountable. Banding is important because it helps us grow in community in the grace and love of Jesus Christ. Banding joins believers together in a networking community that leads us into discipleship practice of accountability and Christian love.

Challenge: *Join a D.N.A. group or start your own. Learn how with this free download!***



Links:

***Prayer:** <https://www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer>

+Scripture: <https://bibleproject.com>

****D.N.A. Group Download:** <http://asbury.to/howtoband>



Healthy Living:
Robin Ferraro

Healthy living is more than diet and exercise. It's a wholesome lifestyle without being constrained to a set of rules. Our bodies are the temple of God, so it's important that we take care of them. The Bible shows the importance of not only taking care of our bodies, but also not allowing our bodies to be slaves to anything, specifically food or sex. Healthy living digs deep into the nutritional and healing properties of consuming real food, the benefits of maintaining an active lifestyle, and learning how to observe a Sabbath.

Challenge: *Make time to do something healthy today and do it again tomorrow! You could fast from sugar, go for a run or bike ride, stretch for 30 minutes, prayer walk, or complete an online workout.*



Communion:
Dr. Jeff Frymire

John Wesley refers to communion as the "grand channel whereby we receive the grace of God." Communion is offered for all of God's children. In some sense, the entirety of worship is a means of grace, but communion allows believers to respond to God's grace. When we take communion, we receive God's forgiveness, reconciliation and healing through the representation of his body and blood. By taking the bread and the cup, we celebrate both the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Challenge: *Savor God's gift of life the next time you take communion.*



Worship:
Dr. Jonathan Powers

Corporate worship offers believers an opportunity to join with like-minded others in love. Grace is God giving His very self to us. Worship allows us to thank God for His love, ask for forgiveness of sins, and discern God's will in community. Through worship, we are encouraged, challenged and convicted by God and then are sent forth into the world. Worship is not only a proclamation of God's word, but also a participatory experience through the sacraments.

Challenge: *Even if you can't attend church in person, find an online service to attend. Whether in person or online, invite a friend to share the experience with you.*



Acts of Service:
Dr. Timothy C. Tennent

Acts of service, also known as works of piety, speak to how we act in the world. Serving others allows us to be the church to the world. John Wesley realized that it was not only important to be contemplative, but to go from that time of internal reflection to serve others in tangible ways. By serving God in the world, we become more like Christ. These acts can be helping your neighbor, visiting the sick, feeding the hungry or participating in social justice initiatives. These acts of service allow us to lay our lives down for others, as Jesus did for us.

Challenge: *Love God and love your neighbor by finding a way to meet a physical need. Deliver groceries. Send a card. Do yard work. Or volunteer with a reputable organization.*





PRAYING IN A PANDEMIC

How do we respond to COVID-19
from a perspective of awakening?

by Dr. David Thomas

We've all been hit hard by unprecedented safety measures, a flood of unnerving news, and the interruption of fundamental human connections. How are we to discern our response in prayer?

Obviously this is a moment for the Church to adapt, to pivot creatively in our use of technology. It is a juncture summoning our A-game as leaders, responding with humility and wisdom and sound theology. We find ourselves unexpectedly at a point of strengthening community remotely, caring even more intentionally for the vulnerable and immuno-suppressed, and loving our neighbors. We're giving bigger tips in the drive-through, sending encouragement notes to healthcare workers, and praying for government decision-makers.

But it is also a moment for us as intercessors to gently, firmly allow the reality and gravity of our circumstances to register in the deep places of our souls. COVID-19 has appeared on the scene as a great equalizer. The famous and the commoner, all ages and nationalities are now seeing clearly what we have shared in common all along: our

mortality. The truth of our vulnerability. How profoundly humbling it is that a simple microscopic organism is essentially bringing our entire planet to a halt.

Across the New Room community, we've often said that maybe the best word we know for describing our need for God in our day is "desperate," a claim which suddenly seems more relevant than before. We've acknowledged that, yes, desperation can lead to mistakes and excess. We don't want to be about fear-mongering right now; Christians hold out the one true hope and comfort people need most. But we are also honest, compassionately inviting all those who will to confront the baffled urgency of our moment, and to let that weight bend our knees in prayer.

