

# In Ministry

THE MAGAZINE OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*An Indispensable  
Partner  
with the Church*

 EVANGELICAL  
*Theological Seminary*

SPRING 2010

# Partnering *for the* Great Commission



Michael W. Sigman, D.D.  
*President,  
Evangelical  
Theological  
Seminary*

Partnership to the Church is much larger than training and educating men and women to become pastors and missionaries. That is our primary mission at Evangelical Theological Seminary, but the vision is much greater. It includes equipping local churches, their lay leaders, committees, and boards, as well as marketplace leaders.

First, Evangelical views itself as part of the Church; therefore, we are called to partner with the Church to ultimately fulfill the Great Commission—to see men, women, young people, boys and girls within the region come to faith in Jesus Christ, but also to teach the faith and build them up in their individual relationships with Christ. We do that in unique ways—coming alongside marketplace leaders, helping them connect Sunday to Monday and applying Scripture to life so they can live a more consistent and dynamic Christian life.

Evangelical Theological Seminary also exists to come alongside churches as well as denominations, to help them have a healthy ministry that is effective in engaging their cultures and communities with the Gospel of Christ.

There is another side to this partnership, and that is that Evangelical Theological Seminary chooses not to take

a stance of superiority, insisting that we know what the Church needs. Instead, we prefer to invite the Church to enter into a dialogue with us. We are asking how the seminary can be more effective in preparing men and women for mission and ministry; what curriculum should be used; how education should be delivered for effectiveness. Putting it simply, we seek to serve the Body of Christ!

Working with denominational leaders has been a great avenue of ministry for us. We recently invited 20 such leaders to meet with us, many of whom had little familiarity with our program. We asked them what might be missing in a seminary curriculum—components that would lead to greater effectiveness in ministry. Because Craig Sider, Executive Director for the Center for Leadership Impact, and I are retired denominational leaders, there seems to be a sense within the region that we understand denominations and their leaders. The results were tremendous. We forged new bonds so that these denominational leaders are willing to recommend the seminary and promote Evangelical's conferences and seminars.

That's just one of the aspects of partnership that energizes our ministry at Evangelical Theological Seminary and pushes us on toward an exciting future. Finding more and more ways to be a vital link to churches will be one of the initiatives we focus on as we continue to build valuable partnerships within the region and beyond.

# Hundreds Attend, Church Boards Transformed



Craig Sider,  
D. Min.,  
Executive  
Director,  
Center for  
Leadership  
Impact

**D**uring a discussion at the Center for Leadership Impact, an initiative of Evangelical Theological Seminary, it seemed that working with and enhancing church boards was a missing emphasis. Most of us had either worked with or served on a church board, and the general attitude

of many current servants when determining whether to continue their service on the board had become a dismaying, “I’ve done my time.” When talking about church board meetings, there was no sense of invigoration as demonstrated by a collective rolling of the eyes and a general frustration with the lack of focus or impact. Where had the excitement gone?

I approached a friend, Steve Musser, a District Superintendent of Evangelical Free Church of America, to explore how best to assist churches across Central Pennsylvania in addressing some of the issues of church board effectiveness—focus, role clarification, vision development, and team enthusiasm. We had a common mind ... to help the local

## Conference by the Numbers

**88** church boards

**14** different denominations  
or traditions

**725** in total attendance



church advance the kingdom. The Transforming Church Board Conference took root.

Steve and I, along with several denominational leaders, worked together to frame a resource day for January 23, 2010. We really had no idea how many would attend. The response was overwhelming. With a total of 725 attending, it was an outstanding day that seemed to truly galvanize what we’re about at the Center. We want to put a towel over our arm and serve church leaders, churches, and pastors in central Pennsylvania by addressing leadership needs they perceive in their lives and in their churches. We continue to receive positive feedback on the day.

*“This event makes me think of Evangelical in fresh new ways.”*  
– Non-Profit Executive and Local Church Board Member

*“God is using the Center for Leadership Impact at ETS to change the leadership map in the East coast. Marketplace leaders and church leaders who are being strengthened through the programs, events and activities of the Center are helping reverse the trend of secularism in our culture. The Center is being used of God to enable and empower all kinds of leaders to bring the hope and power of the Gospel into our organizations and communities.”*

– Steve Musser, District Superintendent, EFCA Eastern District

It was also a great day for Evangelical. We made a whole new group of people aware of the seminary and how we desire to be an indispensable partner to them in their ministries. With an exciting Fall Leadership Forum scheduled for later this year, the Center for Leadership Impact is looking forward to an exceptional 2010!

A photograph of two men in suits sitting at a table and talking. The man on the left is older, with white hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit and tie. The man on the right is younger, with grey hair, glasses, and a mustache, wearing a grey suit and a patterned tie. They are in a well-lit room with a window in the background.

# A Strong Heart for God, a Deep Love for Evangelical

An interview with Dr. James Yoder, Th. D.

**B**orn into a minister's family, Dr. James Yoder grew up enveloped in God's love through the church, its people, and his participation in it. In addition to taking part in church leadership, he taught Sunday school classes from an early age, and then sensed God's call into ministry. Teaching was the perfect fit for him.

