

THE ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

HERALD

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UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES



THE ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY HERALD

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Marking the Moment: A New Season at Asbury Seminary



As I write, spring has come to Kentucky—a time of blooming flowers, renewed life, and vibrant hope. It is also a moment of deep reflection and thanksgiving at Asbury Theological Seminary, as we mark a pivotal season in our institutional life.

Over the past year, the Seminary has journeyed through a significant time of transition. In moments such as these, the Lord often provides exactly the leader we need, and in 2024, that leader was Dr. David J. Gyertson.

Dr. Gyertson stepped into the role of Interim President with wisdom, grace, and a steady hand. From the start, he embraced the Seminary's mission with humility and deep spiritual conviction. His leadership was marked not by self-promotion but by a tireless commitment to stewarding our institutional calling and preparing the way for our next chapter. On May 6, 2025, in Estes Chapel, the Board of Trustees presented a formal Resolution in Appreciation to Dr. Gyertson, thanking him for his collaborative and faith-filled leadership throughout the 2024–2025 academic year.

With his guidance and in alignment with the Board's strategic priorities, Dr. Gyertson helped the Seminary accomplish a great deal:

- He strengthened board governance by updating governing documents and clarifying executive responsibilities.
- He led the early phases of our Optimizing Missional Effectiveness (OME) initiative, setting the groundwork for sustainable programmatic and financial health.
- He realigned the Executive Leadership Team's structure and clarified roles to ensure a strong foundation for Dr. David Watson's incoming presidency.
- He championed a culture of listening and collaboration, prioritizing faculty and staff feedback and creating healthier forums for shared governance.
- He provided critical support to Advancement efforts, ensuring strong donor relationships and preparing the ground for future fundraising success.
- He also helped develop and deliver the transition plan that will enable President Watson to "hit the ground running" on July 1.

In each of these areas, Dr. Gyertson lived out the Seminary's call to steward our mission with both conviction and care. His legacy during this transitional year is one of progress, alignment, and spiritual depth—a true season of preparation for what God is doing next at Asbury.

Now, as we enter "the Watson years," we do so with joy and deep anticipation. President Watson, along with his wife Harriet, was warmly welcomed to the community in March, and we look forward to all that God will do through his Spirit-led leadership. But we also pause to give thanks. We mark this moment not just as a new beginning, but as a season of gratitude for the leadership that has brought us here.

As we reflect, I am reminded that transitions are not simply about moving forward—they are about honoring the faithfulness that has carried us thus far. And indeed, Dr. Gyertson's steady hand has helped us navigate this past year with grace, hope, and vision.



With full hearts, we say:

Thank you, Dr. Gyertson!

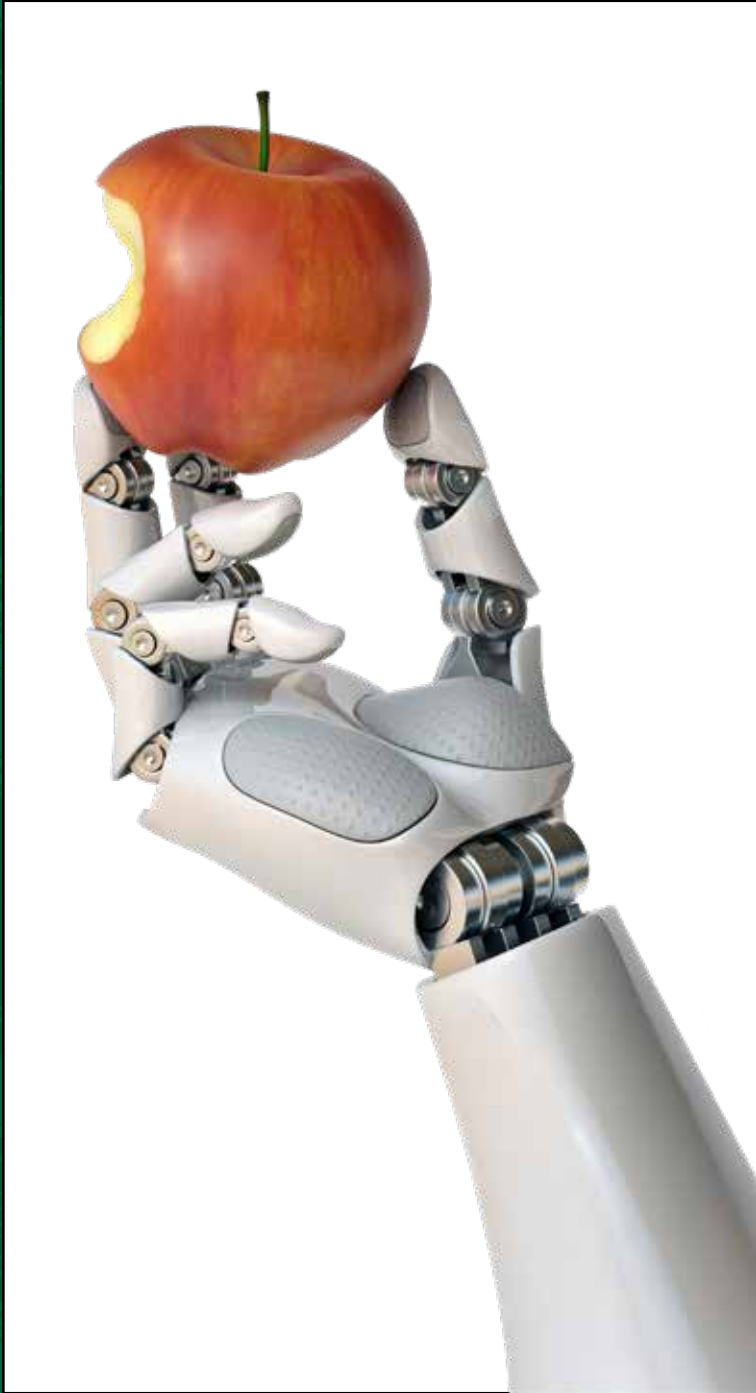
Welcome, Dr. Watson!

"To God be the glory—great things He has done!"



Helen Rhea Stumbo

Chair, Board of Trustees



Leading with Wisdom for the Future

by Dr. John Oswalt

Someone has said that knowledge is knowing what to do, whereas wisdom is knowing whether to do it.

There is a lot of wisdom in that statement itself. The ability to discern whether it is right or wrong to do something is a priceless possession. There is a great deal of sorrow in our culture produced by the attitude of, “Well, we could do it, so we did do it.” This is where the wisdom of experience comes into play. When we have seen the results of certain actions played out in multiple tragedies, we should know enough not to do those things anymore. Whether we have the capacity to do them is not the ruling question.

As we look at the realm of artificial intelligence, it appears that knowledge is overruling wisdom. Since we can build these kinds of machines, it is apparent that we should build them. We seem not to take into account, as Karl Marx did not, that humans are desperately fallen, and that fallen humans will not produce innocent results. Can we build sufficient controls? Possibly so – if we will. But suppose those controls will reduce “the bottom line” of the makers and the distributors? Not a very encouraging prospect.

So where does the Christian faith enter pictures like these? We believe that while God is not the great puppet master, he is the providential ruler of the cosmos. That being so, we can go forward in confidence, knowing that whatever the circumstances that may eventuate in a world of fallen humanity, God is able to make us victorious in them.

Even better than that, God, through Christ, actually lives within his people and can reproduce his character in us. This means, in Paul’s words, that “we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37). God does not promise to “fix” everything for us, but he does promise the resources to triumph in every situation. As the Scriptures say, “If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking” (James 1:5 NLT). This is good news. We can ask God to guide us toward the right actions to take in complex situations, and he will genuinely help us.