We choose to let COVID-19 burn off the fog of the myth of continuity—that ruse we've become accustomed to in the West, having been lulled into satisfaction by years of today being much like yesterday, tomorrow expected to be much like today. Debunking these deceptions of self-sufficiency—that high competency has not prevented

current calamity—is hard to face. We would rather not. Right now though, increasingly, we have little choice. “May your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need” (Ps 79:8 [NIV]) is actually how many people are beginning to feel. Loving support of one another to enter such a baptism of honesty by way of prayer could be a threshold of awakening.

Such a move toward prayer is nothing more than our inheritance. On November 1, 1755, Lisbon, Portugal was slammed by a devastating earthquake, estimated to have registered as high as 9.0 on the Richter scale. Three main shocks were followed by tsunamis, compounding the destruction with floods. Damage was widespread, reaching as far south as Morocco. It took weeks for details of the disaster to reach England, after which George II proclaimed February 6, 1756

a day of fasting and prayer. In response, Charles Wesley composed a hymn on the judgment of God based on Revelation 16 and 17, and his brother John published “Serious Thoughts Occasioned by The Late Earthquake at Lisbon,” in which he wrote,

“Now, what help? What wisdom can prevent, what strength resist, the blow? What money can purchase, I will not say deliverance, but an hour’s reprieve? Poor honourable fool, where are now thy titles? Wealthy fool, where is now thy golden god? If any thing can help, it must be prayer. But what wilt thou pray to?”

A century later, in his “Lectures on Revival of Religion,” Charles Finney would issue the same call for Christians to respond to “peculiar and alarming events” and “the state of public health” as means by which “God may indicate His will to a people” that revival is possible.

“This is a moment to seize the situation in prayer.”

We know that uncertainty and crisis alone do not make the case for awakening. If that were so, the Great Depression of the 1930s would have been a golden age for revival—which it was not. And yet there have been those Christians, like layman Jeremiah Lanphier in the 1850s, who had the wisdom and courage to steward the crisis of his moment as a seedbed of awakening. When America was collapsing into its worst-ever economic condition, Lanphier called the out-of-work and unsettled to a daily hour of prayer. Eventually, even the *Journal of Commerce*, a financial paper, urged its readers to “steal awhile away from Wall Street

and every worldly care, and spend an hour about mid-day in humble, hopeful prayer.” Eight months later, 50,000 of New York City’s 800,000 inhabitants had come to Christian faith.

Let’s not squander this moment and its potential in prayer. We can help each other “make good use of every opportunity you have” (Eph 5:16 [GN]) to steward this turning point. It will take measured, skillful shepherding in a time of distress to point people to the altars of their own hearts. But it will also call for boldness to name the fact that all along we’ve been contending with a much more universally fatal virus called sin, against which there is no immunity and only one effective Cure. Sheltering in place everywhere are people needing Jesus, facing our human frailty and pondering what lies ahead. This is a moment to seize the situation in prayer. Now could be a time when our closet becomes the most important place of our ministry. Now could be a threshold of awakening.

Dr. David Thomas is a seasoned pastor, teacher, and expert on leading people in the practice of traveling prayer. He serves as a senior adviser to the New Room Conference and Network





FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: DR. ELLEN L. MARMON

Professor of Christian Discipleship

Learning that lasts starts on “the edge of your own incompetence.” Dr. Ellen Marmon, Professor of Christian Discipleship, learned that phrase from her mentor while she completed her Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky. Now as the director of Asbury Seminary’s Doctor of Ministry Program, she weaves that philosophy into the D.Min. experience. The three-year applied doctoral degree program creates opportunities for participants to develop the humble posture of learner and embrace a season of intentional academic and spiritual formation.

“Discipleship is more than what you memorize, and we’re not just brains on a stick,” she said, referencing author James Smith.

Discipleship starts by recognizing a soul gap, a need to know more about God and experience God authentically. It’s a whole body experience that embraces a lifelong, intentional journey with God and others. As she tells her classes, there’s no surefire discipleship program, but there are practices and dispositions that are essential to spiritual growth.

“We’ve been focusing on the means of grace this year at Asbury Seminary, and those are historically tried and true practices—prayer, really being in God’s word, worship, the spiritual disciplines, being with believers, serving people in our community outside of the local church—these all open up room for God to really do his work,” she said.

Most of the students in the D.Min. Program have completed their M.Div. and have at least three years (usually more) of ministry experience. With high competencies and leadership capacities, it’s unusual for these women and men to encounter something completely unfamiliar, like a five-chapter dissertation.

