A quarterly publication of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

AWARE

October 2016

2015-2016 Annual Report
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary named to 2016-2017 Class of Seminaries that Change the World

Trina Armstrong, assistant professor of pastoral theology and pastoral care, joins the faculty of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

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Aware is published quarterly by the development office for alums and friends of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, a graduate school of theology related to The United Methodist Church.

Founded in 1853, the seminary serves more than 500 students from many denominations and various cultural backgrounds, fostering an atmosphere of ecumenical interaction. Garrett-Evangelical creates bold leaders through master of divinity, master of arts, master of theological studies, doctor of philosophy, and doctor of ministry degrees. Its 4,500 living alums serve church and society around the world.

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Grace and Peace to our Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Alums and Friends!

This fall, we welcomed the 2016-2017 entering class with an uptick in enrollment. The halls are alive with the excitement of new life and fresh perspectives! Our students are glad to be at Garrett-Evangelical, believing that the Spirit of God has been at work in their lives guiding them to this particular seminary. They are deeply committed to serving God and making a real difference in the world. They are looking to us to prepare and equip them for a variety of transformative ministries.

Rev. Dr. Michael C. R. Nabors, senior pastor of the 134-year-old, historic Second Baptist Church in Evanston, was our fall convocation speaker. In his address, “For Such a Time as This,” he reflected on Esther 4:1-14 where it becomes clear that God chooses ordinary people to do extraordinary things in the rightness of a given moment. Nabors encouraged students to listen and discern God’s call up on their lives, remaining open to new and challenging learning and to the range of diversity already being experienced, and to be ready to take action as God directs their steps.

For a Baptist man, he skirted very close to our Wesleyan heritage! We recognize the wisdom of John Wesley, who taught the necessity of staying close to God and pursuing knowledge. This combination of hearts of faith and critical learning provides the underpinnings for taking action, for loving our neighbor.

This semester, I have the good fortune of co-teaching with Dr. Nancy Bedford the first-year required “Biblical and Theological Hermeneutics” seminar for all PhD students. I began that first class with a prayer for our work together, for openness to learning, for trust in the Holy Spirit to guide our way, and for gratitude for the privilege of teaching and learning together. The class included a student who had completed his basic theological education at the University of Chicago and another student from a graduate program at Northwestern, among others. As we introduced ourselves, we learned something of students’ backgrounds, their experience of studying the interpretation of texts, and their hopes and anxieties for the course.

One Pentecostal pastor remarked appreciatively that he could not believe we had begun the class with prayer. Another described surprise that we could speak from a faith perspective about Jesus in a PhD class. Bedford quickly responded by telling the students they would be held accountable for their explicit understanding of God as we work through the required readings. She called upon them to see themselves as theologians and to proceed with their scholarship intentionally from this standpoint.

The United Methodist commitment to the combination of vital piety and education goes all the way back to John Wesley in 1729 and “The Holy Club” at Oxford University. Garrett-Evangelical embodies this commitment in each of its programs, including the PhD program. We prepare persons of faith who are also scholars to “go and teach” as Jesus commanded. Our colleges and seminaries are in need of our graduates who will help to prepare the next generation of servant leaders called by God for these desperate times.

In this issue of Aware, you will learn more about our PhD program, some of the exciting ministry our PhD alums are doing, and its new director, Dr. Charles Cosgrove. In addition, this issue features the 2015-2016 Annual Report of the Development Office and the excellent work we count on to support the ongoing mission of the seminary.

As always, we give unceasing thanks to God for you and for the many ways you are engaged in leading transformation. Garrett-Evangelical alums are everywhere, and I have loved seeing so many of you during these past months at all the United Methodist conferences. May God bless you and your ministries.
We offer our heartfelt thanks to the 1,174 alums, 770 friends, 57 churches, 51 trustees, 21 corporations, 18 estates, and 16 foundations who supported Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in the 2015-16 fiscal year (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016). The $4.75 million received in gifts during the 2015-2016 fiscal year enabled Garrett-Evangelical to:

- Educate more than 400 future Christian leaders
- Provide scholarship assistance totaling $2.3 million to deserving students
- Send 71 graduates into the world as pastors, deacons, Christian educators, spiritual directors, chaplains, counselors, and non-profit professionals
- Hire a new assistant professor of pastoral theology and pastoral care
- Add $2.4 million to the endowment
- Surpass the $92 million mark in the seminary’s $100 million capital campaign

We are grateful for your support, and we invite you again this year to help us fulfill our mission of preparing bold Christian leaders for the church, the academy, and the world.

