Wondering What To Do With Your Old Car? Donate It To NWTS!

Northwest Theological Seminary has been approved by Vehicle Donation Processing Center, Inc., to participate in their vehicle donation program. How it works: you call 1-800-553-3018, where the operator will collect some information about your car (or other vehicle, boat, trailer, timeshare, or even real estate!). Within 48 hours you will be contacted by a local transport company to have your vehicle picked up. The vehicle will then be sold at auction to the highest bidder and the net proceeds will be given to NWTS. In addition, your donation will count as a legitimate tax deduction! For more information, contact Brian Belh at 425-787-5144 or email him at brian_nwts@yahoo.com.

An FYI on Return Envelopes...

As stewards of the resources our Lord has given to us, we are continually challenged to use these resources as efficiently as possible. To this end, we are no longer placing postage stamps on our return envelopes. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause, and are grateful for your continued support of NWTS!

Translators of Latin, German, Hungarian/Magyar Documents Needed!

Contact James T. Dennison, Jr., 17711 Spruce Way, Lynnwood, WA 98037 (425-787-5144)

THE KING NO ONE WANTED

Certainly Caesar Augustus wasn't interested. He was king par excellence. And he was very busy maintaining the Pax Romana. He needed more taxes to keep that peace. Consequently, his mind was occupied with the census he had decreed to raise these taxes. Likewise, the residents of Bethlehem were busy enjoying the peace of their little village. Actually, it had become less peaceful because all of their relatives were coming to register for the census. And furthermore, they had just finished celebrating Purim and were now celebrating Chanukah.

When Joseph arrived with Mary, nine months pregnant and having ridden over sixty miles on a donkey, no one seemed to be too sympathetic. But then, Mary's reputation had preceded her. Even though Joseph had married her (Matthew 1:24), every one remembered that she had become pregnant while engaged (Luke 2:5). After all, why did Joseph take her along and not leave her with her cousin, Elizabeth? Of course, to protect her from being stoned to death. So, who wants that couple in their home with that reputation? No one wants to be the talk of the town. Even the inn wasn't available. They would have to sleep in a cave with the animals. That is where they belong, isn't it?

The shepherds on the hillside weren't very interested either. They were busy with their sheep. But then, they weren't welcome in town. Shepherds had a reputation. They were thieves and liars. They couldn't give testimony in a court of law.

We recently held an election in this nation. The voice of the majority of the voters was for Pax Romana. Bring those troops back home! We don't want to fight some one else's battles. We want to enjoy our culture with its peace and freedom. And what are many Christians saying? Make the culture and government more Christian so we can enjoy Pax Christiana. I wonder, would we be more interested in King Jesus than any of those of his day? After all, he came to...

Continued on Page 6...
From Professor James T. Dennison, Jr.

The Psalms and the most Sublime Song (of Solomon): these are the parts of Scripture we have explored this semester in “Psalms and Wisdom Literature”. Our approach has included the study of the Hebrew text using the insights of J. P. Fokkelman (Reading Biblical Poetry and his monumental series Major Poems of the Hebrew Bible). We have also examined these texts using the biblical theology of Geerhardus Vos (“The Eschatology of the Psalter”). This unique interface between text as structure and pattern, and text as revelation of the Son of God (Christ in the Psalms and the Song) has deepened our love for the Eschatological Singer of Psalms and Song. We have found our own hearts filled with Hallelujahs (cf. Pss. 146-150) and our souls exhilarated by the Beloved Bridgroom of the Beloved Bride (S. Sol. 6:3: 7:10; Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 19:5-10; 21:2, 9). Some of the results of this approach are available in Mr. Dennison’s Kerux 2005 presentations entitled: “Psalms: Poetic Devices and Biblical-theological Reflection” (Two Parts)—available from the Seminary on CD. A more detailed study of the Song of Solomon by Mr. Dennison is also available from the Seminary on request—as is his article, “Solomon’s Sublime Song”.

The question of the freedom of the will is a perennial favorite in the dialogue between Calvinists and Arminians. The brilliant Calvinist, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), wrote the definitive answer to this discussion (first published in 1754). This semester, we have had a class of about twenty-five work through a close reading of all 439 pages of that profound book (Yale edition). In faithfulness to the Word of God and in harmony with common sense definitions of terms, Edwards shows that the Arminian notion of a will not connected to motives is an absurdity. A will in a state of absolute indifference (Arminian view) is a will absolutely indifferent to any motive; hence a will unmoved to volition or to choice (Edwards). This Arminian notion of the will is utter nonsense. Our Lord’s remark stands: “Everyone who commits sin is the slave of [in bondage to] sin” (Jn. 8:34). Praise God for irresistible, regenerating grace—grace that sets willful slaves free from bondage (Jn. 8:36; cf. the story of Lazarus in the tomb, Jn. 11). Edwards is a great help to us as we reflect on Free Will and Efficacious Grace in the Westminster Standards and the Three Forms of Unity.