“But I actually tie this into discipleship because this is where researching and writing a dissertation will become part of their own discipleship experience. At what other time are we more aware of our need for God than when we have bumped into the end of our own ingenuity, and we don’t know what’s on the other side?” she said. “I mean that’s basically where you start discipleship, especially with adults.”

As director of the program, Dr. Marmon does her share of academic and administrative tasks, but her role is also pastoral. She and her team have found that ministry leaders are often isolated and long for shared experiences that

they don’t have to organize, but in which they just participate.

“We’re really committed to students’ academic rigor,” she said. “But if the students haven’t changed as men and women of God, by the time the experience is over, then we feel like we failed completely. So we just try to create really fertile spaces. And then we’ve seen it over and over again, how God uses that space.”

Before Dr. Marmon guided others on their faith journey at the Seminary, she actively participated in her church’s discipleship ministry. She moved to Lexington, Ky., after undergrad and joined Centenary United Methodist Church. The church had a significant focus on prayer, scripture reading, discipleship classes and learning more about the Holy Spirit. Dr. Marmon fully engaged and when the Christian education director left, the senior pastor invited Dr. Marmon to lead adult ministries, part-time.

In less than a year, she was the full-time pastor of adult discipleship. She earned her M.A. in Christian education while working full-time at Centenary, and she joined the Seminary faculty full-time in 2005, after also completing her Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky. She still attends Centenary, but now in a civilian role, volunteering to substitute teach Sunday School classes, directing traffic in the parking lot, and often participating in memorial services for the saints who influenced her faith walk so much when she first arrived in Lexington.

Dr. Ellen L. Marmon, professor of Christian Discipleship, received an M.A. in English from the University of Kentucky; an M.A. in Christian Education from Asbury Theological Seminary; and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Kentucky. Dr. Marmon served at Centenary United Methodist Church in Lexington, Ky., for 16 years before joining the Asbury Seminary faculty full-time in 2005. She has also taught discipleship in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya. Dr. Marmon has also worked with local church leaders in Darwin, Australia; Papua, New Guinea; Manila, Philippines, and Bihar, India. She has co-led multiple mission teams to Es-carpment, Kenya, outside Nairobi since 2002.



FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: DR. RICHARD L. GRAY

Professor of Leadership and Christian Ministries

Dr. Richard Gray is used to being first. He was the first African American to be converted at a Youth for Christ camp in Pennsylvania. He was the first African American to live full-time on the campus of a Bible College in Arizona. He was the first person in his family to earn a Ph.D., and in 1999, he became the first African American professor at Asbury Theological Seminary. His classes have enlightened Seminary students for the past 21 years, and during his tenure, Asbury Seminary graduated its first two African American Ph.D. students.

“You are paving the way for more of your people.’ That’s what I was told at the first Bible school,” Dr. Gray said. “I might not be the best example for my people, but I feel like I have enough sensitivity and a deep enough understanding of the majority evangelical culture that I know how to be within that context without causing offense, so I can teach the students at Asbury Seminary in a way that wakes them up some, but is not real offensive to them.”

During his first semester at Asbury Seminary, students labeled him racist, bigot and militant. But as Dr. Gray created a classroom environment of trust and grace, they started listening, talking and changing. By the end of his first year, he was informed that he was one of the most popular professors on campus.

“I’m in my 21st year at Asbury Seminary and it’s been the faculty, administration and the students that have communicated with words and actions that this a safe place for me,” he said.

His classes in leadership, discipleship, majority/minority relationships, and black religious studies continue to challenge students. In this semester’s Cross-Cultural Leadership class, a conversation started around what it meant to be African American versus American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS). As the conversation unfolded, Dr. Gray noticed that his white students became silent as they listened, then asked questions and began to learn from their black classmates.

“To be able to do that with bright white students or African American students, I don’t know how to explain how significant and important that is for me and to know the nuancing of being able to do that in a way that

doesn’t turn them off academically, but ignites them,” he said.

In and out of the classroom, Dr. Gray’s life exemplifies the grace and forgiveness he receives from God and from others who have been influential in his life.

“The residue of their grace is what pours out of me into my students,” he said. “It’s just a product of a lot of people over 55 years who have been Jesus in my life, so my quest is to be Jesus in the life of those I come across.”

In 2012, Dr. Gray helped to found the Harry Hosier Institute on the Florida Dunnam campus. This Institute pays tribute to Harry Hosier, an African American preacher who travelled and preached widely with Francis Asbury during the second Great Awakening. The Institute annually gives a preaching award in his honor, to a deserving student.