There are numerous ways to support Garrett-Evangelical’s mission. To find which way works best for you, go to www.Garrett.edu/WaysToGive.

Development Office Summary

**Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Gift Sources and Totals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Type</th>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>Current Operations</th>
<th>Capital Gifts</th>
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Forging Our Future: The Final Lap Campaign Update

When Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2003, it launched a $35 million capital campaign. That goal was later raised to $60 million in 2006 and then to $100 million in 2010.

So much has been accomplished in this campaign because of the generosity of many people. Ninety new leadership scholarships have been endowed, four faculty positions (in theology, worship, preaching, and spiritual formation) have been endowed, $46 million has been committed to unrestricted endowment, campus facilities have been renovated, and the library has been strengthened in a number of ways.

Yes, much has been accomplished in the seminary’s capital campaign, and the Garrett-Evangelical community is extremely grateful for the 16,804 individuals, churches, foundations, and corporations who have given $92.9 million toward the $100 million goal. These gifts help ensure that Garrett-Evangelical will continue to prepare strong Christian leaders for many years to come.

The finish line for the Forging Our Future: The Final Lap campaign is in sight, but much still remains to be done. With $7 million yet to be raised, Garrett-Evangelical hopes to:

- Establish at least 10 more leadership scholarships
- Endow a chair in Global Christianity and World Religions
- Endow a chair in Methodist/Wesleyan Studies
- Endow the Center for the Church and the Black Experience
- Receive additional unrestricted campaign gifts

When the board of trustees raised the goal to $100 million in 2010, the board set a target date of December 31, 2017 to complete the campaign. That date is fast approaching. If you share Garrett-Evangelical’s commitment to prepare outstanding Christian leaders, we invite your participation in the seminary’s Forging Our Future: The Final Lap campaign. Gifts for any of the above goals are welcome and can be made as outright gifts, pledges over a five-year period, or planned gift commitments. Many naming opportunities are available for those who would like to leave a legacy or honor a loved one.

Please help us put the campaign over the top! For more information, contact David Heetland, vice president for development, at david.heetland@garrett.edu or 847.866.3970.

<table>
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<th>Campaign Component</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Commitments to Date</th>
<th>Percent of Goal</th>
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<td>Unrestricted (including facility renovation)</td>
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Garrett-Evangelical alums and friends have created many new endowment funds during the seminary’s *Forging Our Future* campaign. Gifts to endowed funds are some of the most helpful gifts to Garrett-Evangelical, for they are gifts that keep on giving, providing a living legacy for generations to come. These charitable gifts are invested in perpetuity, with the earnings providing much-needed scholarships and other support to the seminary.

Endowments at Garrett-Evangelical provide for scholarships, faculty support, and academic programs. Named scholarship endowments can be established with a minimum commitment of $25,000. All endowments can be funded with cash or other gifts of value, such as stocks, bonds, or property that can be sold to realize a cash value. An endowed fund can also be created through a charitable bequest or other type of planned gift.

A number of people have decided to endow their annual gift to the seminary through a planned gift commitment so that the endowment fund will continue to generate income equivalent to their annual gift each year after they pass away. Here’s how it works: Let’s say that Reverend and Mrs. Jones make an annual leadership gift of $1,000 to Garrett-Evangelical. They can permanently endow that gift by including Garrett-Evangelical in their will for $20,000. Five percent of that endowed fund would then generate an annual gift of $1,000. Any earnings above five percent would be placed back into the endowment fund so that it would continue to grow to keep pace with inflation even if no other gifts are added to the endowment.