This is so important as we think about the future with all its unknowns. Wisdom will show us what works and what doesn’t work, regardless of the differing circumstances. These truths are disarmingly simple, and will even appear simplistic, but they are the distilled wisdom of the ages. For example, it

is never wise to lie. There is a humorous line that says, “The good thing about telling the truth about something is that you don’t have to remember what you said the last time you were asked about it.” The truth is never convenient, and it rarely serves my ends, but it will stand, and sooner or later, it will come out.

It is never wise to “puff up” yourself. That certainly flies in the face of today’s conventional wisdom, where public relations and appearances are so important. But once again, maintaining a façade becomes an intolerable burden over time. Rather, accept the person God has made you to be and discover ways to enhance and improve that person (and not some artificial creation). That is an enjoyable, profitable, productive, and even restful, way of life.

It is always wise to promote the work of others. In the very crass language of the parable, they are likely to promote yours (Luke 16:4)! But beyond that, we need one another, and the mutual caring that such interest and concern promotes is the very stuff of civilization.

It is wise to find that which is perennial and to avoid the latest trends. Our God is building people for eternity, and fads will come and go with tiring regularity. In this regard, it is wise to read the great literature and to soak your mind with those ideas and principles that have endured. Here is the place

to say that we should regularly read the Book of Proverbs. How many evangelical pastors should have taken deeply into themselves its warnings about adultery?

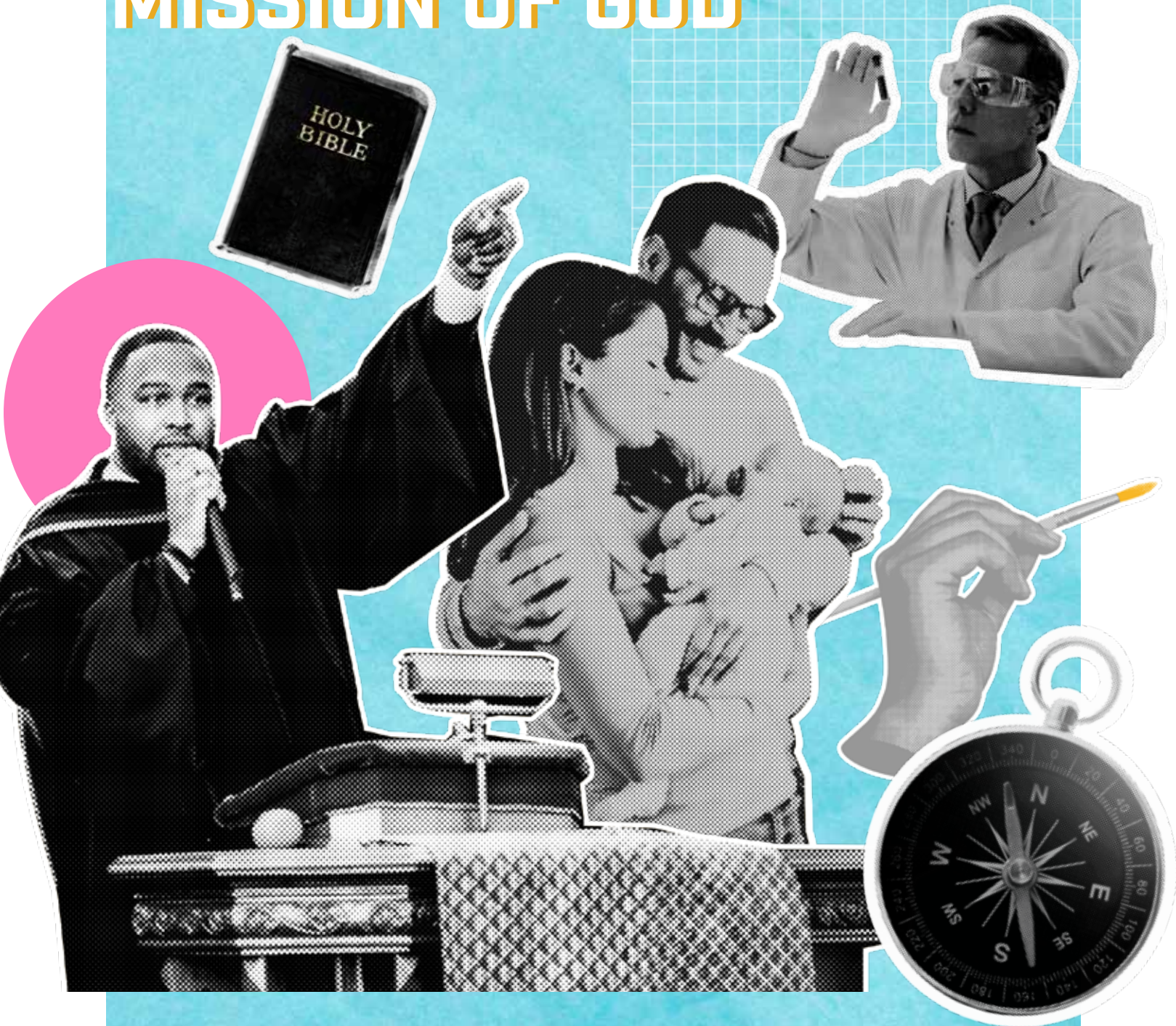
Finally, it is wise to read the Bible and pray. The most foolish thing any human can do is to cut themselves off from the source of life. We can be a tree planted by streams of water—not very obtrusive or attention-getting, but alive and fruitful—or we can be a glittering cloud of chaff blowing away from the threshing floor, catching the eye of everyone passing by (Psalm 1).



When we have seen the results of certain actions played out in multiple tragedies, we should know enough not to do those things anymore.

Dr. John Oswalt is the Visiting
Distinguished Professor of Old Testament

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES AND THE MISSION OF GOD



by Dr. Stephen Bailey

1 Chronicles 12:1 says that men "... came to David... while he was banished from the presence of Saul... [v 32, some were] from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do..."

We live in an era where change is so unpredictable and increasingly complex that some people are giving up planning for the future. Scholars speak of fusion, hybridity and cultural blending to describe the emerging worldviews and ways of life. Everyone, even Christians, seems uncertain about the nature and reliability of truth. Technology and consumerism are the platforms for disembodied relationships. Tribalism has replaced civic discourse in a desperate attempt to reclaim familiar ways of life already lost. Discussing these realities causes anxiety and many of us instinctively seek the comfort of denial or fatalism.

Let's regroup with the help of Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way... Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations..."

This Psalm reminds us that God still reigns, not the U.S., not Russia, not China, not NATO, not Google, not Tesla, not the U.S. Dollar. God reigns alone! Scripture also informs us that God's people, in the past and globally, have been through worse. Yet, they found God faithful and were able to discern how to effectively partner in God's Mission to redeem all of creation even as the nations rebel against God's rule (Psalm 2). So, how can we partner with God's mission today?

First, realize that while the world is complex, what God wants of us is simple and clear. To partner with God in any era requires that our hearts be formed by the perfect love that drives out fear (1 John 4:18) and that we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Our lives must be governed by the Spirit that fills us with life and peace (Romans 8:6). I am referring to our need for sanctified hearts and minds. John Wesley spoke of a holy love from God that can fill us with love for God and neighbor. By this holy love, we love God above everything else and, as Paul Ricoeur says, "live for others in just institutions." By this holy love, we order our lives to reflect inward holiness and dispositions of the Spirit (virtues). Wesley also says we should seek works of mercy for the sake of others, otherwise our piety is worthless. "Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy" (Leviticus 19:2). The Spirit will help us discern what God is doing in the world and how to partner with God.