Dr. Gray is currently working on books based on selected axioms of Christian Leadership and African American religious history. He’s also expanding a previous manuscript “Beneath the Lode of the Cross.” Dr. Gray plans to retire at the end of the Spring 2021 semestwand will teach classes as an affiliate professor for the Fall 2021 semester. He and his wife, Coral, have been married 43 years.

*Dr. Richard L. “Rick” Gray is professor of Leadership and Christian Ministries. He currently serves the Leadership department at Asbury Theological Seminary on its Florida Dunnam Campus. He has published numerous books, including *The Journal of African American Christian Thought* (UMI Publishing, 2008) and *Beneath the Lode of the Cross* (Evening Star Enterprise, 2008). He has received numerous community service awards, including awards from the Los Angeles Urban League Pasadena Branch, County of Los Angeles, City of Pasadena, California State Assembly and United States Congress. Dr. Gray was a PEW Graduate Fellow (Christian College Coalition) and a member of the International Society of Theta Phi.*



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STUDENT HIGHLIGHT: STEPHANIE M. RAGLIN

Pastor, Embry Chapel AME Church in Elizabethtown, Ky

M.A. in Christian Leadership, Asbury Seminary, 2010 / Master of Divinity, Asbury Seminary, 2017

Doctor of Ministry, Graduating 2022

Battling with her own demons, Stephanie M. Raglin didn't think she was fit to live based on where she'd been, what she'd done and what she'd been taught in the church. But through God's grace, she found hope, healing and recovery at a rehab and therapy center in Louisville, Ky. Today, she serves as the Director of Programs at the Hope Center and is in her fourth charge at Embry Chapel AME Church in Elizabethtown, Ky.

As she worked through her rehab, she continued to build her relationship with God. Before, she knew about God, but she started developing a rich prayer life, listening and learning to be in His presence.

"The first thing I had to do was identify who God was for me," she said. "God can be anything that I need him to be at any given time. God is a triune God and because of that, God is all about relationship."

In 2002, she moved to Lexington to work at the Hope Center as a night monitor and in 2008 became a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor. With an interest to learn everything she could, she quickly advanced within the organization to become assistant director.

Stephanie works with the men's and women's recovery programs, as well as the Detention Center Recovery Program, working to make sure that each client receives the best possible care.

"To watch the men and women come into the program beat up and beaten down, without a shot of hope and then to watch their lives transform over time [is very rewarding,]" she said.

Stephanie calls the women she works with "roses," likening their transformation to a flower that receives the tending and care it needs. When the girls arrive, the ground of their lives is hard and brittle. But after time and care, the new branches come forth.

One young woman entered the program knowing about

God, but because of trauma in her life was completely broken, emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually. Through teaching, time and healing, this woman came to the realization that the God she knew today was different than the God she'd been taught about.

The Hope Center houses more than 800 individuals each night, offers 6-12 month recovery programs, and provides a Detention Center Recovery Program for both men and women. The programs teach the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and the 28 lessons of recovery dynamics, and offer mental, medical health and other services with community partners to provide a safe environment to gain and sustain sobriety.

"Behaviors haven't develop in just a few days, not even six months," Stephanie said. "But if we give them the tools that they need, then we've done our job. We lay [the tools] at your feet and it's up to you to pick them up, apply them and take them with you when you go."

Each year, the University of Kentucky Center on Drug and Alcohol Research BHOS team conducts an annual outcome evaluation for the Hope Center. Six months after going through the Hope Center's recovery program, only 10 percent of clients reported any illegal drug use.

"The reality of recovery is that no one can ever tell who's going to make it and who's not," she said. "You can't judge a book by its cover. I've come to the realization that recovery is not about how much time you have in the process, but about the quality of sobriety."

Stephanie is currently pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree at Asbury Seminary. Her dissertation "Evaluates the Disparities of Men and Women Clergy in Leadership Roles in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Namely the 13th Episcopal District." She is at her fourth charge at Embry Chapel AME Church in Elizabethtown, Ky.



ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT: DEANNA SPANGLER

Author, Orthopedic Specialist

M.A. in Spiritual Formation, Asbury Seminary, 2017.