To find out how much it would take to permanently endow your annual gift to the seminary, simply multiply your annual gift by 20. A $500 annual gift would require a planned gift commitment of $10,000. A $10,000 annual gift would require a planned gift commitment of $200,000.

In actuality, the typical planned gift is not 20 times the annual gift. According to research, a typical planned gift is 200 to 300 times the size of a donor’s largest annual gift.

Whether your planned gift commitment is 20 times or 200 times the size of your annual gift, it is a wonderful way to perpetuate your gift to Garrett-Evangelical, a wonderful way to help the seminary reach its $100 million campaign goal, and a wonderful way to ensure the long-term strength of an institution that has been preparing strong Christian leaders for more than 160 years! Interested? Contact David Heetland, vice president for development, at 847.866.3970.
Garrett-Evangelical Welcomes Trina Armstrong

Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Care

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is excited to announce the appointment of Rev. Dr. Trina Armstrong as assistant professor of pastoral theology and pastoral care. With her prior teaching experience, commitments to the church and the community, as well as her clinical work, Armstrong brings a wealth of knowledge to the classroom and the seminary community at-large. Her appointment officially began on July 1, 2016.

After a thorough process and the review of many candidates, the search committee unanimously and enthusiastically recommended Armstrong for the position, noting, “We are convinced Armstrong will make vital contributions to the seminary’s efforts to expand the models of pastoral practice for which we train students, deepen our pastoral theological reflection on those practices, and inspire students and colleagues with her personal and professional energy.”

Armstrong comes to Garrett-Evangelical from United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, where she was assistant professor of pastoral theology and pastoral care. In addition, she served as a systemic family therapist with Nystrom and Associates, providing psychotherapy and family counseling to adolescents and families in the Twin Cities. Armstrong, an itinerant elder in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, has served on the ministerial staffs of several AME churches, most recently as associate minister at St. James AME Church, St. Paul, Minnesota. She has also worked as a hospice chaplain, community-based therapist, substance abuse counselor, and a pastoral counselor to homeless families, formerly incarcerated women, and at-risk youth.

When asked about coming to Garrett-Evangelical, Armstrong said: “I’m thrilled to be joining a refreshingly diverse community of passionate leaders, stellar scholars, and students committed to serving the church, academy, and our communities. In addition, I look forward to working with two amazing senior scholars in the field of pastoral care and counseling and the opportunity to build on a program with a long history of training students to be effective caregivers and educators. After my campus visit, I left feeling certain, in this season of re-imagining theological education, that Garrett-Evangelical is poised to continue its legacy of training skilled, bold, and articulate leaders to meet the ever-changing needs of the church and the wider sphere.”

Armstrong holds a doctor of philosophy degree in spiritual care and counseling from the Claremont School of Theology, a master of divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary, a master of arts degree in psychology with an emphasis on marriage and family therapy from California Southern University, and a bachelor of science degree in information systems from Golden Gate University.

Her research intersects with practical and womanist theology, post-trauma psychology, and relational cultural theory. She also researches issues of loss, grief, death and dying, crisis care, and the impact of historical trauma on the wellbeing of African American families and interpersonal relationships. She has written several academic papers on African American family systems and approaches to pastoral care that focus on psychological aspects including, “Rot at the Core: Black Theology and Psychotherapy: An Integrative Approach Towards Liberation from Psychological Slavery.”

Armstrong holds professional memberships in the American Academy of Religion, Society of Pastoral Theology, American Psychological Association, Association of Black Psychologists, and the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.
Committed to Academic Excellence and the PhD

With a rich history of scholarship, a strong reputation for teaching, and access to world-class academic resources, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is committed to excellence throughout its Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Program. We are home to one of the top 10 theological libraries in the nation. As a member of the largest concentration of seminaries in the United States, we offer abundant opportunities for students to develop skills as teachers and scholars. We were also selected as members of the first cohort of the Forum for Theological Exploration’s Institutional Doctoral Network.

The PhD program at Garrett-Evangelical prepares teachers and scholars for seminaries, church-related colleges, universities, ecumenical agencies, and local congregations. We offer concentrations in biblical studies; Christian education and congregational studies; history of Christianity and historical theology; liturgical studies; pastoral theology, personality and culture; and theological and ethical studies.