When the Evangelical Theological Seminary opened a half-century ago in 1953, Dr. Yoder was one of its first professors. Teaching Old Testament, New Testament, biblical languages, literature, and theology, he remained active in the classroom until his retirement in 1989.

"In our first year, I was one of the two full-time professors on staff at Evangelical," said Dr. Yoder. "This was exciting and demanding because I had to teach all the biblical classes and assist in financial areas of the seminary as well. I was also pastoring the Myerstown Evangelical Congregational Church and working on my dissertation." Talk about multitasking!

Outside the classroom, Dr. Yoder encouraged students to be involved in extracurricular sports and activities including touch football, basketball, volleyball, and softball. The school's basketball team played at various colleges and also at the Lebanon County prison. He remembers the inmates being

surprised to be beaten by a "bunch of pastors." It was wonderful to have a witness to that unique part of the community, making Evangelical Theological Seminary more than just a great place for the mind; it was a place to gain physical strength as well.

According to Dr. Yoder, a key component to being the indispensable partner of the Church lies within Evangelical's

Marriage and Family Therapy program. "In the preparation of people for ministry, we've developed a counseling program and a very effective department. Outside of pastoral preparation, they have a very important role at the seminary. They are indispensable because of the great need within society today."

For someone who spent so many years with Evangelical Theological Seminary at the center of his ministry, Dr. Yoder still has great hopes and dreams for the school's future. "I'm hoping that students will remain faithful to

their calling, despite so many changes taking place in society, antagonism against Christianity, and the fleshly tendencies in the Church. As Evangelical becomes stronger and better known, I pray they will not allow the world to mold them. As Paul writes in Romans 12, 'Do not let the world around you squeeze you into its mold.' I hope that they will deepen their evangelical spirit and continue to prepare people for effective Christian ministry."

*"I am one of hundreds of pastors who had the privilege of sitting under the teaching of Dr. Jim Yoder. He taught us how to unlock the riches of the biblical text by a careful, thorough study of each word and phrase. I'm indebted to Dr. Yoder for equipping me to 'correctly handle the word of truth' (2 Timothy 2:15)."*

— President Michael W. Sigman

# The Healing Impact of a Unique Church Partnership

**M**eet Iliamaris R. Walter, (Class 2007), an alumnus of Evangelical's Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy (MAMFT) program. She now serves as the director of Glad Services Counseling and Coaching Center, and knows exactly what it means to share that vital partnership with the Church.

Her relationship with God and love for doing His work is what motivated Iliamaris to obtain her Master of Arts degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. Upon discovering Evangelical's program and working her way through it, she came to the point of her required internship and approached one of the pastors at her church, Glad Tidings Assembly of God, to see if they would allow her to see clients free of charge (the way the system functioned at the time). Because the church had a board of directors in place to establish a church-affiliated non-profit with its own ability to seek grant funding, they approached Iliamaris to open her practice there. This is a unique partnership that has flourished since its first day.

Through her time at Evangelical Theological Seminary, Iliamaris was impressed by the transparency of one of her professors, Dr. Andy Mercurio. He was very open with his students about the areas in his life that needed growth and didn't hide his struggle. This vulnerability guided Iliamaris to accept herself and her shortcomings, and to be a model of truth and honesty with her clients. It's a lesson that has stayed with her and one she'll never forget.

"Evangelical has not only taught me to partner with the church and how important that is, but also prepared me as

a person and a clinician through the program's emphasis on self-awareness. They helped me learn how to process that information, really knowing oneself, your family of origin, and its impact on who you are and who you've come to be. More than any therapeutic skill or theory knowledge, that is what prepared me to work with the church as a therapist because everything is relational. That impacts everything I do."

When it comes to serving her current clients, Iliamaris finds satisfaction in seeing them gain their own insights and watching the new person emerge when healing principles are put into action. She imagines where her training will take her in the next 10 to 15 years. God has placed on her heart a desire to help people heal, relationships strengthen, and ministries of the church work better together. "I'd really love to continue teaching as an adjunct in MFT because that is where my heart is. I like incorporating that element into helping the Body of Christ thrive."



Iliamaris and her husband Jim



# The Partnership Alive and in Action

**P**astor Tim Valentino grew up in Reading, Pennsylvania, and came to Christ during his freshman year at West Virginia University, where he attended on a swimming scholarship. The ministries of Campus Crusade for Christ and Fellowship of Christian Athletes played a key role and he soon began attending church and growing in grace. He graduated with a Bachelor's degree in English.

Jason Dickinson grew up in the Pottstown area and accepted Christ at the tender age of five. He was educated in Christian schools and felt from a very young age that God was calling him to do something special with his life—just what, he didn't know. Following high school, he went into a two-year program to become a mechanic.

Each man married and started a family, and through different circumstances, found themselves at Fleetwood Bible Church in Fleetwood, Pennsylvania. Tim was already halfway through his seminary training at Evangelical

Theological Seminary when he accepted the pastorate at Fleetwood; Jason was just receiving his call to the ministry.