For more than 25 years, Deanna lived her life without hope. A victim of childhood abuse, traumatized by her mom's repeated suicide attempts and generational addictions to drugs and alcohol, Deanna sought survival and the promise of a better future through prostitution. Addicted to drugs and a victim of violence, she pursued a career in the porn industry. While still in the industry, she met Jesus and continued her journey to freedom and healing at Refuge for Women in Lexington, Ky. Now, she shares her story to show God's power, freedom, forgiveness and grace.

"I have a life that is unrecognizable today," Deanna said. "That can happen for anybody. Even if God doesn't remove every single situation or circumstance when it comes to the consequences of that lifestyle, our life can still be unrecognizable. That's just amazing to me. I want to be honest about the good, the bad, the ugly, so that people could see full on this is what God has brought me from."

Her mom introduced her to sexually explicit films when she was five. Deanna thought her body was the only way to find acceptance. She and her sister imitated the scenes they'd seen on television, thinking this was normal child's play.

"It's really interesting because when you're a child, you don't think it's doing anything to you," she said.

"You just assume everybody's been introduced to this. You talk about things that you think everybody's talking about. You do things that you think is normal for an eight-year-old to do."

Deanna started working at Hooters at 17. While there, she was invited to participate in a modeling competition with the grand prize a layout in *Playboy*. What started with wearing a skimpy outfit and getting a little bit of attention, led to a career in the sex industry.

At first she was met with limos, mansions and famous people, but she soon realized the glamor only masked a painful reality. She and other women in the industry were frequently in and out of emergency rooms, constantly tested for sexually transmitted diseases and often addicted to drugs and alcohol to cope with the physical and emotional pain.

"It was so bad that when the camera wasn't on my face, I would cry in my pillow," she said. "I had somebody walk off set because he's like, 'I can't continue to do this to her.'"

But this was her job and the only way she knew to survive. She worked in the industry about 10 years before realizing she had to change. One of her fans drove across the country to meet her. Afterwards, he returned home and committed suicide because he couldn't reconcile the fact that Deanna was a real person, not an object he had watched perform. For

“I want to be honest about the good, the bad, the ugly, so that people could see full on this is what God has brought me from.”

the first time, Deanna started to realize how her career affected others.

“This man took his life because his addiction was so bad,” she said. “Even when the addiction isn’t bad, just what I’ve seen it do to relationships and marriages and just how humiliated people feel and the shame and torture that it brings. I had no idea because I was just trying to make a living.”

Deanna took the first step in her journey to sobriety and wholeness when she told one person about everything. Her mentor helped her walk through the recovery process. She stopped performing, went back to school for holistic health and started attending church. Although she knew and accepted that Jesus died for her, she had no idea how to break free from her past and start a new life.

“A lot of people will say, ‘Get out of the industry. Porn is bad. Porn is sinful,’” she said. “But nobody is there to walk you through, okay, ‘Well, how do I make a new life? What else do I do?’”

A year after leaving the industry, she came to Refuge for Women in Lexington, Ky., to heal from trauma and develop life skills. Refuge for Women offers women leaving the sex industry through trafficking or exploitation an individualized plan in a therapeutic atmosphere that provides healing classes, faith-based discipleship opportunities, recovery meetings and job training.

“I needed people to re-raise me as an adult and a rehab wasn’t going to do that,” Deanna said. “I didn’t need to get clean and sober, though most of the times [people leaving the industry] do. I had a program that helped me do that. I needed to learn how to relate to other human beings in a non-sexual way and be able to trust what it looked like when people weren’t going to use me for sex and figure out friendships and all of

that stuff. Refuge helped me to do that.”

For the first time in her life, Deanna could fall asleep without wondering if someone was going to hurt her, come home drunk, or yell at her. After completing the program at Refuge, Deanna stayed with a host family for two years. They included her in their family and introduced her to authentic faith. She enrolled in Bible Study Fellowship, but longed to learn even more about Jesus. Her host family lived near Asbury Seminary. Deanna frequently saw the road signs for the Seminary and took those as a sign that she should apply. She did and was accepted.

She completed her M.A. in Spiritual Formation in 2017. While at Asbury Seminary, she met and married her husband, Matt. They are expecting twins in 2020.

“[My time at Asbury Seminary] was formation for the sake of others,” she said. “A lot of times that gets left out, but all the self-formation and self-growth is only beneficial if that ripples out onto the people around you.”

