

northwest news

Volume 11 Issue 3
September 2010

EVENTS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Addictions & Recovery
Conference
October 1-2

Best Practices for
Church Missions
Kamloops - Oct. 2
Vancouver - Oct. 23

Church, Marketplace &
Missions Conference
October 30

Best Practices for
Church Boards - Basic
November 6

World Evangelization
Workshop
November 12-13

(see www.nbseminary.ca
for details)

A Division of Northwest
Baptist Theological College

A Member of ACTS Seminaries
of Trinity Western University

REFLECTIONS ON 20 YEARS OF MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

BY LARRY PERKINS, PH.D.

Interview with Dinesh Prasad (MDV, '91, NBS/TWU)

Dinesh is an alumnus of Northwest, graduating in 1991, just a few years after we developed the consortium at Trinity Western University. For almost twenty years he has pastored Fraserview Alliance Church (now South Vancouver Community Church) in southeast Vancouver. He and his wife Sheila have two children, Byron (15) and Rebekah (12).

Dinesh, you were one of the first students to graduate from the NBS/ACTS consortium. As you reflect back, what were some of the factors that encouraged you to apply?

After I graduated from the University of British Columbia, I participated in a short term missions trip to India. In the midst of that experience God impressed upon my heart a calling to ministry. At that time, I did not have any idea it would be in pastoral ministry. However, as I reflected upon this I realized I needed training. Further encouragement was being given by people in my church, Fraserview Alliance, who saw in me gifting for church ministry.

When I returned from the missions experience, I began to look around for a possible place to receive training. My family

lived in southeast Vancouver and I discovered Northwest Baptist Seminary -- five minutes from where I lived! So I began studies at the Marine Drive Campus, intending to do a year of studies and then get into some kind of ministry. But God had other plans.

Shortly after I started I learned about the plans to affiliate with Trinity Western University and begin the ACTS Consortium. The vision for Evangelical Denominations to work together in preparing leaders and the excitement of this change, encouraged me to continue. So I applied to the Master of Divinity program. Even though it meant a significant drive, God provided the means.

How did God lead you after graduation?

Again this is rather remarkable. I came to faith in Christ through the ministry of Fraserview Alliance church. During my seminary training they graciously allowed me to complete all of the practical ministry requirements through the church. To my surprise, when I graduated, they called me to serve as their pastor. So since 1991 I have served as the lead pastor of Fraser-view Alliance, the church I grew up in and which introduced me to Jesus.

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THE MEASURE OF EXCELLENCE IN THE TEACHING — THE LEARNER

BY BRIAN M. RAPSKE, PH.D.



I'm on sabbatical. The regular patterns have been altered so that I can work at a number of strategic projects and activities. One of these has been my participation in a 12-month-long Educational Learning Community (ELC)—a think tank sponsored by the Office of Research and Faculty Development (ORFD) at Trinity Western University. Our task was to kindle each other to higher levels of excellence in teaching. It was to conclude in a paper we submitted to the ORFD. So, it was a delightful surprise to us when the university made our work the theme for the August TWU/ACTS Faculty Retreat. The ELC chair and I were invited to deliver the plenary session and lead discussion for 150+ of our colleagues.

Let me share just one thing (of the many!) that has really energized me. The true measure of excellence in teaching is not my delivery of carefully-ordered, current, and complete content—as important as that is! It's how

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CONTEXTUALIZED COMMUNICATION OF THE CROSS

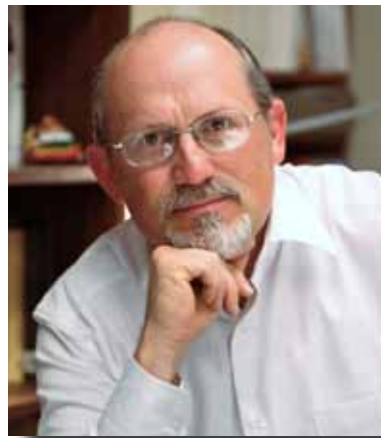
BY MARK NAYLOR, THM

Communicating the significance of the cross of Jesus is of primary concern for our Fellowship International missionaries. People in other cultures and those with different religious backgrounds have difficulty understanding the relevance of the cross to their lives. The role of the cross-cultural missionary is to present the sacrifice of Jesus in a way that resonates with the culture in forms that fit with their perspective of reality, while remaining true to biblical revelation.