Second, while discerning what God is doing in the world is important, understanding the context of our world is also important. Philippians 2:6-8 says Christ Jesus, who was God,

set aside what it meant to be God and emptied himself, making himself nothing, taking on the role of a servant, and obediently submitted to death by lynching on behalf of the world (my paraphrase). God in Christ emptied himself to enter the very particular poor first-century Jewish context, rife with complexity, rebellion, violence and idolatry. God translated himself so that first-century Palestine could hear, understand

***God still reigns, not the U.S., not
Russia, not China, not NATO, not
Google, not Tesla, not the U.S. Dollar.
God reigns alone!***

and experience the message of God's redeeming grace and the sacrifice of his sinless and nonviolent life. We can do no less. But emptying ourselves to embody the gospel in the varied contexts of our world requires careful discernment and study.

It requires that people who are called and sanctified by God meditate on His word "day and night" (Psalm 1:2). We must study the scriptures and fill our minds with the world of the Bible so that when the "nations rage" we are unafraid because we know God reigns and we know how to do God's will (Psalm 2).

It requires that we look to the church that went before us and to our global sisters and brothers to understand how to interpret and apply God's word to the contexts in which we live and serve.

It requires that we train our minds (reason) to observe and discern the patterns in creation and in human affairs so that our witness lines up with the prevenient grace of God already available in the world.

Finally, it requires that we continually experience the living presence of God in Christ by the Spirit in worship, in the church and among the poor (where Christ also dwells, Matthew 25).

Do not make the mistake of thinking that God's mission is complete or too complex! Now more than ever God is calling men and women from everywhere to everywhere. Scientists, artists, farmers, lawyers, mothers and fathers, preachers and missionaries must understand the times and partner in God's mission to redeem all creation.

Dr. Stephen Bailey
*Associate Professor of Missions
and Development Studies*



Q & A with Dr. David Watson

Shortly after Dr. David Watson was elected as the new president of Asbury Seminary, he sat down for an interview with Dr. Bill Arnold and Dr. Jessica LaGrone. Here is part of that interview. You can scan the QR code above or visit asbury.to/watson to see the full interview.

Dr. Bill Arnold: David, you spoke very movingly this morning to the full community about the state of the church today, and you said you see renewal happening, reform, and revival taking place throughout the church. As you know, Asbury Seminary has over 80 denominations represented in our student body, almost 14,000 graduates around the world.

What can Asbury Seminary do to enhance this revival that you speak of and how might our ministry continue and what's your vision for Asbury in that sense?

Dr. David Watson: Yeah, it's a really exciting time for the church right now. I know in the US a lot of the talk is about church decline, but globally speaking God is pouring out the Holy Spirit all over the world in powerful ways.

People are coming to Christ all over the world, and I even think it's going to happen here. I can see the beginnings of revival and renewal in the West. I simply don't believe the people who say that in the U.S. the future is one of inexorable decline. I don't think that's right. And I think Asbury is perfectly poised to lead the way with regard to renewal and revival both here and abroad.

Asbury has renewal and revival in our bones. That's the DNA of the institution. And what is the mission statement? It's to prepare theologically educated, sanctified, spirit-filled men and women who will evangelize and spread scriptural holiness through the whole world.

And with that kind of mission, I

think we're just right on track with what God is doing in so many places right now.

Dr. Jessica LaGrone: I've heard you say before that everything is theological. So tell us a little bit about your passion for theological education and why you think that's so vital for the Church of the Future.

Dr. David Watson: I think we have to teach people how to think Christianly. You know, we all have certain patterns, certain habits of mind, that we pick up just by living within the culture that we live in. But thinking like a Christian, seeing the world Christianly is something that we really have to cultivate. It's a matter of intention by immersing ourselves in scripture, by reading great teachers of the church, by the means of grace of the sacraments. We learn how to see the world and think about the world in a different way, and we need to do that. When Paul talks, you know, in Romans

12:2, Paul says there is the pattern of this age, and then there is the renewing of your mind. And he says, don't be conformed to the patterns of this age, even though that's what's naturally going to happen, but you have to be transformed by the renewing of your mind and theological education is a great avenue in which that can happen. Now, additionally, I'll say that the world is not getting simpler, right? The world is becoming more complex all the time, and the problems that our grandparents had, many of those still remain.

But then there are additional issues that we have to think about, like ethics around artificial intelligence or right now a big topic of conversation in the Christian world is the ethics around IVF. There are lots of issues that are facing the Church today and we have to learn how to think theologically.

We have to learn how to think Christianly about these issues, and that requires hard work and intense study with people who have dedicated themselves to the study of scripture and Christian theology and other disciplines in our faith.

Dr. Bill Arnold: So David, you know a good deal about Asbury. What is your leadership philosophy and how do you think that meshes with what you see already happening here at Asbury Seminary?

Dr. David Watson: My leadership philosophy is really two-pronged. The first part of it is everything is mission-based. Everything that we do has to flow out of the mission statement. When institutions begin to have mission drift, then they begin to expend resources in ways that aren't productive.

And we just want to avoid that. So



whatever decisions we make, we have to make out of the basic mission of the school. The second part of it is I think that we have to work together and I have a collaborative mission leadership style. Like Paul says, there are a variety of gifts in the same spirit. My gifts aren't Your gifts and your gifts aren't my gifts, but those gifts compliment each other within the body of Christ and more specifically within the seminary. I believe that God has brought people here to fulfill the mission of the seminary, and we have to work together collaboratively and in appreciation of the different gifts and graces that we have.

Dr. Jessica LaGrone: Tell us a little bit about your family. We're all eager to welcome and meet them.

Dr. David. Watson: My wife, Harriet, and I met at a camp for kids with diabetes in Gainesville, Texas, which is up on the Red River. She's from England. She's run four marathons, I've run zero. She came to the United States on a tennis scholarship and she was teaching tennis at this

camp and I was also working at the camp. Then she got a job in Dallas where I was in school, we fell in love and got married. We've been married 27 years.

We have three kids. They're all very different from each other, and they're all great kids. We've lived in Ohio for 19 years and developed a good community there. So coming to Asbury, we're very excited about that. We're looking forward to being a part of the community and getting to know everyone here.



Dr. Watson will officially begin on July 1, 2025. Please be in prayer for him and his family as they step into a new calling from God.





Spiritual Formation for Future Pastors, Scholars, and Leaders

As an institution committed to raising up “theologically educated, sanctified, Spirit-filled men and women,” the spiritual lives of our students are as much of a priority as their theological education. While the study of scripture and theology naturally encourages one’s faith, the team in the Student Life and Formation department, under the leadership of Vice President Rev. Dr. Matt Barnes, ensures that the spiritual formation of our residential students is not just coincidental, but intentional.

In February 2025, the Student Services office transferred from the Enrollment Management and Student Services department under Vice President Kevin Bish (now titled Enrollment Management Services and Marketing) to the Formation department under Dr. Barnes (now called Student Life and Formation). This changed the title of the office that focuses specifically on the spiritual lives of residential students, as well as that of its director, Rev. Dr. Kylie McCormick. “Student Life” has now been added to both.

“The newly merged Student Life and Community Formation team now has the opportunity to serve students for a majority of their non-curricular life,” Kylie says. “We get to be a part of students’ families’ and the larger Asbury Seminary community’s experience that is outside of the classroom, things like overseeing pastoral care, community groups, housing, and health and wellness.”

A M.Div. graduate of Fuller Seminary with a Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Birmingham, Kylie has both deeply researched and experienced Christian community and spiritual formation. Her dissertation included comparing secular music festivals to church communities in how they create community. She then served as Pastor of Spiritual Formation and Next Generation Ministry at Blue Oaks Church in Pleasanton, CA, before coming to Asbury Seminary. “I know what it is like, in both Christian spheres and non-religious spheres, to feel outside of the group,” Kylie says. “I am passionate about helping our isolated and outcast find a place where they experience wholeness and hope.”