In Fall 2019, she published *Purchased: Leaving the Sex Trade*. Her book tells her story of childhood abuse, generational addictions, and her life in the sex industry. But her writing also depicts her journey to find her true savior Jesus Christ and how that encounter changed her life from one of captivity to one of healing, hope, freedom and wholeness. She hopes her book empowers others to make necessary changes and find the help that they need. Her book is available on Amazon.



Listen to Deanna on the Thrive with Asbury Seminary Podcast, Ep.11.

Go to thrive.asburyseminary.edu to listen, or subscribe and download wherever you get your podcasts.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHT: CHRISTIAN SELVARATNAM

Church Planter, Leader of G2. Priest in the Church of England and an Ordained Pioneer Minister. Doctor of Ministry, Asbury Seminary, Graduating 2020.

“My heart is to help our church to be strong in mission. There’s an army of young leaders that need to be raised up.”

On a retreat, God promised Christian Selvaratnam that he would make him famous for his spiritual children. As church planter and leader of G2, a café style approach to church planting, Christian trains church planters using the ancient model of master, apprentice and interns.

“The best way to train a pioneer is to have an expert pioneer watch them,” Christian said.

For his Doctor of Ministry dissertation, Christian is researching “The Craft of Church Planting,” to make relevant the ancient practice of apprenticeship within church planting.

Christian’s church began in 2005 with a team of 12 people committed to serving, leading, giving and inviting people. The church now has two services and unlike a traditional service, G2 invites discussion and interaction as part of the sermon.

“The whole proposal of the church was an experiment,” Christian said. “We didn’t know who we might reach, [but wanted a place] for people just trying to dip into church.”

Three times each year, the church does Ignition Sunday. Following Paul’s admonition to Timothy to “ignite the gift that’s within you,” the church leadership invites four people who haven’t spoken before to share for five minutes. Each person receives a coach that helps them gain confidence sharing with others.

“This is one of the favorite Sundays,” Christian said.

A few times per year, G2 also hosts the Mosaic service, which offers a variety of activities around a particular theme, such as Bible reading and prayer. Participants can go from room to room to engage in activities or presentations.

“When you come on Mosaic Sunday, we give you a

ASBURY SEMINARY

VOICES

buffet menu, and you can choose where you want to go,” Christian said.

Christian is also tackling the challenge of training future church planters, helping them to couple a theological degree with practical skills.

“My heart is to help our church to be strong in mission,” he said. “There’s an army of young leaders that need to be raised up. Millennials are missing from the church...because they’re not being engaged. If they’re engaged and someone believes in them, they give their life to it.”

Even before starting his D.Min., Christian mentored future preachers by meeting with them, helping them develop a sermon, providing practice sessions, and offering helpful critique following the message.

“Churches could be the centers of excellence where a master could train up church planters and help them perfect their skills under supervision,” Christian said.

Christian is a priest in the Church of England and an Ordained Pioneer Minister. Christian is married to Amanda and they have 3 children.



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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.



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IRA Rollover

If you are 70½ or older you may be interested in a way to lower the income and taxes from your IRA withdrawals while helping Asbury Seminary. Some benefits of an IRA rollover:

- Avoid taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA
- Satisfy your required minimum distribution for the year
- Reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions
- Make a gift that is not subject to the 50% deduction limits on charitable gifts
- Help further the work and mission of the Kingdom

HUNDREDFOLD INITIATIVES

FUNDRAISING UPDATE*



CAMPAIGN FUND: Supporting strategic impact where needed most

Goal: \$15,400,000

Raised: \$14,083,187



CHURCH PLANTING: Equipping 1,000 church planters

Goal: \$5,000,000

Raised: \$4,710,127



ENHANCING ESTES CHAPEL: Improving the heart of our Wilmore campus

Goal: \$1,500,000

Raised: \$1,561,928



ENDOWING CHAIR OF THEOLOGY: Confirming our commitment to biblical training

Goal: \$2,500,000

Raised: \$365,773



ENRICHING HISPANIC AND GLOBAL PROGRAMS: Developing concentrated master's programs to serve growing populations

Goal: \$1,000,000

Raised: \$1,383,050



GROWING SCHOLARSHIPS: Liberating students from debt to sow where God leads

Goal: \$40,000,000

Raised: \$33,989,435



SUPPORTING SEEDBED: Resourcing clergy and laity around the world

Goal: \$2,000,000

Raised: \$3,911,868



DEFERRED GIFTS: Providing gifts in the future through estate planning and life income plans

Goal: \$32,600,000

Raised: \$36,322,761

*As of 05/11/20

FROM THE ARCHIVES:

Taken from the January 15, 1969 Herald

Prayer Never Fails

By J.C. McPheeters

President Emeritus, Asbury Theological Seminary



LAWS FOR ASKING

The laws which govern effectual prayer are simple, brief, and unembellished with academic and technical terms.