Through the Center for Ministry Excellence and with the initiative of Northwest Baptist Seminary, this October several of our Fellowship International cross-cultural workers will participate in an interactive, online course designed to develop and hone this skill. Over a period of 7 months as they continue to minister in their various contexts, they will contribute to an ongoing dialogue in order to challenge and encourage each other in this crucial task. By engaging current scholarship on missions as well as working through a culturally sensitive research project, each participant will seek to discover those images of the cross that impact the people they are called to serve. ■

COACHING FOR MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM

BY MARK NAYLOR, THM



Coaching makes a difference. Recently Fellowship International and Northwest Baptist Seminary completed a year-long coaching for missions relationship with South Delta Baptist Church. The purpose was to establish and develop their missions team so that their church would make an ongoing global impact for God's glory. Pastor Paul Johnson writes,

The coaching process took us from a disorganized group that was struggling to find a vision to a motivated and focused team. The sessions helped us understand the cultural dynamics of global missions in our culture, the importance of congregational buy-

in, and helped us to establish the organizational structure needed to develop a successful global mission program.

Coaching for evangelism is done through establishing a culture of prayer and support that guides the congregation to participate in "Significant Conversations." Pastor Dwight Geiger writes,

"Significant Conversations" fits our cultural context like a good pair of running shoes. We have been especially blessed with the coaching segment of the program that helps with adjustments and encouragement to get in the race.

The desire of Northwest Baptist Seminary is to provide relevant and effective resources to our churches that produce visible and impacting results. Coaching for evangelism and missions is one avenue through which that is happening. For further information on coaching opportunities for your church contact mark.naylor@twu.ca. ■

FALL NEW STUDENTS



75 new students attended the Northwest / ACTS Seminaries New Student Orientation Day

INTERVIEW WITH DINESH PRASAD... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Serving as pastor in one church for such a long period is unusual today. What are the factors that you believe have enabled this?

First, the people have generously supported and encouraged continuing education through seminaries, workshops and even a three month sabbatical. These opportunities have kept me fresh and allowed me time to recover from periods of stress. Second, God continues to deepen my love for the people in the church. I believe they sense this and their love for me and my family in return is amazing. Third, God keeps fueling my passion for helping and serving the people in the church and in the community. If God has another place for me and my family to serve, I am sure He will reveal it, but at this point, I know this is where God wants me to be.

Identifying, equipping and placing emerging leaders forms one of the great challenges today. How do you as a lead pastor seek to encourage leadership development in the congregation?

One of the things in our church that has changed is the multicultural dynamic. This reflects the reality of our neighbouring community. But it also affects the development of leadership within the congregation. Different cultures have differing values regarding leadership and what they regard as adequate training. So I seek to come alongside those that I discern to be expressing potential for ministry leadership, encouraging them to consider educational preparation for some kind of Kingdom ministry. Our other leaders are also exercising similar discernment and encouragement.

Given your personal journey in Christ, what advice would you give to people thinking about preparing for ministry vocation?

I think the main thing is to be open to God's leading and have the courage to follow. You probably will not know exactly what the next step will be, but you can be confident that God's Spirit will direct you. Also, be bold to depend upon God to provide the resources through various means.

How can we pray for you as you begin a third decade of pastoral ministry?

Pray for my family as they enter young adulthood, that my involvement in pastoral ministry will remain a positive model for them. Pray that as our community continues to change, that God will help our church leadership discern the best ways for us to minister the Gospel among them. Pray that my love for the people will continue to deepen. ■

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

BY LARRY PERKINS, PH.D.