The organizational shift allows one department to be the hub for both spiritual and practical aspects of residential students’ lives, from pastoral care to housing needs. As they did before, the Student Life and Community Formation office staff continues to offer spiritual care and support to students and staff. “Our [job] looks so different every day,” Kylie says. “There’s a large percentage of the day that’s pastoral care-focused. That looks like anything from having one-on-one meetings with students or staff who are struggling to meeting with people’s families, or just walking with people as they do life together.”

Now, in addition, the Student Life and Community Formation office oversees aspects such as residential life, health and wellness, and the community garden. Kylie views working with the Student Life staff as a new opportunity to help support students’ and staff members’ whole selves. “I am working with a whole group of incredibly talented and called



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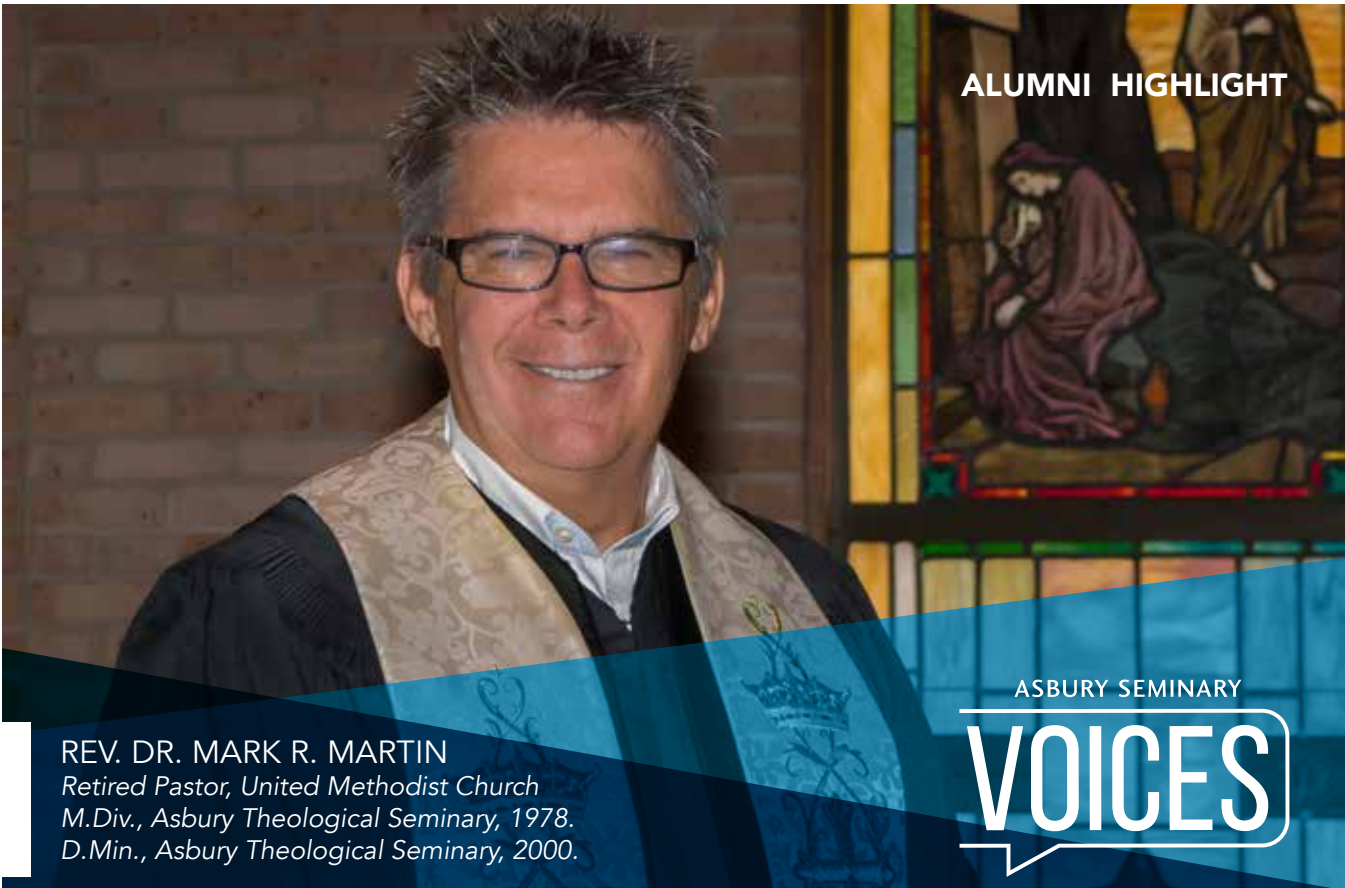
My hope is that each day we are allowing and helping people to find groups to belong with and ways to become spirit-filled and sanctified.

people who use their innate giftings and talents to support the holistic formation of our residential community, from making sure the housing environment is comfortable for people to supporting our amazing SLCF team as they do the ministry God has brought them to,” Kylie says.

A major strategy behind Kylie’s work resonates with the discipleship strategy of John Wesley himself: helping connect people in groups that will encourage their spiritual growth. “My hope is that each day we are allowing and helping people to find groups to belong with and ways to become spirit-filled and sanctified,” Kylie says. One of these group types is a small discipleship group in the style of Wesley’s class meetings. Other groups allow people to connect based on their gender or stage of life. “All of those subgroups are really focused on helping people find their affinity matches based on where they are in life and building support teams around them that can have both that relational aspect and that growing aspect,” Kylie says.

At the same time, Kylie and her team offer resources for important topics within the church, such as Healing Community groups, in which members read a book on and discuss the topic of healing within the church. “We’re building out things to talk about in the future,” Kylie says. “We’re hoping to talk about burnout and church hurt and all these things—addressing topics that our community has experienced or is helping others walk through.”

All of this work is done with the hope that no future pastor, scholar, counselor, or leader coming out of the Seminary will be without a strong, dedicated relationship with Jesus and a thriving spiritual life. Indeed, hope is a concept to which Kylie has been gravitating lately. “It gives me a lot of hope. I’ve used that word many times for the future church because of what I see being done here,” Kylie says. “Not just in formation, but at the seminary as a whole. It is one of the many reasons why I am so glad to be a part of the work done here to help students and families in their callings. To personally be a small part in someone’s story of what God is doing is a tremendous gift, and to see the Spirit moving is to witness God’s story in a unique and incredible way.”



ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

REV. DR. MARK R. MARTIN

*Retired Pastor, United Methodist Church
M.Div., Asbury Theological Seminary, 1978.
D.Min., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2000.*

ASBURY SEMINARY

VOICES

While Mark was in college studying to become a doctor, an Asbury Theological Seminary alumnus named Kent Kilbourne came to his church to serve as associate pastor, and Mark found in him somewhat of a kindred spirit and mentor. Kent invited him to be part of a youth choir at the church, and the experience nurtured Mark's faith and musical talents, as well as the intersection of both. Becoming more involved in ministry led Mark to an inflection point in his faith. "In about 1973... the Lord's hand was upon me and Jesus called and I responded," Mark says. "I remember going to the altar there at Munholland, praying, getting back up, and going to my seat and saying, 'I guess that's it.' I radically changed. I was on fire for Jesus."

Approximately a year later, Mark was still on track for his pre-med degree and preparing for a test on genetics when he began to ask the

Lord what he wanted him to do with his life. "It was as if Jesus walked into the room... and I heard in my mind again and again, 'I have something important for you to do.' So I interpreted that to be [that] he's calling me into the ministry," Mark says.

Because of the impact Kent had on his life, Mark knew his next step: enroll at Asbury Seminary. After graduating with an undergraduate degree in biology, he moved to Wilmore, Kentucky, in 1975 and started his Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program. He describes his seminary experience as incredibly influential for both his theological education and spiritual formation. "It wasn't just the educational side of things that was preparing me for ministry," Mark says. "It was the spiritual side of Asbury Seminary, and that's what I love so much."