Our PhD graduates leave with a knowledge and mastery of key approaches, scholarly literature, and research methods in their focused area and appropriate cognate studies. They are engaged in practices of research, teaching, and leadership and are theologians and practical theologians. Below you will read about five of our graduates who are contributing to the missions of the Church and the academy.

Jo Ann Deasy

*Director of Institutional Initiatives and Student Research at the Association of Theological Schools in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

- PhD, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
- MDiv, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- BS in civil engineering, University of California, Berkeley

Dr. Jo Ann Deasy received her PhD from Garrett-Evangelical in 2010, with a specialization in congregational studies and a minor in contextual theology. In 2014, after serving for seven years as dean of students and community life at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago and four years as the pastor of Sojourner Covenant Church in Evanston, Deasy became director of institutional initiatives and student research at the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

In this position, she has been coordinator for the Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers Initiative funded by the Lilly Endowment and carried out under the auspices of ATS. Her work with the initiative focuses on research, education, institutional strategies, and collaboration in addressing the special economic challenges that confront those seeking to enter the ministry fields.

Deasy was drawn to Garrett-Evangelical’s PhD program because of its grounding in the church, with some students serving as pastors while pursuing their doctoral work. She says that her experience in the program “changed the way I do theology and the way I look at the world” by showing her how “our practices themselves are inherently theological” and how they “reveal what we believe about God, ourselves, and the world around us.”

Deasy was also deeply impacted by the feminist witness of the “brilliant women” with whom she studied, by the faculty member who introduced her to the rich history and tradition of leadership in the Black church, and by the teacher who recognized and named her ability as a theologian. This shaping, she says, gave her the analytical tools to discern how inequality, privilege, and injustice are embedded in social and institutional systems. She has found that this intellectual training was especially valuable in her
current work at ATS on the economics of ministry and in her denominational advocacy for women clergy.

A few of Deasy’s publications include:

- “Seven Things We’ve Learned about Today’s Theology Students: Highlights from the 2015-2016 Entering Student Questionnaire,” Colloquy Online (March 2016).

Gunning Francis’s vocational passion is to live and teach God’s vision of love and justice for society’s most vulnerable communities. In 2012, she won the prestigious Engaged Scholars Fellowship, which enabled her to conduct a study of the perspective of mothers of middle-class African American young men—how they understand the risks posed to their children and what can be done to foster the wholeness and well-being of African American young men. When the Michael Brown shooting occurred in Ferguson, Missouri, Gunning Francis engaged her students in discussion and public witness, then wrote a searching analysis of the event in Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership & Awakening Community (Chalice Press, 2015).

While a student at Garrett-Evangelical, she was impressed with faculty who were “highly respected scholar-practitioners.” These teachers, she says, “became invaluable mentors and friends who have deeply informed my own scholarly pursuits and pedagogical practices.” She also found “a community ethos at Garrett-Evangelical that supported relationality and growth,” an approach to life and learning that has served her well throughout her career.

Gunning Francis has long made the tenets of social activism for racial justice the guiding threads of her teaching and scholarship. In her new role as dean, she is eager to lead conversations with colleagues, students, and constituents about new possibilities for enlivening the church’s witness for wholeness and social justice.

A few of Gunning Francis’s writings include:


Leah Gunning Francis

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana

- Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, Fontbonne University
- PhD, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
- MDiv, Candler School of Theology, Emory University
- BS in marketing, Hampton University

Dr. Leah Gunning Francis received a PhD in Christian education and congregational studies from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in 2009. From 2008 to 2015, she served on the faculty at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis as assistant professor of Christian education and associate dean of contextual education. In 2016, she was appointed vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis.
Brent Peterson

Dean of the School of Theology and Christian Ministries, Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa, Idaho

• PhD, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
• MDiv, Nazarene Theological Seminary
• BS, Northwest Nazarene University

Dr. Brent Peterson received a PhD in liturgical studies from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in 2010. The following year, he won the Outstanding Dissertation Award from the Wesleyan Theological Society. Since 2007, he has served on the faculty of Northwest Nazarene University (NNU), and in 2016, he was named dean of the School of Theology and Christian Ministries at NNU.