The Board of Governors at their October 2010 meeting will consider a recommendation for a new president for Northwest from the Presidential Search Committee. By the time his current term ends (July 31, 2011) Dr. Perkins will have served as president for more than a decade. This follows his leadership as dean in Northwest for many years. During his tenure Northwest has become a strong partner in the Associated Canadian Theological Schools of Trinity Western University. As Dean of ACTS he led the implementation of the University's first doctoral program (the Doctor of Ministry degree) and led the accreditation process of ACTS with the Association of Theological Schools. Innovations in ministry training such as the Youth Leadership Training Program, the counselling program in Marriage and Family Therapy, Best Practices for Church Boards workshops, the Institute for Septuagint Studies, the matching grant with churches to multiply the impact of financial aid, were all implemented. All through his deanship and presidency, Dr. Perkins has maintained a strong academic ministry, being Professor of Biblical Studies, teaching and publishing in the areas of New Testament, Septuagint and Church Leadership. His two websites -- www.internetmoments.ca and www.churchboard-chair.ca -- continue to assist ministry leaders in Canada and other regions of the world. After a sabbatical in the first half of 2011, Dr. Perkins intends to continue teaching with Northwest, maintaining his faculty role within Northwest Baptist Seminary and ACTS, as well as completing various research and writing projects. His initial appointment in 1978 was to the role of assistant professor in New Testament Studies.

The Northwest Board anticipates a formal announcement about the appointment of a new president by the end of October 2010. The succession planning is well underway and the Board is demonstrating excellent leadership in this process. ■



EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

well my students learn.

It sounds obvious. But it's not!

I stand or fall as a teacher by my students' performance in understanding. The teaching location—whether a classroom, online, or “on site” ministry—should not be a place of mere declarative monologues or information transfer. Excellence calls for it to be a place of vigorous dialogue and interaction where I am committed to know learners individually and well. Excellence requires that I intrigue, fascinate, and challenge learners; to facilitate peak learning experiences that will effect deep change in what they learn and in how they think, act and feel. Excellence demands that, long after leaving the formal learning place, I should have helped them to be capable at the tasks to which they have been trained, but also confident self-educators as their job circumstances change, and able, in turn, effectively to teach others.

I'm quite sure this principle generalizes: *The measure of excellence in preaching and Christian leadership is to be found in your hearers and your followers.* ■



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

BY LARRY PERKINS, PH.D.

Alpha and Omega -- How well does a pastor need to know the Bible?

The Bible comes to us in three languages -- Hebrew, Aramaic and Hellenistic Greek. Yet, most people, including pastoral leaders, explore the scriptures through translation. Traditionally people in the congregation have considered the pastor as equipped to investigate thoroughly the biblical message and communicate it truthfully and persuasively. The pastor opens windows into the text to let people discern its meaning, sometimes with painful starkness and impact. But what competence does a pastor need in order to do that with excellence?

Historically Bible colleges and seminaries have included the study of Greek and sometimes Hebrew within programs that equip people for pastoral leadership. Within Northwest we have a strong tradition of teaching the biblical languages. I think this is rooted in our strong commitment to the inspiration, inerrancy and authority of Scripture. What eventually will happen however, if pastoral leaders no longer have competence to interact directly with the Greek and Hebrew Bible?



The argument can be made that good preaching does not depend upon skill in reading the Greek or Hebrew Bibles, and this is true. However, the study of the Greek and Hebrew portions of the Bible is not so much concerned with acquiring language skills, as it is with the more significant question of discerning the Spirit's voice in scripture. The preaching might be persuasive, but is the message true? When a person engages the Greek Bible, for example, he or she is not just encountering words, but must wrestle with an entirely different way of thinking and expression. The cultural distance between the 21st Century preacher and the biblical text must be admitted and addressed. The larger questions of meaning, the intent of the human author, and the means chosen to share his ideas become more immediate. But when a person is presenting the eternal words

of scripture as God's authoritative Word, can he or she be content to depend only on the pre-digested message expressed in a translation, as good as it may be. Commentaries help, but to grasp their arguments often requires some language and exegetical competence.