Mark graduated in 1978 and entered pastoral ministry. He served in a few churches over several years, one of the first being Blackwater United

Methodist Church where he met his wife, Rhonda. Eventually, they ended up at a new church start called St. Charles near New Orleans.

One of those ways of finding renewal was by pursuing a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) at Asbury Seminary. Mark felt there were things that he wanted and needed to learn, but lacked the discipline to do so. Thus, he returned to studying as a means of renewing his heart and mind for ministry.

Despite the challenge of readjusting to academics, receiving his D.Min. in 2000 was a significant occasion in Mark's life in more than one way. "I achieved an educational goal that I always felt I wanted, but I found that that wasn't all there was," Mark says. "It wasn't just achieving this goal, it was what it did in me and the transition that the Lord was making in my own life."

Mark's further theological education may have been part of divine



“

I remember going to the altar there at Munholland, praying, getting back up, and going to my seat and saying, ‘I guess that’s it.’ I radically changed. I was on fire for Jesus.



Visit asbury.to/martin to see the full video interview.

preparation for ministry opportunities he would have never expected. Around the same time that he began his D.Min. program, Mark was invited by a fellow pastor and friend named Tom Howe to join a mission trip to Cuba.

Defying his expectations, Mark found a spiritually vibrant Cuban Methodist church with a bold witness, despite their challenges. “I would see people who would go out in twos with their Bibles after the service and go down the street knowing that at that time they could have gotten in a lot of trouble,” Mark says. He wondered, “How can we help the pastors that are there? How can we support the churches that are reaching people for Christ?”

Mark now has 30 years of continual investment in the church in Cuba through repeated short-term trips.

In 1999, Mark returned to Blackwater United Methodist Church as the senior pastor. This time, his role required much more administration and supervision of multiple aspects

within the church. After a few years, he began to feel burned out. “I was going, gosh, is this it? Is this what the rest of my ministry is going to look like?” Mark says.

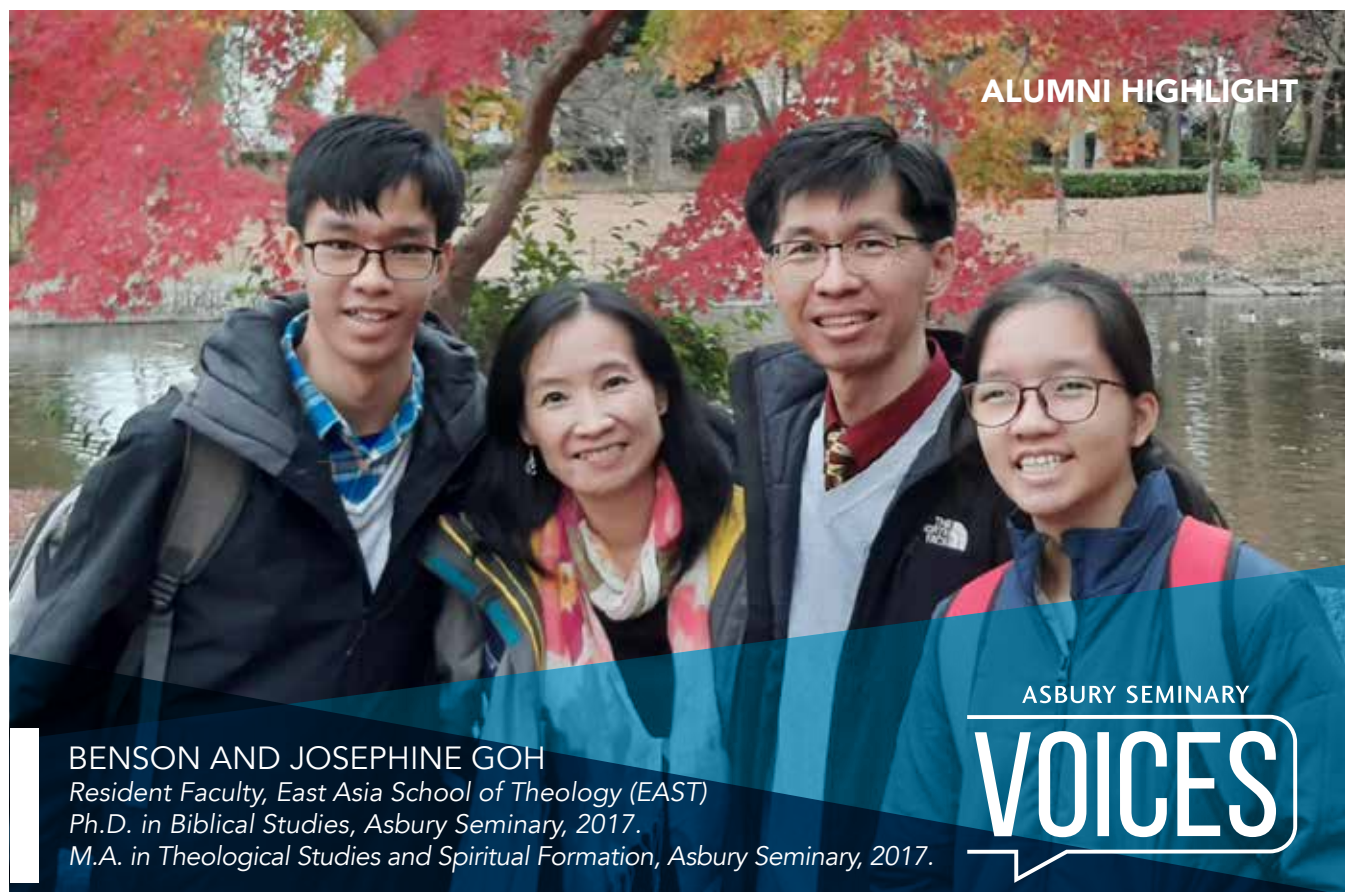
After a sabbatical, he felt the Lord leading him on a different path to work primarily with contemporary worship music. He stepped down as senior pastor and moved to an associate pastor position, and helped start a contemporary worship service called The River at a church in Shreveport, Louisiana. “I saw more people come into Christ because of [the contemporary worship service],” Mark says.

Mark’s decision to retire was largely influenced by a general need for rest after a long life of ministry. Not only so, but he had two different experiences with cancer in his late 50s and early 60s. The first bout was discovered during a routine checkup, at which the doctor happened to detect high numbers indicating prostate cancer. Thankfully, through radiation

treatment, Mark was able to treat the cancer and get his numbers to a healthy level.

The second experience was with an aggressive type of cancer in his appendix that was miraculously discovered when he developed appendicitis and had his appendix removed, neutralizing the cancer threat. “The Lord healed me and I’ve just been so thankful for every day of life since. And anything that I can do to continue in service and ministry, you know, you do it,” Mark says.

Even though he decided to make a transition away from full-time ministry, Mark has remained open to whatever the Lord may call him to in this stage of life. He and Rhonda spent a few months in the Bahamas while he acted as interim pastor for a church. “I’ve got years to go... just to be ready, if something opens up, to start talking to Him about it and see: Is this from you? And to go,” Mark says.



BENSON AND JOSEPHINE GOH

Resident Faculty, East Asia School of Theology (EAST)

Ph.D. in Biblical Studies, Asbury Seminary, 2017.

M.A. in Theological Studies and Spiritual Formation, Asbury Seminary, 2017.

ASBURY SEMINARY

VOICES

Benson and Josephine Goh first met at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore while participating in an orientation group organized by Campus Crusade for Christ (now called Cru).

Before coming to the university and meeting each other, Benson and Josephine each had significant moments of becoming followers of Jesus. Josephine grew up in a strong Buddhist family and did not have any opportunity to hear the gospel. “I had some Christian friends around me in school, but they have never invited me to church, never told me about Jesus Christ,” Josephine says.

