Introducing the SPU Center for Biblical and Theological Education

The School of Theology is proud to unveil the new Center for Biblical and Theological Education (CBTE), which officially launched in the autumn of 2009 under the direction of the Rev. Celeste Cranston, an ordained elder in the Free Methodist Church. The purpose of the Center, funded in part by a generous grant from the Murdock Charitable Trust, is to encourage the Seattle Pacific University community and others, including church groups and alumni, to deepen and develop their knowledge and understanding of the Bible and Christian theology. By demonstrating the depths of biblical literacy and theological maturity among American Christians, President Philip Eaton established the university’s second signature commitment: that SPU will be a place where people “embrace the Christian story, becoming biblically and theologically educated.” The Center resulted from the efforts of a team of faculty and staff from the School of Theology tasked by President Eaton to design a program that reflects this signature commitment to biblical and theological education. The CBTE comprises five program areas: a website; guided readings of the Bible; educational courses; conferences; and research grants and scholarships. The website will host the CBTE guided readings, the School of Theology’s University Foundations courses and graduate courses, and high-quality digital resources to aid biblical and theological education. The guided readings are a web-based, four-year cycle of Scripture readings for students, parents, faculty, staff, churches, and clergy, and are designed to permeate campus life at multiple levels. The CBTE will also offer educational opportunities to theological biblically and theological education for SPU faculty and staff, including quarter-length and summer intensive courses on biblical and theological topics. Yearly regional and national conferences will be hosted on themes of biblical and theological education. The first conference will be a two-day “Bible, Youth, and Culture Conference” for local and regional youth workers and church leaders in May 2010 with Dr. Kendra Creasy Dean.

In addition, funds will be available in support of discipline-specific biblical and theological education for SPU faculty to consult with a School of Theology faculty member for their school or to engage in discipline-specific programs of their own. Seattle Pacific University and the School of Theology are eager to move forward in bringing these programs in motion. We hope to make a difference in the hearts and lives of the Seattle Pacific University community and beyond, as we facilitate and encourage the knowledge and study of God’s Word.

The School of Theology House

Built in 1920, the newly acquired School of Theology house — informally known as “Kingwood House” — has been a Seattle Pacific University neighbor for a decade shy of a century. Over the course of those 90 years, the house has been home to many, including Horatio Ogden, a 1930 graduate of Seattle Pacific College. College in 2007, the age of 100; and a host of recent former students during the house’s stint as student housing under the moniker “the Pink House on the Corner,” thanks to a previous hue. The School of Theology is excited to have a multipurpose property that can be shared with students and faculty alike.

The guiding vision of the School of Theology holds for this house is for the property to exemplify the SOT principles of an “abbey.” The building exists as a place where students can easily have access to holistic spiritual formation in the form of fellowship, worship, and discipleship in intentional Christian community. Autumn Quarter 2009 saw a successful application of this principle: the house is currently being used as a space for graduate students to engage in Wesleyan-style “class meetings” in order to stay accountable to their faith in the midst of the rigor of academic life.

In addition, the house has been an excellent source of fellowship; students have been using it as a place to hang out, relax, study together, and play board games. Students have also organized a campfire service in the evenings as a time of prayer and fellowship. Multiple rooms are available for group studies or other events. Beginning December 1, the SOT house also became home to the Center for Biblical and Theological Education. The house has a full kitchen for theology students, faculty, and CBTE staff to use whenever they need it. The top floor of the house serves as a residence for three School of Theology graduate students.

The School of Theology and the Center for Biblical and Theological Education invite you to visit Kingwood House. Come look around, and experience its welcoming and inspiring ambiance.
From the Dean

Welcome to the first issue of “Kingwood Chronicle” — providing news and information about the School of Theology at Seattle Pacific University. If you are receiving this publication, you have some connection to the School of Theology (SOT), either as an alum, as a current student, or as an interested friend. In whatever capacity, we are glad to have the opportunity to tell you about some of the exciting developments in the SOT and the ways in which God has blessed us.

And a lot has been happening! Our undergraduate minors and majors are thriving; our professors teach all of the more than 3,000 undergraduate SPU students on Christian formation, the Bible, and theology; and our exceptional faculty continues to be outstanding teachers, sought-after speakers, and highly published scholars. Several new programs also demand our attention. Our new graduate degrees (M.Div. and M.A. in Theology) are up and running, with 28 students in our first-year class. Also new is the Center for Biblical and Theological Education (CBTE), a multi-progred opportunity for web-based learning, faculty development, and on-campus conferences. Additionally, the SOT remodeled a beautiful old home adjacent to the SPU campus as a place to house the CBTE and many of the grad programs.

So what about this name? “Kingwood” was the first school established by John Wesley, in Bristol, England, in 1742. At the dedication of the school, John, his brother, Charles, wrote a hymn for the occasion, in which he famously stated: “Unite the pair so long disjoined, knowledge and vital piety.” Our hope is that the Center for Biblical and Theological Education, the undergrad and grad programs, the entire School of Theology, and even this publication will lead all of us to unite our academic study of theology with a profound and meaningful faith in Jesus Christ — one that grows deeper every day.

Together in Christ’s service,

Dorag Strong
Dean, School of Theology

School of Theology Graduate Program

The School of Theology is thrilled to publicize its freshly appointed graduate program. Envisioned for decades, the School of Theology’s graduate program in theology began to develop four years ago as serious planning began. The many practical components necessary for developing a graduate program fell into place, and the vision became reality when the first class of graduate students enrolled this Autumn Quarter.

The new graduate program has received primary accreditation by the NorthWest Commission on Colleges and Universities. In terms of secondary accreditation, the Graduate Program is in line with the standards of the Association of Theological Schools. Currently, the 26 students enrolled in the graduate program come from a large variety of denominational and cultural backgrounds, with an even split between those pursuing a master of divinity and those pursuing a master of arts in theology. The newly formed class of graduate students spent the last week of August and the first week of September attending intensive courses based on “abdy” and “apologetics” principles. In those two weeks, students were able to solidify and fortify into a strong community of believers, resulting in a high degree of openness, particularly during discussions that had the potential for generating conflict.

While the intensive courses have assisted in creating community, Wesleyan-style “class meetings” have also contributed to the unification of this inaugural graduate class. In these weekly meetings, students and faculty discuss matters of faith and accountability in an encouraging manner of discipleship. These class meetings have also given students an opportunity to intercede for one another and to give faithfully to those in need.

The School of Theology is excited to see the continued growth and education of the new graduate students as well as to witness the fruits of the many years of planning which gave the graduate program a foundation.

Recent Books by SOT Faculty

Filled with the Spirit
by Jack Levinson (2000)

Kingdom Without Borders
by Miriam Adeney (2008)

Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition
by Rud Van Til (2009)

The Apostolic God
by Damien Castells (2009)

Kingwood E-Chronicle. If you would like to receive a digital version of Kingwood Chronicle in the future, please email Donovan Richards at richard@spu.edu.