

A Moment in Mission ❖ from Bethany Seminary

These words were spoken by Fletcher Farrar for the ears of Bethany students: “Wherever you go, whatever you do, you will find people yearning to know what you have learned here at Bethany, to know more about God and the Bible and, most important, to know how to combine their faith with courage in order to live an authentic life in the world.” The 2010-11 year exemplified how Bethany strives to serve its students and the church at large in this way.

- ◆ **New initiatives in curriculum and available resources are underway.** In keeping with Bethany’s five-year strategic plan, administration and faculty are focusing energy in three core areas:
 1. New ways of defining and doing ministry, including a curricular emphasis on the missional church, courses in evangelism and social justice from an Anabaptist-Pietist perspective, and extending educational resources to students with callings other than traditional pastoral ministry
 2. New approaches to conflict transformation, studying conflict from a theological perspective with new courses and emphases that address conflict management and congregational conflict and stress
 3. New forms of access to Bethany resources, including webcasting or other electronic means, educational offerings in district and congregational locations, and more continuing education events
- ◆ **Two grants provided major funding for key programs.** In the spring, Bethany received word that the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations would grant \$200,000 to endow the annual Presidential Forum. Begun at the initiative of President Ruthann Johansen, these forums have attracted capacity crowds for noted speakers, group discussion, worship, and personal reflection on current topics. The next forum, entitled Joy and Suffering in the Body: Turning toward Each Other, is scheduled for April 13-14, 2012.

The Barnabas Foundation of New South Wales, Australia, has also granted Bethany \$25,000 to reinstate Exploring Your Call, a ten-day seminar for high school youth to examine the concept of ministry and God’s calling in their own lives. Program director and Bethany professor Russell Haitch worked with alumna Marla Abe and students Bekah Houff and Dylan Haro to create a spectrum of hands-on ministry opportunities, site visits, class sessions, and worship time. Russell describing the six youth who attended this June 2011 event as “intellectually alert, emotionally alive, and spiritually courageous.”

- ◆ **Bethany continues to provide varied and easily accessible resources through its expanding number of webcasts.** In collaboration with the Mission and Ministry Board, all 2011 Annual Conference worship services and business sessions were available to viewers in real time and in recorded format. Other recent webcasts include sessions from the Historic Peace Churches Conference of the Americas in the Dominican Republic; a discussion and reflection on the book of Chronicles by Academic Dean Steve Schweitzer, Bob Neff, and Frank Ramirez; and workshops on church planting, congregational hospitality, transformational pastoral leadership, and financial stewardship.

- ◆ **Bethany had a presence at the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation**, the closing event of the Decade to Overcome Violence held in Jamaica in May 2011. President Ruthann Johansen, the Church of the Brethren delegate, attended along with Bethany professor Scott Holland. As part of an international team representing the World Council of Churches, Scott helped draft a study paper entitled “An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace,” which was a focus of the event.
- ◆ **The academic year closed with the celebration of twenty new graduates**, the largest graduating class since Bethany moved to Richmond, Indiana, in 1994. President Ruthann Johansen expressed thanksgiving not only for the graduates’ personal achievements but also for their presence within the Bethany community. “Every graduating class is special, but this one is extraordinary in several important ways. . . . These students have been life-giving contributors to a subtle, and not so subtle, shift . . . in the ways we here must think about the role of the Seminary in the church and the world.” Several graduates are already serving in pastoral and congregational ministry; others are pursuing church pastorates, additional graduate study, chaplaincy, and teaching.

Bethany expresses gratitude for the many ways you have shown support for its mission. All are invited to take part in Bethany life, from campus visits to support of a student to a story on the website.