Peterson says he was drawn to Garrett-Evangelical because it “cares about people and the church” and its professors are nurturing, challenging, and always supportive. At Garrett-Evangelical, he found nothing of the proverbial “ivory tower” disconnected from the real world. Peterson is currently working with a colleague on a book on the atonement that will explore “the backside of the cross,” how “those who have been sinned against, the victims, can find healing in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.”

Having spent time with Syrian refugees in Germany and aid workers in Paris serving African refugees, Peterson sees signs of the kingdom of God “erupting all over the globe.” In the midst of the world’s great suffering, he wants to be “an agent of hope, peace, and reconciliation, especially to those marginalized and in despair.”

A few of Peterson’s writings include:

• Created to Worship: God's Invitation to Become Fully Human (Beacon Hill Press, 2012).

Jesús Rodríguez Sánchez

Professor of Pastoral Theology at Inter-American University of Puerto Rico

• PhD, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
• DMin, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary
• MDiv, Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico
• BA, World University of Puerto Rico

Dr. Jesús Rodríguez Sánchez received a PhD in pastoral theology, personality, and culture from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in 2003 and since then has been teaching at Inter-American University of Puerto Rico, where he is professor of pastoral theology. Looking back on his Garrett-Evangelical education, he can see that he “internalized the influences of many of my professors and mentors at Garrett-Evangelical.” He says he was shaped by their teaching methods, animated by the urgent questions that enlivened them, and deepened in his commitments to an integrative and cross-disciplinary approach to reflection on faith and life.

When he was considering PhD curricula, he looked for an “integrative educational model” and was drawn to Garrett-Evangelical’s program because it “took into account the relationship between theology, sociology, and psychology in understanding the role of ministry and theology in contemporary society.” What he discovered, he says, was even more than that, an education that prepared him for the academic environment of the Inter-American University, where he teaches in an atmosphere that “is scientific and secular in nature and often challenges theological propositions.”

His teachers at Garrett-Evangelical helped him find his own voice and style of engagement in such a setting. “This is the reason why most of my books, which are written in Spanish, include in their subtitles phrases such as ‘a transdisciplinary dialogue between pastoral theology,’ followed by the discipline I am engaging, whether psychology, sociology, psychiatry, etc.,” he says.
Garrett-Evangelical’s PhD program also inspired an important direction of his research – his commitment to document the history of Protestant theology in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. He recalls how his advisor and dissertation committee emphasized the unique value of cultural research based on ethnographic studies and primary documents analysis. Fired up by a vision to do this kind of work for the churches of his native land, he established the Center for the Study and Research of the Christian Faith in Puerto Rico. The center is an internet site with a database of the original documents of key Puerto Rican scholars. To date, the center has attracted some four million viewers and is a primary source of research for seminarians, historians, and professors locally and abroad.

A few of Rodriguez Sánchez’s writings include:

• Teoría y Praxis del Ministerio de la Capellanía en el Hospital: Una Introducción (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Situm, 2016).
• A Latino/a Clergy Self Psychology Hermeneutics of Pastoral Care (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholar’s Press, 2014).
• Imágenes del Cuidado Pastoral y Su Influencia en la Calidad del Cuido (Hato Rey, Puerto Rico: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas, 2006).

Bernard Wong
Assistant Professor of Theological Studies, China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong

• PhD, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
• MDiv, China Graduate School of Theology
• MS in chemical engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
• BA in chemical engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Dr. Bernard Wong is a 2015 graduate of Garrett-Evangelical with a specialization in Christian ethics. Since graduation, he has been serving as assistant professor of theological studies at China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong.

The scholarship of Garrett-Evangelical professor, Dr. Brent Waters initially attracted Wong to the Garrett-Evangelical PhD program. Waters’s publications on subjects ranging from the modern family to issues posed by technology appealed to Wong’s own breadth of moral concerns.

