



New Theological Seminary of the West

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Issue Five

MAJOR GIFT RECEIVED

The seminary is pleased to announce the receipt of a major gift of \$100,000 from Dana and Dave Dornsife. The Dornsifes are well known, faith-motivated humanitarian philanthropists. Projects which they have supported include cancer research, world-wide pure water projects and educational endeavors. Their support of higher education have included the gift that endowed the Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences at the University of Southern California, and previous major gifts to support theological education. NTSWest is grateful to the Dornsifes for this gift that provides a timely economic boost for the support of the growing range of education programs being offered by NTSWest.



FALL HIGHLIGHTS

OPENING RETREAT BEGINS THE SECOND YEAR OF CLASSES

New and continuing students gathered with faculty for an Opening Retreat held at the La Canada Presbyterian Church on Saturday, September 26. Led by **Chaplain Charles Marks** and a student-faculty committee composed of **Lynn Smith, Ruth Mandernach, Janna Gosselin** and **Brian Symonds**, the retreat began our second year of classes. Meeting in the beautiful Cook Prayer Chapel, after an introductory "getting to know you" session, students and faculty talked together about the seminary's distinctive understanding of the way learning is always both intellectual and practical in each of the fall classes. New student **Eduardo Jesús Arismendi-Pardi** commented:

"What I found so impressive was the unique focus of the NTSW, that is, a student-focused seminary where the practical and theoretical intersect in terms of uniting one's personal spiritual growth with the academic."

EXCITEMENT IN FALL CLASSES

In only our second year, **eighty students** are meeting in six classes in **Costa Mesa, East Whittier, Encino, La Canada, Santa Ana, Tustin**, plus an Independent Study offering in **Irvine**. As a church-centered seminary, classes are meeting in congregations in Episcopal, National Baptist, and Presbyterian congregations. Already students who signed up as a its—what we call "toe in the water" students—are deciding to switch to either the Master of Arts in Christian Practice or the Master of Divinity degree programs.

The faculty, after listening to several pastors who told us that last year's semester-long classes—14 weeks—were too long for congregations, decided at its October Faculty Meeting to switch to a quarter system—10 weeks.

THE GATHERING

San Marino Community Church was the host for NTSWest's fall GATHERING on Saturday, November 5. Students, prospective students, faculty, trustees, and friends, gathered together around the theme: "The Future of the Church in Southern California."

Lively table conversation focused on issues facing the church in a changing culture.



After lunch the Reverend Jeff O'Grady, senior pastor of the host congregation, offered a keynote address on the theme.



Attending the Gathering was new NTSWest student **Eduardo Jesús Arismendi-Pardi**.

“NTSWest...has helped me to learn to love and live with the Psalms in a very personal way... it has provided a template for prayer.”

- A student in the fall course of *Psalms*

The reason we are getting such terrific feedback already on our classes is that our faculty, all involved in some kind of ministry, combine the academic and the practical in their daily lives. **Dr. Jeff McCrory**, in his **Psalms** class, brings the best academic scholarship as he reads from his Hebrew Bible, but again and again encourages each of the twenty-one students to discover how the Psalms can become part of both our personal and church life. And each week we sing Hebrew songs accompanied by Jeff on his guitar. The English translation of Psalm 133:1 reads, “Behold how good and how pleasant it is when brothers and sisters live together as one.” The Hebrew song:

“Hinney Mah Tov oo-Mah Nayim
Shevet Achim Gam Yachad”

NTSWEST PARTNERS WITH THE NATIONAL BAPTIST ANNUAL CONGRESS ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

On October 29-31, at the request of the National Baptist Convention, the seminary provided leadership for their annual Congress on Christian Education. Sixty participants attended one of the four seminars: *Technology in the Church*, *Youth and Young Adult Ministry*, *Stewardship for Today*, and *Transformative Pastoral Leadership*. The event was held at the Greater Community Missionary Baptist Church in Pacoima.

From participants in the Youth and Young Adult Ministry class:

“There is not enough room on this form - front or back - to express my gratitude for these two lovely Godly and Humble servants of God!”... “excellent and awesome, very knowledgeable!”

SPIRITUALITY AND AGING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

NTSWest began a new Certificate program in September. The Spirituality and Aging certificate is focused on the importance of Spirituality in people's lives, as they age. The Certificate consists of four courses spaced over six months and includes a major written project designing a new program in each student's own context of ministry. Those in the program include professionals serving in a variety of programs and facilities, including congregational ministry. The seminary, in cooperation with the be.group, hope to offer this program again in the fall of 2016. ELCA pastor, Donald Koepke is the coordinator of this certificate program.

Other new and prospective students who attended the Fall Gathering:



Shelley Irvine



Josiel Perez