Rev. Dennison was pulpit supply for two months this summer at Redeeming Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Port Angeles, Washington (Rev. William Renkema, pastor). During the Sunday School hour, he worked through the doctrine of the Trinity in dialogue fashion with the congregation, using Francis Turretin’s superb treatment of the topic in his Institutes.

This Fall, he is repeating the series on the Trinity at Trinity Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Bothell, Washington (Rev. Marc Renkema, pastor).

This series on the Trinity is also available to other congregations who may be interested in a thorough and orthodox discussion of this wonderful Biblical truth. Please contact the Seminary office if you have further questions (425-787-5144).

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### Northwest Theological Seminary

**Want to learn more about the Word of God? Audit any Spring 2007 class at NWTS for only $40!**

Visit your first class for free and register when you come again.

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**MONDAY**

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**Classes begin January 2, 2007. Classes end April 6, 2007.**

Spring Break Feb. 26 – Mar. 2, 2007


All classes are held at the NWTS campus in the facilities of Lynnwood Orthodox Presbyterian Church located at 17711 Spruce Way, Lynnwood, WA 98037. Adult members of the community are welcome to audit courses at $40.00 per course (auditors are not required to purchase textbooks unless specified). Courses for credit are $150.00 per credit hour for enrolled students. Northwest Theological Seminary reserves the right to cancel any class due to lack of student enrollment—full refunds to auditors will be issued in such an event.
"For Such a Time as This"

This phrase comes from the well known story of Esther (4:14). Here Esther, Queen of the Persian Empire, is challenged by Mordecai, her uncle, to approach the king and plead for her endangered people, the Jews. This is a very dangerous thing for her to do, for if she approaches the king without being summoned, she could be put to death. But what is Mordecai saying to her? He is pointing to God’s providence. Perhaps Esther is Queen because God in his good providence has intended her to act at this very moment to save his people, the Jews. And of course, this ultimately points to Christ.

The King No One Wanted...

call sinners to repentance and bring genuine peace between them and God (Luke 5:32). Are we interested in sinners and outcasts? Jesus began his reign with the lowly and it is they who come to him by grace. What kind of peace are we really interested in?

—The Rev. J. Peter Vosteen, Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology

who in the fullness of time, came to redeem his people, the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

I bring this story to your attention, not as a prooftext, but as a point of contemplating God’s providence. Christ is Lord of all, including history. And he is Lord not only of the totality of history, but of each of the moments in history, including our moment in history. And where do we, Northwest Theological Seminary, friends and supporters, stand in this particular moment? We stand in a time of challenge. We are a small school with great needs. We have two great needs to be specific: students and financial resources.

In light of our great needs at this moment in our history, I appeal to you, friends and supporters of Northwest Theological Seminary, to consider our needs at this time. Do you know students contemplating seminary studies this coming Fall 2007? Would you encourage them to consider Northwest Theological Seminary? Also, would you consider giving in this challenging time so that we may continue preparing ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? And who knows, perhaps you have come, in God’s good providence, to be in such a position to help us at just this time.

How You Can Help NWTS:

• Pray without Ceasing!
• Recommend NWTS to Students
• Donate Frequent Flyer Mileage
• Donate Your Used Car
• Direct Financial Contributions

From Professor Scott Sanborn

In Systematic Theology, we seek to understand the theology of the orthodox creeds and Reformed confessions along with the theologians who have enriched the Reformed tradition. Thus, in addition to class lectures, our systematics courses provide students with the opportunity to read and discuss the writings of Reformed theologians such as Francis Turretin (reading his three-volume Institutes of Eleventh Theology in the course of the systematics curriculum), Jonathan Edwards, B.B. Warfield, John Murray, and others.

Since Geerhardus Vos was himself fully conversant with the Church’s reflection on Scripture, his insights into the organic progress of revelation and our vital union with Christ are built upon and further enrich the Church’s own theology. Therefore, in our systematics courses we seek to develop the biblical theological insights of Geerhardus Vos and Herman Ridderbos and explore how these insights relate to Systematic Theology. As a result, we are continually reflecting upon the relationship of the biblical covenants in their continuity and discontinuity as they express the progressive eschatological triumph of Christ in redemptive history. We also spend a great deal of time thinking about how this historia salutis (history of salvation) relates to the ordo salutis (the order of salvation or our personal union with Christ). Thus, we consider how we, the Church, are legally and vitally united to this great drama of redemptive history in Christ.

Vos’s Christ-centered reflections on Scripture have truly unearthed life-giving words for the Church. Clearly, the vitality of the Church is essential to our life in the risen Christ. And our Savior governs his Church and dispenses his heavenly gifts through the Presbyterian form of church government prescribed in Scripture. Thus, we have one systematics course primarily devoted to the Church, its nature, and its government through the keys of the kingdom—the sound preaching of the Word, the sacraments, and church discipline. We try to consider all these things in light of their semi-eschatological nature. Thus, we are continually brought back to the great power and mercy of Christ, as he defends his Church against all her enemies and builds her up in her blessed communion above—to the praise and glory of God.