At Garrett-Evangelical, Wong learned how to relate moral insight to concrete human situations. “The diverse faculty and student body,” he says, “showed me how the Christian faith can be contextualized in various social locations.” This has proven especially valuable as Wong seeks to do theology in Hong Kong, a diverse and growing city in the midst of political change. Wong says he wants to help the church respond to these changes “with a robust political theology.”

At the same time, Wong is examining how the rapid growth of modern technology in Hong Kong is affecting human life in the city. “People are generally unaware,” he observes, “of how we’ve been formed by technology and how modern technology affects our moral decisions.” In his teaching and writing, Wong is seeking to help Christians think through the role of technology in their lives.

A few of Wong’s publications include:

• “Anger of the Children of Peace,” Christian Times 1489 (February 17, 2016).
• “Hope and The Lord of the Rings,” Christian Times 1489 (January 20, 2016).
• “Hong Kong University, TSA, and the Church as an ‘Alternative Community,’” Christian Times 1477 (December 17, 2015).
• “Imprecatory Psalms and the Culture of Cursing,” Christian Times 1477 (November 19, 2015).

To learn more about Garrett-Evangelical’s PhD Program, go to www.Garrett.edu/PhD
Where Does a Garrett-Evangelical PhD Lead?

By Rev. Dr. Stephanie Perdew VanSlyke (G-ETS MDiv 1996 and PhD 2012), Garrett-Evangelical affiliate faculty member in Christian history, and senior pastor, First Congregational Church, UCC, Wilmette, Illinois

Those who hold these positions have one thing in common: a doctor of philosophy (PhD) degree from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Despite the rumors that there are fewer things to do with a PhD, Garrett-Evangelical graduates are proving otherwise, and this list of positions is just a small sampling.

While it is true that not all PhD graduates will find full-time academic careers, those entering Garrett-Evangelical’s PhD program often envision their callings more broadly. Many will put their training to work at the intersection of the church and the academy and seek Garrett-Evangelical’s program because of its combination of ecclesial emphasis and intellectual challenge.

Garrett-Evangelical’s PhD program offers opportunities for inter-disciplinary coursework and research and expects that students will draw upon faculty relationships and courses both within and beyond the seminary. The program offers flexibility and creativity in coursework and research, along with rigorous academic expectations appropriate to obtaining a PhD. While we often hear that many PhD students across the country get lost in the process, barely know their advisors, or fail to finish, our graduates attest that Garrett-Evangelical’s program is designed to help foster students’ progress, success, and completion.

Students are advised to think about how each course, paper, or project contributes to their future qualifying exams or their dissertation and are also reminded that the dissertation is not the culmination of a life’s work in the church and academy, but just the beginning.

Garrett-Evangelical PhD graduates are departing the program to continue a life’s work of service at the intersection of church and academy, whether in colleges, seminaries, institutes, interfaith work, global ministries, denominational settings, bi-vocational ministry, or in the local church. They are all enriched by a program combining interdisciplinary expectations, academic rigor, a commitment to the dialogue of church and academy, and a focus upon success, support, and completion.

To learn more about the PhD program at Garrett-Evangelical, go to www.Garrett.edu/PhD.
A very popular book on ancient Rome (composed nearly 100 years ago by a well-known scholar) has only a few words to say about ancient women, and it turns out that everything it does say about them concerns aristocrats or those made notable by wealth. The ancient Greek and Roman authors are equally uninterested in ordinary women—and ordinary men for that matter. Common folk—the vast majority of people in the ancient Mediterranean world—are left to historical oblivion. Most elites assumed that the lives of the masses were devoid of color and variety and anything ennobling.

In recent scholarship, however, there has been an effort to recover the particularities of forgotten ancient people. Patient collecting of scattered incidental remarks adds up to a glimpse. An ephemeral source such as a papyrus letter, rescued from an ancient garbage dump, offers a clue. Applying modern socio-economic models to scanty ancient evidence suggests a portrait of common people even if we do not know their names and particulars.