However, Josephine soon faced a major challenge that caused her to start reassessing her life and beliefs. Her father tragically died in a car accident when she was very young. “Where are we heading after our time on earth? Is there such a thing as eternity? I began to ask my mom lots of these questions and she couldn’t answer me,” Josephine says.

One of the teachers in Josephine’s equivalent of an American high school

was a Christian who invited students to his house for a Christian meeting. Josephine attended and heard the worship song “Let There Be Love.” “When they sang it, I was very touched and then I felt water on my cheek, and I thought there was like water dripping from the ceiling,” she says. “But then I realized it was my tears. I felt I was in the presence of someone supernatural or something supernatural.”

Shortly after, that Christian classmate shared the gospel with her using Romans 5:8. “Who is this who died for my sins even before I know him?” Josephine says. “That day when he shared with me the gospel was the first time I heard the gospel and I gave my life to Christ.”

Josephine’s subsequent spiritual growth was quick, but she faced much opposition from her family because of her new faith. However, the members of her first church greatly encouraged her to endure. After starting at Nanyang Technological University, she became involved in Campus Crusade, which fostered her discipleship. Not

only so, but she met her future husband and partner in ministry.

Benson grew up in a family that was much more receptive to Christianity. In contrast to Josephine’s family, he had five older siblings who had already become Christians. “They set the pace and the stage as well,” he says. “And so, I became a Christian, having acknowledged that I know I really needed God.”

A message about the second coming of Jesus moved his heart. “Here is a God who has chosen to give his life for me,” Benson says. “So I’ve decided that if he were to do that for me, the more I should reciprocate and respond.”

After her initial training, Josephine began boldly sharing the gospel with her classmates and seeing many of them come to faith in Jesus. A mission trip to Taiwan clarified her calling from the Lord. “The Lord opened my eyes to see, wow, the harvest is plentiful, but the labors are so few,” she says. “So that was when I decided to surrender my future and really submit to the Lordship of Christ.”



“

The hurdle was more of God asking me a question: are you willing to surrender your whole life to me... rather than doing it in your own strength and doing it in your own will?



Visit asbury.to/goh to see the full video interview.

This surrender came at a great price. As the first graduate in her tribe, it was very difficult for her to answer her family's questions regarding why she was not going into the corporate world to potentially earn much money.

Benson's discernment of a call to ministry was not as difficult as Josephine's, by his admission. "The hurdle was more of God asking me a question: are you willing to surrender your whole life to me... rather than doing it in your own strength and doing it in your own will?"

Once he said yes, Benson felt his path straighten and his purpose in life become clearer. One of the next major steps in that path was to gain greater theological education. After getting married and serving with Campus Crusade for many years, Benson and Josephine began their respective roles at the East Asian School of Theology (EAST). Benson started studying for his Master of Divinity and eventually became a teacher's assistant. Josephine helped out with the Partners in Ministry program, which sought

to equip the spouses of seminary students.

Benson applied to Asbury Seminary for the Ph.D. program and was surprised to be accepted. "We were there for six and a half years," Josephine says. "It's a long time, but that period of our lives we would always say that it's one of the greatest highlights in our journey with the Lord." Josephine originally saw her role as helping Benson get his degree, but she would soon discover a path of her own at Asbury Seminary.

Before their time at Asbury, tragedy struck. Their firstborn child, Samuel, died only five days after being born due to lung failure. "It was a valley season of our lives as well," Josephine says. "But, long story short, I think I encountered the Lord's healing grace just going through the grieving process." Josephine describes Samuel as "the hero of our family."

"I began to be really interested in this whole field of spiritual formation that is totally new to me." She started auditing spiritual formation classes at

the Seminary and eventually worked toward an M.A. in Spiritual Formation.

After completing their degrees, Benson and Josephine went back to Singapore to teach and serve at EAST. "I think our current mission remains unchanged and that is, while we have time, to trust the Lord to raise Christ-like servant leaders for the Great Commission," Benson says. "I think the harvest is still plentiful in Asia, but the laborers are few."

As Benson equips future church leaders, Josephine provides spiritual direction and guidance to pastors. "I think we just want to trust the Lord to raise the Joshua generation," Josephine says. "And the young people who have given their life to Christ, equip them not just in the head knowledge, but their heart formation."

Asbury Seminary Voices is a collection of alumni, student and faculty stories designed to GLORIFY GOD and inspire YOU! See the full version of these stories and many more at asbury.to/voices.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES:

The Herald, Spring 2006

Well Trained: The Key to Fruitful Ministry

by Dr. Lawson G. Stone, Professor of Old Testament

What seminary wants to send out poorly trained ministers? On first sight, this aspect of Asbury Seminary's founding mission statement seems obvious. Here, though, "well-trained" carries a richer meaning than a focus on mere skills. Ministry, at its best, happens the way leaves and fruit grow on a tree. The beauty and fruitfulness of the tree happen as the tree itself thrives in health.

If we want fruit, we attend to the total health of the tree. Likewise, a ministry that bears fruit and adorns the Gospel happens as the minister thrives on every level.

So, at Asbury Seminary, we believe in order best to be "practical" and fruitful, we must ground our curriculum in the careful study of God's Word. We follow the priorities expressed by John Wesley in his "Address to the Clergy." Having spoken of the value of a good general education, including logic, Wesley, the "man of one book," then turns to Scripture: "No less necessary is a knowledge of the scriptures, which teach us how to teach others... None else can be mighty in the scriptures; able both to instruct and to stop the mouths of gainsayers..."

Wesley presents a tall order to the contemporary seminary. At the root of his recommendation, we find "a knowledge of the original tongues." Asbury Seminary has always expected its ministerial students to study New Testament Greek, but several years ago the faculty agreed to include Biblical Hebrew as well. Our students grapple with the whole Bible, at least in a rudimentary way, in the original languages.

But a knowledge of the original languages can lead one astray without a solid grasp of how one discerns the meaning of individual biblical passages.

So, our students take courses in Inductive Biblical Studies, in which they learn to submit their own pre-conceived ideas to what Yale Old Testament scholar Brevard Childs called the "coercion or pressure exerted by the biblical text on the reader" in *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture*.

In the same paragraph of our Articles of Incorporation that calls us to "prepare and send forth a well-trained... ministry," we find in the next sentence that the school "will emphasize in its teaching the divine inspiration and infallibility of the Holy Scriptures..." We remain convinced that the Bible's portrayal of the story of salvation speaks a saving word to us as a story precisely because this story of salvation really happened. We stand with St. Augustine, who said in his sermon on Genesis 22: "Before all else, brothers, in the name of the Lord... believe that things occurred just as recounted. Do not remove the foundation in actual events and try to build on air."

At Asbury Seminary, we still not only believe the Bible's historical witness, but we celebrate it! Recognizing, as Robert L. Wilken wrote in *The Land Called Holy*, that "Christian memory is inescapably bound to place," every year students from the Seminary travel to Israel to study Scripture in the very land in which its narrative took place.

Then, in alternate years in July, our students can work on an archaeological dig somewhere in Israel, truly "getting the dirt" on the Bible in the best possible way. Our faculty join students in these adventures, so that from first to last they have an "Asbury experience" of fellowship, learning and spiritual growth.

But, of course, biblical study always

aims at the formation of Christian conviction and character. A commitment to Scripture births a spontaneous concern for sound doctrine. Our Articles of Incorporation charge the faculty to "guard with jealous care against any sort of teaching in sympathy with modern liberalism." In an age that cannot seem to find the truth, Asbury Theological Seminary remains devoted to hearing and fully expressing scriptural truth.

As naturally as fruit grows on a healthy tree, a stress on the Bible and its truth powerfully energizes a commitment to spiritual renewal, both personally and in the church, especially in preaching.