With Jason not having the required four-year degree for seminary, he investigated multiple options and found no peace in any of them—it would be a full-time return to school

if he wanted to answer God's call. Tim encouraged Jason to check out the programs at Evangelical Theological Seminary. "By the grace of God and the generosity of Evangelical, I was able to get into

the Certificate in Ministry program without the four-year undergraduate degree. The seminary had housing for my wife and me and our two daughters; and it felt like the perfect fit. We gave up everything for this call," says Jason.

Tim still serves as the Lead Pastor of Fleetwood Bible Church, while Jason has become the part-time Associate Pastor of Discipleship Ministries under Tim's leadership. Pastor Tim describes Jason as the spiritual brother he never

had. "I love this man. He's bright, hungry, passionate, articulate, sensible, practical and wise. He's a dear friend as well."

Jason describes Tim in similar terms. "Pastor Tim is authentically and genuinely a pastor with a scholar's mind. He has the warmth and love of a pastor, but the sharpness of a scholar—the perfect marriage. That's what I want to be."

"Evangelical is the indispensable partner of the church because it teaches you to use the tools to lead the church, not just cognitively, but relationally," says Jason. "There's grace in everything that's said and done. The Lord is held at the center of that discussion. What should be done in the church is played out and demonstrated here at the school."

With two men of different ages and backgrounds, having passed through similar training at the same institution and clearly working in harmony, it's easy to see how the interconnection between the Church and Evangelical Theological Seminary creates a powerful partnership unlike any other. It is, indeed, indispensable. Why would we want it any other way in the Body of Christ?



# Provision Above and Beyond



Ann E. Steel,  
*Vice President,  
Institutional  
Advancement*

**W**e have so much to be thankful for in God's great provision for the financial needs of the seminary! We attained our fundraising goals for the last six months of 2009, encouraging us once again to realize that our God knows our needs even in the face of a weakened economy.

At this writing, our team of volunteers has completed the calling portion of the 2010 Phonathon, and while we have some distance to clear to reach our final goals, we remain confident that gifts will continue to arrive from our friends, allowing Evangelical Theological Seminary to continue to prepare Christian leaders who will minister effectively in this broken and complex world. Some of our donors had great words to share with us:

*"We have a warm spot in our hearts for the seminary," increasing their gift over last year's total.*

*A Phonathon volunteer shared, "It was a great time of connecting with those who have been faithful to ETS in the past. These are people who believe in the*

*mission of the seminary, who support us with their finances as well as with their prayers."*

I believe our donors feel confident about what's happening at the seminary. People respect our current leadership under the direction of President Mike Sigman. I see that expressed with a significant increase in the level of gifts from some long-standing donors. They want to get on board with our vision. When the Lord brings a visionary leader, people want to offer support and help move the vision forward.

Last year we began an alumni e-newsletter which is released three times per year. Unfortunately, we only have email addresses for half of our alumni, so many are missing out on that news. We'd like to hear from alumni, not only to pass on the latest news, but to find out how we can better help them be leaders of impact within their community and churches.

Alumni—please send me your email address so we can keep you updated on the latest happenings at Evangelical. Send a note to me at [asteel@evangelical.edu](mailto:asteel@evangelical.edu) so I can capture your email address and any personal updates you'd like to share with us.

*God knows our needs even in the face of a weakened economy.*



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# ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

*silver anniversary edition*

THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2010

Registration: 6:45am  
Fairview Golf Course  
Rt. 72 South of Lebanon

For more information about playing golf or selecting a sponsorship level, please contact Bob Ladd, Director of Special Gifts at [rladd@evangelical.edu](mailto:rladd@evangelical.edu) or 717-269-5508.



## SUMMER CLASS REGISTERING NOW

Part of your exciting journey this summer could include joining Evangelical Theological Seminary for our diverse Summer Session. Classes run May 24-August 13 and include courses on church planting, ethics in family therapy, adult ministries, missional churches, Biblical languages, and the Willow Creek Leadership Summit. Register today at [www.evangelical.edu](http://www.evangelical.edu).



### FALL LEADERSHIP FORUM

*with Dr. Henry Cloud*

*Regaining control of yourself, your work, and your life!*

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Location and price pending

For more information contact the Center for Leadership Impact at [www.center4li.org](http://www.center4li.org) or call (717) 866- 5775 ext 2106.



### FRIENDS OF EVANGELICAL BANQUET

*with Dr. Henry Blackaby*

September 24, 2010

Calvary Church, 1051 Landis Valley Road, Lancaster, PA  
Fellowship: 5:45pm, Dinner: 6:30pm

For more information contact Ann E. Steel from Institutional Advancement at [www.evangelical.edu](http://www.evangelical.edu) or 717-866-5775.



### FAITH IN THE MARKETPLACE

Tuesday, May 4, 7:00 am to 8:30am

Cost: \$15.00

“Chipping Away at ‘Ministry’ to Find God at Work”

Ed Herr, President, Herr Foods, Inc.

For more information contact the Center for Leadership Impact at [www.center4li.org](http://www.center4li.org) or call (717) 866- 5775 ext 2106.



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