Using such a method, a young New Testament professor at the Methodist School of Theology in Ohio, Ryan Schellenberg, has been sharpening the picture of the poor in the early church, showing that they were not merely passive objects of alms but almsgivers themselves, adept in stretching their modest provisions so that someone else might eat or be clothed. People like that are worth knowing and remembering, for wisdom does not come only from the upper echelons of society. It comes from the mass of us, including those at the bottom of the social order. “God chose what is low and despised in the world,” Paul says, “even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are” (1 Cor 1:28). Ancient people otherwise destined for oblivion are declared agents of the New Creation in this statement. Therefore, we want to make friends with them and their brothers and sisters in every generation.

Dr. Melanie Baffes (G-ETS 2010 and 2016) makes friends of such a person, Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus. This Mary makes a cameo appearance in the Gospel of John in the story of the death and resurrection of Lazarus. Most commentators have treated Mary as an unimportant figure in the story, a mere foil for other utterances and actions, not a voice worth paying attention to. Yet Baffes pays attention to her. In her new book, Love, Loss, and Abjection: The Journey of New Birth in the Gospel of John, Baffes uses one of the newer methods of narrative analysis to study John 11, where she discovers a remarkable story, a transformative journey of faith in Mary’s encounter with Jesus. To speak in the language of the gospel’s own hermeneutic, Baffes looks at Mary of Bethany the way God does, the way God teaches us to see people and to listen to them—especially to any who are marginalized, overlooked, or ignored, whether in the world or even in the commentaries! I learn from Baffes’s study that it pays to shake off our dominant interest in only the larger-than-life characters of the Bible and to discover the background figures, the seemingly incidental persons, the apparently too-ordinary and undramatic people. For God chooses them, too, and speaks through them to us in a still, small voice. I close with an excerpt from Baffes about what she discovered in Mary’s story:

In my early readings of John, Mary of Bethany seemed to be the only one out of all the characters in John’s gospel to undergo the kind of transformation that might be characterized as birth from above. . . . Mary is the one whose faith is called into question as she alternates between hoping in Jesus and being disappointed by him—rejecting him at one moment yet being open, humble, and receptive at other moments. . . . It is precisely this dialectic that sets up the possibility for a deeper, more genuine relationship of mutuality and love between Mary and Jesus.

I am grateful for this word from Baffes, and proud to teach at Garrett-Evangelical, where she recently earned her PhD degree.
In Memoriam

Our Christian sympathy is extended to the family and friends of the following alums who have died in Christ.

1940s
Sargent J. Wright, GBI 1944, Carmichael, CA, died March 7, 2014.

1950s
Vincent L. Rothwell, ETS 1955, Westfield, NY, died June 1, 2016.
Robert King, GBI 1959, Rockford, IL, died September 2, 2016.
Vincent L. Rothwell, ETS 1955, Westfield, NY, died June 1, 2016.

1960s

1970s
John A. Rierson, GTS 1964, Indianapolis, IN, died June 18, 2016.

1980s
Simone Rehak, G-ETS 1989, Chicago, IL, died August 22, 2015.

1990s

Remembering James E. Will, Alum and Emeritus Professor

Rev. Dr. James E. Will (ETS 1952), alum and emeritus professor of systematic theology at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, died at 88 on September 10, 2016, in a single car accident. Will was a member of the faculty at Garrett-Evangelical for 39 years, first as professor of philosophical theology at Evangelical Theological Seminary in Naperville, Illinois starting in 1959 and later as professor of systematic theology in 1973 at the newly merged Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Will retired and was named emeritus professor in 1998.

Reflecting on the life of Will, Garrett-Evangelical President Lallene J. Rector remarked: “Jim was a champion for justice in many forms and a leader at the seminary in teaching inter-faith courses for four decades. During that time, his engagement in process theology and perspectives in philosophical and liberation theologies had a tremendous impact. We give thanks for Jim and his numerous contributions to Garrett-Evangelical.”