First and foremost is the law of asking. The very act of coming to God in prayer is a step of faith, as stated in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews: "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Jesus said: "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7, 8).

The Apostle James says in his epistle: "Ye have not because ye ask not" (4:2). Many of the rich treasures of God are obtained only through asking. When we fail to ask, we fail to receive.

Our asking must be in the name of Christ. Jesus said: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13,14). The last vestige of selfish motive must be exchanged for the glory of Christ before we can receive that for which we ask.

Our asking must be with humility and repentance: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14).

The Apostle John tells us that we must ask according to God's will: "And this is the confidence that he have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (I John 5:14).

Our asking is to be accompanied by faith. Jesus said: "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt 21:22).

Our asking is not to be confined to the closet alone, but

with others also. Jesus said: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 19,20).

WHAT TO ASK FOR

God gives instruction in His word concerning certain things that we are to ask for.

We are to ask God for salvation, as indicated by Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost. Quoting from the prophet Joel,

Peter said: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

We are to ask God for the healing of the sick. The Apostle James says: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (5:14).

We are to ask God to send forth laborers into the harvest field. Jesus said: "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2).

We are to ask God for all men, and especially for earthly rulers. Timothy said in his first epistle: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (2:1,2).

We are to ask God for the Holy Spirit. Jesus said: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts until your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" (Luke 11:13). In all of our asking there is no more important request than for the inner cleansing and endowment which comes in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"

(Matt. 7:7, 8)

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News & Events

Asbury Seminary Moves Spring Commencement to Fall 2020

Asbury Seminary announces that spring commencement is moved to fall 2020 due to COVID-19. Graduation ceremonies, along with all of the normal celebrative events, will be held on both the Florida Dunnam and Kentucky campuses on November 7 and 14, respectively. Students will have their degrees conferred after the close of the spring or summer term when their degree work is completed.

Calvin Institute for Christian Worship Grant Awarded to Asbury Theological Seminary

Asbury Theological Seminary received a \$15,000 grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship that will fund a year-long Vital Worship Grants Program to promote worship and faith formation at the Seminary. Starting June 2020, the program seeks to cultivate new expressions of hymn-singing at the Seminary by introducing a globally diverse diet of hymns and by strengthening understanding of the contexts in which songs were created.

Asbury Seminary Faculty Win Multiple Biblical Foundation Book Awards

Dr. Craig Keener, Asbury Theological Seminary F.M. and Ada Thompson Professor of Biblical Studies, and Dr. Bill Arnold, Paul S. Amos Professor of Old Testament Interpretation, received Biblical Foundation Book Awards from the Center for Biblical Studies. Dr. Arnold's book *The World around the Old Testament: The People and Places of the Ancient Near East* received first place in the Old Testament category. Dr. Keener's book *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels* received first place in the New Testament category and was also chosen as the Biblical Foundations Book of the Year 2019.

Asbury Seminary Faculty Wins PROSE Award



Dr. Ben Witherington III, Jean R. Amos Professor of New Testament for Doctoral Studies, is the co-winner of the Professional and Scholarly Excellence (PROSE) Award in the category of Theology and Religious studies for his book *Biblical Theology: The Convergence of the Canon*. The PROSE awards, administered by the American Association of Publishers, annually recognize the very best

in professional and scholarly publishing by bringing attention to distinguished books, journals and electronic content.

Asbury Seminary Professor Releases "C.S. Lewis and the Christian Worldview"

Dr. Michael Peterson, Professor of Philosophy of Religion, released *C.S. Lewis and the Christian Worldview* on February 13. In this Oxford University Press book, Dr. Peterson helps us understand Lewis' Christian worldview, including his famous arguments for God based on reason, morality and transcendent desire, as well as his ideas about Incarnation, Trinity and Atonement.