Whether it's through scholarly books and articles, work on the *New Living Translation* of the Bible, speaking at family camps, writing about popular culture, or refuting *The Da Vinci Code*, Asbury Seminary's faculty works hard to ensure that our students are "well-trained" in presenting the authentic witness of the Scriptures to contemporary culture.

St. Augustine wrote a manual on theological education entitled *On Christian Teaching*. What he said expresses what we strive for at Asbury Seminary:

"The student who fears God earnestly seeks his will in the holy scriptures... Readers furnished with such an education will not be held back... peacefully subject to Christ, founded and rooted and built up in love..."

Ministers "furnished with such an education" go out from Asbury Theological Seminary every year. Their fruitfulness in a variety of ministries arises naturally from what they learn and what they become at Asbury Seminary, just like the leaves and fruit grow on a healthy tree.



Thrive

Equipping You to Flourish in Life, Ministry, and Mission.

Thrive is a space created by Asbury Theological Seminary to nourish your soul. Here you'll find articles, devotionals, stories, and resources designed to help you grow in Christ, lead with wisdom, and live faithfully in every season of life and ministry.



For Students

A fresh resource for seminary students to help navigate seminary life. Fountain offers videos, articles, and relevant information from our community for our community. Join us as we seek to embrace the formational season that is your seminary education.

■ FOUNTAIN



For Alumni

Classes and conferences from professors and renowned speakers to equip Asbury Seminary alumni. Join the professors you loved as a student to refresh your education or attend a class you missed in seminary. ThriveU is continuing education to encourage your ministry, answer your questions, and inspire meaningful conversations among your peers and your congregation.

■ THRIVEU



For Women in Ministry

Engaging women in the discernment, development, and practice of vocational ministry through mentorship and discipleship. WTIM encourages women serving in their first five years of ministry to band together in small groups and provides them with ongoing access to vital resources. Join a diverse and multigenerational collective of mentors and clergywomen from across the world.

■ WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Also featuring Asbury Seminary Voices, as well as current and past issues of the Herald.



ASBURY SEMINARY

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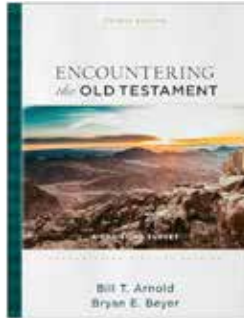
Watch Asbury Seminary Chapel LIVE online every week during the semester at asbury.to/live



Visit asbury.to/chapel for our chapel message archive.



Faculty Publications



Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey

By Bill T. Arnold, Bryan E. Beyer, and Walter A. Elwell

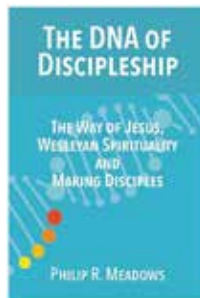
A foundational introduction to the Old Testament, this new edition of the survey brings Scripture to life with rich visuals, clear theological insight, and accessible scholarship. Ideal for students, pastors, and anyone seeking to understand God's story from Genesis to Malachi.



Missional Discipleship: A Field Guide

By Philip R. Meadows

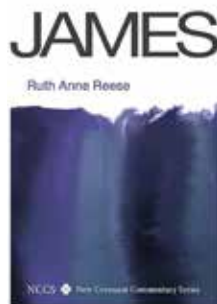
This practical guide connects whole-life discipleship with everyday mission. It serves as a manual for following Jesus for the sake of joining his mission to save the least and the lost.



The DNA of Discipleship: The Way of Jesus, Wesleyan Spirituality, and Making Disciples

By Philip R. Meadows

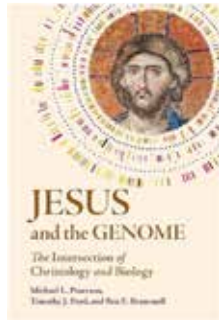
Exploring the four core genes in the DNA of Christian discipleship, Meadows weaves together the teachings of Jesus and the Wesleyan tradition to present a compelling vision for developing disciples who make disciples.



James (New Covenant Commentary Series)

By Ruth Anne Reese

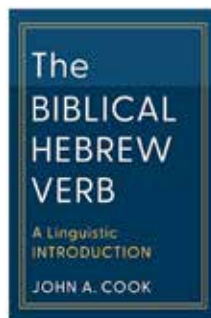
This theologically rich and accessible commentary on James invites readers to hear the ancient message of this book anew. Reese presents the main message and the theological issues discussed in James as wisdom that Christians should heed today.



Jesus and the Genome: The Intersection of Christology and Biology

By Michael L. Peterson, Timothy J. Pawl, Ben F. Brammell

This interdisciplinary work explores the compatibility between classical Christian doctrines and contemporary evolutionary biology. Engaging with thinkers from Augustine to Dawkins, the authors argue for a worldview that harmonizes Christology with modern genetics, offering a scientifically and theologically coherent perspective.



The Biblical Hebrew Verb: A Linguistic Introduction

By John A. Cook

An innovative linguistic approach to understanding Hebrew verbs, this book equips students and scholars to read the Old Testament with greater clarity and depth, making a complex subject approachable and engaging.



1-2 Thessalonians: A Beginning-Intermediate Greek Reader (with a Translation)

By Fredrick J. Long and QiaoQiao Chen

Designed for students of biblical Greek, this reader helps bridge the gap between classroom learning and reading the New Testament. With vocabulary helps and commentary, it deepens understanding of Paul's early letters.



Essays Exploring New Testament Texts: Biblical Research Methods Applied

Edited by Fredrick J. Long and Edward T. Wright

This collection showcases a range of scholarly methods applied to New Testament texts. Perfect for students and researchers, the essays demonstrate how careful study reveals fresh theological insights and deepens biblical engagement.

News & Events

Asbury Seminary Mourns the Passing of Dr. Burrell D. Dinkins



Asbury Seminary mourns the passing of Dr. Burrell D. Dinkins, professor emeritus of pastoral counseling and a pioneer in narrative therapy. A graduate of Asbury College and Emory University, Dr. Dinkins taught on both the Kentucky and Florida Dunnam campuses from 1992 to 2006. He was a devoted pastor, teacher and counselor who contributed significantly to the Wesleyan theological understanding of pastoral care. His legacy lives on in the countless students, pastors and global church leaders he mentored. A Celebration of Life service was held on February 8, 2025, in Wilmore, Ky.

Distinguished Alumnus General Paul Rader Promoted to Glory



General Paul Rader, former international leader of The Salvation Army and 1959 Bachelor of Divinity graduate of Asbury Seminary, passed away on January 18 at the age of 90. A visionary servant leader, Rader was the first American elected General of The Salvation Army and a former president of

Asbury College. Together with his wife, Commissioner Kay Rader, who served on the Asbury Seminary Board of Trustees from 1998 to 2003, he ministered in Korea and across the globe. His legacy of faithful leadership and global service continues to impact thousands. A memorial service was held February 1, 2025, at Hughes Auditorium in Wilmore, Ky.

Asbury Theological Seminary Announced as a Recipient of James V. Heidinger II, Good News Endowed Scholarship Fund

Good News Magazine has established the James V. Heidinger II Endowed Scholarship Fund at Asbury Seminary in honor of its longtime president and

publisher. The scholarship supports students affiliated with the Global Methodist Church, preparing them for ministry within the Wesleyan tradition. Dr. Heidinger, a 1966 graduate of Asbury Seminary and the Seminary's 2024 Alumnus of the Year, served for nearly 30 years with Good News and continues to advocate for theological orthodoxy and renewal in the Church. This endowed fund ensures his impact will carry forward for future generations of church leaders.

