



Purpose— SEMINARY

Daniel Tomberlin

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■ WE HAVE ALL HEARD the comparison of *seminary to cemetery*, suggesting that a seminary is a place where faith dies. There is an alternative, that is, the seminary is a place where the seeds of faith come to life and are cultivated.

The word *seminary* has its origin in the Latin term *seminarium* which is translated as seedbed. In ancient (and modern) horticulture the seedbed was the place where seeds were first planted and the seedlings were carefully cultivated before being transplanted to the fields where they grew to maturity and bore fruit. By the fifteenth century, the term *seminary* was referred to as a training school for clergy.

The Apostle Paul declared, “That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies” (1 Corinthians 15:36 NASB). Paul used the metaphor of a planted seed to speak of the resurrection of the body. The lifeless seed that is buried bursts forth from the ground in new



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life, likewise the lifeless body of those who die in Christ shall be raised to eternal life. So, let's press the metaphor just a bit to understand the purpose of the seminary.

The seminary is indeed somewhat like a cemetery. The seminary is a place to die. After all, those who come to study at the seminary do so to follow after Christ, and Christ has called us to take up the cross and die (Matthew 10:38-39). The seminary should be the place where seeds of spiritual immaturity and theological misunderstanding fall to the ground, die, and are buried. Through the study of the Holy Scripture and Sacred Theology the seeds then come to life, sprouting in the seedbed of faith. The seminary is the place of re-formed faith and spiritual formation.

Seminary life is a spiritual conversation in which the student dialogues with the great witnesses of the faith in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. The inspired writings of the prophets and apostles are studied with great reverence. The seminary student reflects upon the preaching and teaching of historic theologians. Seminary study is the fiery forge which sharpens the mind (Proverbs 27:17). The process of prayerful study and dialogue in the Spirit renews, sanctifies, and transforms the mind so that the will of God may be discerned (Romans 12:2).

The seminary provides an open door to the mission of God in the world. Seminarians are charged to be shepherds of the Church of God and public theologians who can defend the Faith. Seminarians are to be masters of the Good News and doctors of souls. The goal of the seminary is to prepare men and women to serve as pastors of local congregations, denominational administrators, educators in the academy, and missionaries to the world. Seminarians serve as chaplains in the armed forces, law enforcement, hospitals, and prisons. Seminarians offer counsel and encouragement to those suffering from emotional distress and mental illness. The seminary experience provides unique opportunities of influence for those called to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

The seeds of faith planted in the seedbed of seminary life will bear fruit throughout the seminarian's life and ministry. When I began seminary studies many years ago, I could not envision the journey that God had placed before me. The discipline of seminary study cultivated knowledge and wisdom that enabled me to better serve as pastor in a local community. Seminary credentials have provided opportunities for me to represent the Pentecostal message to other Christian churches throughout the world. It is my joy and honor to witness new seminarians plant their seeds of faith in the seedbed of Pentecostal Theological Seminary.

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PTS AWARDED \$ 1 MILLION DOLLAR GRANT

From Lilly Endowment Inc.

■ On September 20, 2018, the Pentecostal Theological Seminary received from Lilly Endowment Inc. a \$1million grant to help establish PTS Thrive. It is part of Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Thriving in Ministry, an initiative that supports a variety of religious organizations across the U.S.A., as they create or strengthen programs that help pastors build relationships with experienced clergy who can serve as mentors and guide them through key leadership challenges in congregational ministry. The Endowment is making nearly \$70 million in grants through Thriving in Ministry Initiative.

PTS Thrive will assist a new generation of young pastors and seminarians by coordinating placement; facilitating mentoring relationships for a period of three years that will help young pastors negotiate points of conflict and discouragement; and, provide a variety of resources that will offer sustainable solutions to the challenges of pastoral ministry. Dr. Dan Tomberlin, director of PTS student placement and instructor of Pastoral Ministries, will serve as the executive director.

Dr. Michael Baker, president of PTS, states, “We are thrilled to be a part of Lilly Endowment’s Thriving in Ministry Initiative. Through PTS Thrive, the seminary will partner with educational assets throughout the Pentecostal movement in an effort to assist our graduates and other new pastors, contextualize their classroom experience to the practice of pastoral ministry. We believe this process of coaching and mentoring will demonstrate effectiveness.”

PTS is one of 78 organizations located in 29 states taking part in the initiative. The organizations reflect diverse Christian traditions: mainline and evangelical Protestant, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic and Orthodox.

Thriving in Ministry is part of Lilly Endowment’s grantmaking to strengthen pastoral leadership in Christian congregations in the United States. This has been a grantmaking priority at Lilly Endowment for nearly 25 years.

PTS Thrive will be active by the first of 2019. Watch for more information and how you may possibly get involved!