Trends in pastoral training come and go. I have seen a number in my 32 years of seminary experience. Whether it was counselling, church growth, or more latterly leadership development, each pushes its way into the pastoral curriculum, bartering for space with the existing subjects. Pressure is on to shorten the time required for developing pastoral leaders and this requires academic leaders to determine carefully what subjects deserve space in a limited curriculum. And then there is student pressure to ease the requirements or to focus the curriculum on more applied subjects, things that have immediate pay-off. Given

the costs of pastoral education and the time restraints that emerging leaders frequently experience, perhaps the space in the curriculum devoted to acquiring capacity to work directly with the Greek and Hebrew Bible might be put to better use?

Can the study of Greek or Hebrew biblical interpreta-

tion survive in such a context? If it doesn't, what does it mean for the proclamation of the Gospel and the discipling of God's people in the next fifty years? If pastors of the future lack the competence to engage the Scriptures in their Greek and Hebrew forms, will the churches be stronger for it? I doubt it. Providing this kind of education and competence development for new pastoral leaders requires specific investments in people and programs. The immediate returns are not dramatic, but the long term implications for the health of the church will be critical. These same kinds of arguments compel us also to invest significantly in developing ministry leaders with deep, theological competence. ■

BEST PRACTICES FOR CHURCH BOARDS

BY LYLE SCHRAG, D.MIN.

On June 19, 2010 leaders from five Fellowship Baptist churches met in Revelstoke for training through the Best Practices for Church Boards Basic Workshop. The host, Pastor Rick Eby, of the Revelstoke Fellowship Baptist Church described the experience: *Several years ago, four of us from our leadership team participated in a Best Practices workshop. We found the training to be very helpful and all wished that more of the Board members had been able to come. As a church leadership team, we have been committed to taking those necessary steps and strides in learning to work together as effectively as we can. This year's Best Practices helped us to take another of those strides.*



When we heard that Best Practices needed a host church we quickly volunteered, more out of selfish reasons than altruistic. We operate with two boards - elders and deacons. Hosting the workshop seemed the best way to get all thirteen of our Board members to this training opportunity. The workshop provided a review of some principles we were already familiar with, but needed to have reinforced. It also gave us good, new tools to

work with. The times of applying what we learned into our church experience were very valuable. Thank you to Lyle and his team for investing time and effort into this much needed training of our church boards. We highly recommend to those church's who haven't yet participated in such a workshop - this is training that you need to take!

In the last five years, over 50 churches and 350 church leaders have participated in this training, some for multiple sessions. This has created a rich environment for learning, and with each session, new things are added making the training more relevant to the needs of Church leaders. Registration for the next session, to be held in Langley on November 6, 2010, is now open. Space is available and details for registration can be accessed through the Northwest web site. ■



northwest
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seminary



NEW RESOURCE FOR LEADERS

BY ARCHIE SPENCER, TH.D.

Christians on the west coast have been blessed with a new opportunity to help train emerging leaders and lay folk who do not have the time to undertake further studies at college or seminary. Koinos has now made available on line and in churches several seminars that are designed to introduce interested individuals to the basics of theological education with introductory seminars designed for lay learners. I have copied the description below with the link. My own course, The Story of Christian Theology, or Theology 101, is available there as well. This is an excellent opportunity to expand your biblical and theological horizons.



KOINOS is a program developed by Pacific Association for Theological Studies (Seattle), an association of churches and educational institutions linked together to make theological education accessible. For more detailed information see koinosseminars.wordpress.com. ■

FINANCIAL UPDATE

As we enter that last quarter of our fiscal year, we are asking God for \$70,000 in gifts to fully fund our various educational projects. Your financial gift in the next month or two will be very critical to the achievement of our goal. Thank you for prayerful considering how you might assist.

Larry Perkins, Ph.D.
President

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