Finally, we encourage our students to follow the examples of Augustine, Calvin, Turretin, Edwards, Hodge, Warfield, and Van Til (to name a few) by learning some modern theology—some Karl Barth and Auburn Avenue Theology, but primarily Wolfhart Pannenberg and the New Perspective on Paul—in an effort to defend orthodox Christianity against its opponents. In the process, we explore a Christ-centered eschatological critique of these modern errors, following the admonition of the Apostle Paul to take “every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).
Over the past two years, I have been a student at NWTS. Before coming to NWTS, I made a diligent search into the many Reformed seminaries across the United States, having visited five of them and speaking to representatives at many more. At the end of that long search, I was convinced that NWTS offers one of the finest courses of preparation for ministry available. My past two and a half years of study has only confirmed and heightened that evaluation. How is that so? There are at least two reasons.

First, NWTS offers a curriculum that is thoroughly Reformed, academically challenging, and Scripturally rich. Let me give you a few examples of what I mean. In our Patristics class, the entire survey of the history of the early church is structured around extensive readings from the primary documents of the period. Like the Reformers themselves, students at NWTS are required to master the works of men like Augustine, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Athanasius, and the Cappadocian Fathers. In our Systematic Theology courses, students are required to master the entirety of Francis Turretin’s Institutes of Elenctic Theology, as well as the liberal challenges to orthodox Calvinism—all from primary document sources. Following a Van Tillian apologetic method, these challenges are shown not only to be internally incoherent, but also presupposing the Christian system they seek to destroy. In our Biblical Studies classes, the class lectures are based around the text of Scripture itself in its original language. Students are required to interact with the original Greek and Hebrew in class as the text is exegeted and explicated. Finally, all of this is done from a confessionally Reformed framework. The Westminster Confession of Faith is a required first year class, and an elective on the Three Forms of Unity is also available. In sum, NWTS students learn to engage, interact, and critique scholarship, both liberal and conservative.

Second, NWTS is also interested in training men to be pastors and churchmen. It is this pastor-theological model, exemplified in the apostle Paul, into which students are modeled and shaped. While other seminaries require students to preach as little as 2-4 times a year, at NWTS I have been required to preach 5-6 times each semester (10-12 times a year). Each sermon is followed by a full student and teacher evaluation. Furthermore, NWTS requires classes on worship, church polity (both Presbyterian and Continental), missions, Christian education, and counseling. In these classes the work of the scholar-theologian is brought directly to bear upon the life of God’s beloved flock.

But if I were to stop there, I would be falling well short of explaining the distinctive features of NWTS. For even though the great Apostle Paul exemplified this model, in itself he counted it to be “less than nothing” (Phil 3). The heart of NWTS curriculum centers around what Paul referred to as “the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.” It is the Father’s great desire that his Son’s glorious name might be known and loved among all his saints (Phil. 2:9-11). Through union with Christ, our Chief Shepherd and Prophet, we glory that we mere men might participate with him in that great work.

Michigan Friends of Northwest Theological Seminary Reception

In early November, several representatives of Northwest Theological Seminary made their way east to Grand Rapids, Michigan, to a reception for friends of Northwest Theological Seminary in Michigan. The Rev. J. Peter Vosteen, The Rev. Robert Van Kooten, Mr. Benji Swinburnson and Mr. Brian Bell, all made their way to Dutton United Reformed Church to talk about the vision of NWTS. Peter was the master of ceremonies for the evening, Benji gave a testimonial on how he has benefited from NWTS, Brian introduced himself as the new Director of Development, and Rob gave a brief lecture of how Biblical Theology benefits the ministry of the Gospel.

Local Recruiting

In addition to his extensive travels, Brian Bell has been recruiting locally in the Northwest. He has set up displays at Seattle Pacific University, Pacific Lutheran University, and has made arrangements to visit Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington. His goal is to let folks in the Pacific Northwest know that Northwest Theological Seminary is in their backyard, and has much to offer degree students and auditors alike.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AT NWTS...

On Sunday, November 4, representatives of NWTS had the wonderful opportunity to visit with several United Reformed Churches in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area. Mr. Benji Swinburnson and The Rev. Rob Van Kooten had the opportunity to preach at Trinity United Reformed Church in the morning and evening services, respectively. They were well received. Mr. Brian Bell and The Rev. Peter Vosteen were able to visit Cornerstone United Reformed Church, where Brian gave a brief announcement about NWTS prior to evening worship. Peter and Rob also had the opportunity to worship at Dutton United Reformed Church.

East of the Mississippi Tour!

Just two months in, and already on the road! Brian Bell just completed a nearly 2-week tour of Reformed Christian Colleges east of the Mississippi River. Starting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, he visited Calvin College and Kuyper College. Moving on, he traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he visited Grove City College and Geneva College. Finally, he completed his tour by driving to Lookout Mountain, Georgia, where he visited Covenant College. In all, he made nearly twenty contacts with various folks who expressed interest in Northwest Theological Seminary. He plans to repeat this lengthy trek in the Spring, to recruit students for Fall 2007.

Passionate About Christ...