Will centered much of his teaching in the relation of faith to culture and theological ethics. He served as the first director of the Garrett-Evangelical Peace Institute, which was founded in 1975. This work led to the publication of numerous articles and books during his career, including Must Walls Divide? (1981), Moral Rejection of Nuclear Deterrence (1985), A Christology of Peace (1989), and The Universal God: Justice, Love, and Peace in the Global Village (1994). His final book, Review of a Contemporary Theology for Ecumenical Peace (2014), was authored at the age of 86. While written primarily for laity in the church, the book reads as a memoir. In it, Will told stories from his times in ROTC, college, and seminary, as well as when he taught in graduate school.

Ordained by the Evangelical United Brethren Church, a predecessor of The United Methodist Church, Will’s ministry extended far beyond the seminary classroom. He travelled all over eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, studying the ministry of churches in socialist societies. He was a principal speaker at the Christian Peace Conference in 1975 at Budapest, Hungary, and he represented the National Council of Churches-USA at a World Council of Churches consultation on human rights in Montreux, Switzerland in 1976. He also served as a member of the Commission on Faith and Order of the National Council of Churches and director of the Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, October 22 at 11 a.m. at Kingswood United Methodist Church in Buffalo Grove, Illinois. Messages of condolence may be sent to Rev. Dr. Hwa Young Chong at 721 Harlem Avenue, Glenview, Illinois 60025.
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary has been recognized as a Seminary that Changes the World, Class of 2016-17 by The Center for Faith and Service. Each year, the Center identifies a select group of seminaries and divinity schools offering innovative courses, programs, and opportunities for students seeking to engage in social justice and service work while in seminary.

“We are delighted and honored to be recognized as a seminary that is leaving a lasting imprint on the world,” said Garrett-Evangelical President Lallene J. Rector. “Positive change in the world is brought about through teaching and learning in community and through authentic and nurturing relationships. Garrett-Evangelical has long been committed to preparing spiritually grounded and prophetic leaders in this way.”

Garrett-Evangelical equips its students to proclaim the good news of the gospel, to foster deep spirituality in the lives of others, to serve with cultural competence and commitment to racial equity, and to lead transformative change for the well-being of all persons and creation. The seminary’s work in public theology over the last few years has led to the establishment of the Garrett-Evanston Children’s Defense Fund Freedom Schools program, continued work in the area of sustainability, a new doctor of ministry track in community organizing, and more. Through lectures, curriculum, and community engagement, Garrett-Evangelical continues to ensure public theology remains at the forefront of its work in preparing religious leaders to meet the ever-changing challenges and needs of our local and global communities.

The list of Seminaries that Change the World is published by The Center for Faith and Service, an organization that works to help seminaries, service programs, denominations and local congregations connect faith with service and social justice work. Reflecting on this year’s list of Seminaries that Change the World, Wayne Meisel, executive director of The Center for Faith and Service, remarked: “Anyone seeking to change the world ought to at least consider seminary or divinity school as an option to grow personally in one’s faith and to inspire, sustain, and deepen his or her commitment to neighbor, community, country, and the world. Through their commitment to collaborate, the diverse group of schools named on this year’s list of Seminaries that Change the World embody the best of faithful and justice seeking communities.”

For more information about Seminaries that Change the World or Garrett-Evangelical’s unique programs, courses, and scholarships, visit www.stctw.org.

About The Center for Faith and Service

Based out of McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois, The Center for Faith and Service works to develop new programs and identify existing resources that support the church to be present and relevant in the lives of young adults. Through a variety of initiatives, including Seminaries that Change the World, The Center partners with seminaries, summer camps, colleges, youth corps, denominations, and local congregations to create programs and resources that help young people connect their passions for service and justice with their faith.
Town Hall with President Lallene J. Rector

*January 18, 2017  |  12 p.m. - 1 p.m. (CST)*

Our annual Town Hall with President Lallene J. Rector will be held on Wednesday, January 18, 2017. In this 60-minute live presentation, participants will hear directly from President Rector, who will share the latest news and updates from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Participants will also have an opportunity to engage in dialogue with President Rector and ask questions.

This telephone forum will begin at 12:00 p.m. (CST). Details on how you can be a part of this exciting conversation will be made available beginning January 3, 2017. We encourage you to save the date!