Asbury Seminary Receives KEMI Destiny Award for Workplace Safety

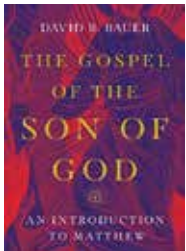
Asbury Theological Seminary received the Destiny Award for employee and workplace safety from Kentucky Employers' Mutual Insurance (KEMI) on December 9, 2019. KEMI presents this award annually to recognize what can be accomplished when organizations work together to improve safety within the workplace.

Counseling Graduate Molly Halpin Receives Award from KCA



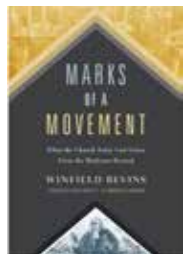
Asbury Seminary alumna Molly Ann Halpin recently received the Kentucky Counseling Association (KCA) Award for Graduate students. Each year, KCA invites nominations for this state award. Recipients must be graduate students in good standing, be a member of KCA and be involved within its leadership.

Dr. David Bauer Releases “The Gospel of the Son of God: An Introduction to Matthew”



Dr. David R. Bauer, Dean of the School of Biblical Interpretation and Ralph Waldo Beeson Professor of Inductive Biblical Studies, released *The Gospel of the Son of God: An Introduction to Matthew* in November 2019. His book studies the framework of Matthew with an inductive approach that provides a literary, theological and canonical focus.

“Marks of a Movement” by Winfield Bevins New & Noteworthy According to Christianity Today



Winfield Bevins, author, artist, pastor, teacher and director of church planting at Asbury Seminary, released *Marks of a Movement* in September 2019. Bevins is one of three authors that *Christianity Today* recognized in their New and Noteworthy list this fall.

Asbury Seminary Faculty Wins Christianity Today Book Award



Dr. Craig Keener, Asbury Theological Seminary F.M. and Ada Thompson Professor of Biblical Studies, received first place in *Christianity Today's* 2020 book awards in the biblical studies category.

In his book *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels*, Dr. Keener shows how the gospel writers followed the literary practices of writers in their day. His book explores the nature of ancient biography and urges readers to appreciate the writers' method and degree of accuracy in recounting the ministry of Jesus.

Linda Adams Named 2019 Distinguished Alumni of the Year



Asbury Theological Seminary is pleased to announce its 2019 Distinguished Alumna of the Year, Linda Adams of Holland, Michigan. Asbury Seminary's Distinguished Alumni award is designed to honor alumni who, in their personal lives and public ministries, exhibit the values of a theologically educated, sanctified, Spirit-filled, evangelistic ministry to spread scriptural holiness across the world.

Asbury Theological Seminary Welcomes New Trustees

Asbury Theological Seminary welcomed three new members to the Board of Trustees at their Fall 2019 board meeting in Orlando. New trustees are Scott Lees, Prabhu Singh and Andy Hurst. The Seminary welcomed three new trustees at the Spring 2020 board meeting. New trustees are Dr. Cynthia James, Rev. Kyle Ray and Rev. Charles Savage. The Board of Trustees serves Asbury Seminary by helping to shape and oversee its overarching policies.



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A Daily Discipleship Journey by J. D. Walt and friends

Many of us heard these words when we got hurt: "Rub some dirt in it!" Though bad for playground injuries, it's not bad for reading and reflecting on scripture. J.D. Walt rubs dirt in his musings on scripture in The Daily Text and it really heals. I read it every day as a part of my spiritual regimen.

- **Jorge Acevedo** Lead Pastor, Grace Church

Julie and I follow the Daily Text and find it to be deeply nourishing to our faith. I count it a privilege to write a weekly meditation on a Psalm which posts on the Daily Text each Sunday.

- **Timothy C. Tennent** President of Asbury Theological Seminary

The Daily Text has been timely, raw and on point for me. It gets to the heart of the text with a different voice than I would have heard on my own. I am thankful to receive this bread each day in my inbox.

- **Rev. Rebecca Rutherford** Associate Pastor, Spanish Fort United Methodist Church

The Seedbed Daily Text has become a real source of connection for our church. They eat it for breakfast and talk about it in their groups. At our daily prayer time, we can always count on someone quoting JD. This resource is a grace. Thanks, Seedbed.

- **Rev. Carolyn Moore** Pastor, Mosaic Church

I am continually amazed and blessed by the Spirit-anointed insights into Scripture found in the Daily Text. Communicated in such an engaging way, they are living water to my soul.

- **Stephen Seamands** Professor of Christian Doctrine Emeritus, Asbury Theological Seminary



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