Asbury Seminary Welcomes New Director of Employee Services



Kahrah Williams joined Asbury Seminary in March 2025 as Director of Employee Services. Williams has a degree from Kentucky State University and brings extensive experience in human resources and administration, as well as a long-standing commitment to church

ministry. She succeeds Barbara Antrobus, who will retire this spring after 34 years of faithful and compassionate service to Asbury Seminary. The Seminary heartedly welcomes Kahrah and celebrates Barbara's legacy.

Asbury Theological Seminary Announces Dr. David F. Watson as the Seminary's Next President



In March 2025, the Board of Trustees unanimously elected Dr. David F. Watson as Asbury Seminary's next president, effective July 1, 2025. Dr. Watson currently serves as academic dean and professor of New Testament at United Theological Seminary and is a recognized Wesleyan

theologian, author, and elder in the Global Methodist Church. He brings a vision for theological education marked by academic excellence, missional engagement and spiritual formation. Dr. David Gyertson, who has served as interim president since July 2024, will complete his tenure on June 30, 2025.

tATS and CACREP Reaffirm Accreditation of Asbury Seminary Degrees

Asbury Theological Seminary is pleased to announce that the Association of Theological Schools (tATS) has officially reaffirmed Asbury Seminary's accreditation for a full 10-year period, extending through July 31, 2035. Additionally, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) has reaffirmed its accreditation of the M.A. in Mental Health Counseling and M.A. in Marriage and Family Counseling through March 31, 2033. These reaffirmations reflect the Seminary's commitment to academic excellence and professional preparation for ministry, as well as licensure-readiness for clinical counseling.

Asbury Seminary Rededicates McKenna Chapel Pipe Organ and Announces Dr. Albin C. Whitworth Music Fund



On April 27, 2025, Asbury Seminary hosted a hymn sing celebrating the rededication of the McKenna Chapel organ. The event also celebrated Dr. Albin Whitworth for his over 40 years of service to the Seminary by

announcing the creation of the Albin C. Whitworth Music Fund. The fund will help provide funding to cover the expenses for Advent Vespers, Tenebrae and Baccelaureate, beloved and traditional services featuring the seminary singers. If you would like to help contribute to this fund you can donate by going to asburyseminary.edu/donate/ and in the designation box signify "The Whitworth Music Fund".

Asbury Seminary Welcomes New Director of Facilities and Security



Asbury Seminary has appointed Torrance Clark as its new Director of Facilities and Security, beginning May 19, 2025. Clark brings more than 30 years of experience in operations, security, and facilities management, including nearly 13 years as the Director of Plant Operations at a

central Kentucky hospital. Clark's family roots go back to nearby Keene, Kentucky, and the Lexington area has been his home for over 20 years. He will succeed Brian U'Ren, who will retire on June 2 after 15 years of outstanding stewardship. The Seminary welcomes Torrance and honors Brian's faithful contributions to campus life.

Asbury Seminary and SAIACS Celebrate D.Min. Graduates



The first Doctor of Ministry cohort resulting from a historic partnership between Asbury Theological Seminary and South Asia Institute of Advanced

Christian Studies (SAIACS) graduated on May 17, 2025. On August 12, 2022, Asbury Seminary and SAIACS entered into a partnership to develop 20 Indian D.Min. candidates in 3 years through a hybrid model of learning, which culminated in the candidates receiving their D.Min. degree from Asbury Seminary. The 20 student cohort included 16 men and 4 women who are from and serve in 10 different states of India. 14 of the graduates were able to attend the commencement ceremony in person on the Kentucky Campus.



Follow us on social media for the latest news, events and content from Asbury Seminary.





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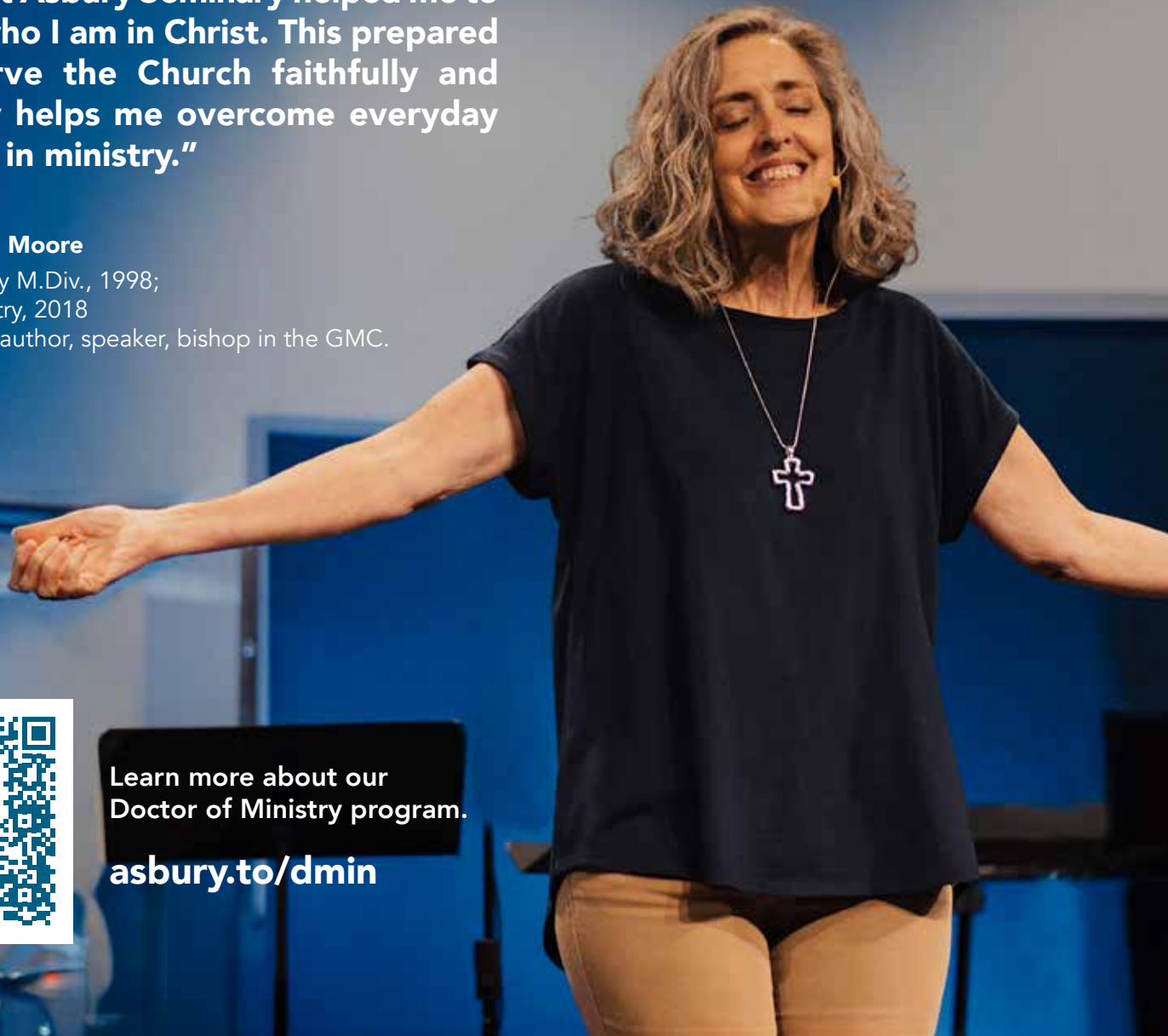


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"My time at Asbury Seminary helped me to discover who I am in Christ. This prepared me to serve the Church faithfully and continually helps me overcome everyday challenges in ministry."

Bishop Carolyn Moore

Asbury Seminary M.Div., 1998;
Doctor of Ministry, 2018
Church planter, author, speaker, bishop in the GMC.



Learn more about our
Doctor of Ministry program.

asbury.to/dmin