

In this issue's *inSpire* Interactive, we are pleased to offer alumni/ae the opportunity to welcome Dr. Torrance as the new president, and to share with him some of their thoughts about Princeton Seminary.

## What would you like to tell President Torrance about Princeton Seminary?

Princeton Seminary is a place I have held dear in my heart all these 50 years since I was a student there. Dr. Mackay's goal for community was a reality, and it sustained and nurtured me. Twenty years later when it became possible for me to be ordained, I realized the seed was planted at Princeton. Continue to nurture the community as Tom and Barbara Gillespie also did. May God bless you as you lead in this global ministry.

*Betty Kurtz Hamilton (e, 1956)*  
Sonoma, California



Congratulations on your new calling as president of Princeton Seminary. As a retired pastor now serving in an interim position, I believe the one thing that our Presbyterian Church (USA) needs is more help in learning how to deal effectively with diversity. As one who truly believes in Paul's image of the church as the "Body of Christ" with all that implies for the rich diversity of its members, I am discouraged when looking at the lobbying efforts of our church (both left and right) to get their own way rather than concerted efforts to work at reconciliation and a positive emphasis on the strength of our diversity.

I hope Princeton can help a new breed of graduates who have a passionate desire to be more centrist in their theological posture and intentional about their efforts to "bind the body back together" rather than fracture it further. With all my prayers for your future leadership.

*Harlan Gilliland, (M.Div., 1962)*  
Longview, Washington



As a professor of mathematics, I appreciate academic studies. But also as a pastor of a congregational church in Connecticut, I have heard many of my local colleagues say that they felt ill-prepared for the practice of ministry, when they graduated from their large New England divinity schools. The strength of the Masters of Divinity program at Princeton Seminary lies in its dedication to the practical needs of the local pastor as preacher, celebrant, and counselor.

I know that you also are bringing this dedication to your tenure as our new president. Thank you, and welcome.

*Bruce Hedman, (M.Div., 1980)*  
Mansfield Center, Connecticut



Both ecumenical and Reformed, embracing both the evangel and the intellect, Princeton Seminary is providentially positioned with its resources of faculty, library, and staff to be a minister of the living Word within a world beset by fear of terror. It incarnates the indispensable relevance of the apparently irrelevant. As such, the mission of Princeton Seminary during this century may focus on recalling the church to explore and live out the social and economic details of God's covenant community, both as a reality itself and as humble yeast for turning individualistic capitalistic American culture toward a more humane direction.

*John G. Gibbs, (Ph.D., 1966)*  
Park Rapids, Minnesota



Princeton Theological Seminary is truly a family of theologians from various creeds, nations, races, and religions, and one that looks out for its own. Administrators and students have a special relationship that goes far beyond the ordinary, and this bond can be felt by anyone entering the campus.

Courses are sometimes tough; however, everyone succeeds because each one helps the other. Much of this, in my opinion, can only be attributed to the very fine leadership of the school, which we trust will always continue.

*Berlinda A. Love, (M.Div., 1992)*  
Trenton, New Jersey



As one who came to a life-changing and personal faith in Jesus Christ during my years at Princeton Seminary, the tumultuous late '60s and early '70s, my prayer is that the Lord will endue you with courage to lead that great institution to be renewed with the vitality of historic biblical orthodoxy while retaining its desire to be conversant with contemporary culture.

*Mike Barbera, (M.Div., 1972)*  
Pass Christian, Mississippi



Welcome to Princeton Seminary, President Torrance. May you enjoy years of happy service and grace-filled leadership. I believe that when its best, Princeton Seminary has belonged to no faction of the church. It has been a place where believers of many kinds can be both heard and challenged in the name of Christ—liberals, post-liberals, conservative evangelicals, post-conservative evangelicals, old line and new line charismatics, and good mainstream church folk alike. Let PTS be that for the church, and so let it be a partner in our healing during these times. God's strength, wisdom, and peace to you.

*Wesley Avram, (M.Div., 1984)*  
New Haven, Connecticut



Princeton can be a very pretentious place, and it doesn't take much for a seminary student or faculty member to "take on airs." My first year of theological training was at Harvard University Divinity School, and coming to Princeton Theological Seminary after an internship in a small church in Kansas was a dip in the road (for me). I was taken somewhat aback that some were "puffed up" with themselves and with their location. How can this cultural sophistication be overcome when the world needs accurate communicators of the Word of God, real men and women of the Gospel?

*John B. Jaymes, (M.R.E., 1962)*  
LaBelle, Florida



I'd like to remind Dr. Torrance that Princeton Seminary is much more than the present faculty, staff, and student body, distinguished as they may be. Princeton Seminary is a whole "cloud of witnesses" to the way, the truth, and the life that is Jesus Christ out at work in the world. That includes Pittsburgh!

Vance W. "Trip" Torbert III, (M.Div., 1987)  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



The U.S. Navy, including the chaplain corps, is dramatically revising its approach to education. Key questions required to fund education now are preceded by a "job task analysis" that identifies what a chaplain must know to serve effectively in a particular ministry. "Just in time" rather than "just in case" training is key. Integrated approaches of classroom, web-based, and hands-on learning produce a prepared chaplain.

Princeton Seminary has much to learn from this type of approach. It is the future. What Princeton teaches must align with what new pastors and receiving churches need. Hard data must precede both tradition and anecdote to determine requirements. Princeton Seminary is positioned to lead. Will it?

Bob Phillips, (Th.M. 1975, D.Min. 1988)  
Norfolk, Virginia



In short, Princeton Seminary has a responsibility to encourage not only confessional faith, but also questing faith.

Heraclitus was right that all is flux, and his genie has escaped the cultural bottle in our age. Amid competing worldviews and ideologies, Princeton Seminary needs to rise above reactionary apologetics and stimulate radical openness to truth and radical outwardness toward a broken world.

If the Seminary does that, it will participate in the reconciling activity of God in Christ. But only through the grace of God will it be afforded both the challenges to seek, and the support needed to do so.

Bill LeMosy (M.Div, 1969, M.A., 1971)  
Pleasant Hill, Iowa



I hope President Torrance will keep in mind the complete diversity of the Princeton Theological Seminary alumni/ae community—especially those whose calling has taken them to vocational settings beyond the church. Many who pass through Princeton end up in vocational endeavors outside the traditional ministry. Historically these have been the forgotten alumni/ae, with precious little attention paid to their gifts, talents, and assets. I would ask of President Torrance that some special attention be dedicated to this "diaspora" community, perhaps a "silent majority" of alumni/ae for whom our seminary experience was a significant factor in our life's direction, but who are not affiliated with the traditional ministries that Princeton Seminary focuses its energies upon.

I believe that this is a sizeable community. I believe that we quietly hunger for a viable connection between our seminary experience and our current lives. And I believe that we have a significant potential for all manner of contribution to the life and future of PTS.

Rick Nyberg (M.Div., 1976)  
Newport Beach, California



I am very grateful for the education I received in my years at Princeton Seminary. But, like a two-edged sword, some of Princeton's strengths run parallel to significant weaknesses.

Princeton does a superb job of academic training, invaluable to those going on to doctoral work; but there are too few courses (and too little room in a student's schedule for courses) that deal with practical issues of church life, administration, and pastoral care, all vital to the small churches so typical in the PCUSA.

Princeton is well aware of the gifts and strengths it has to offer its students; but it often seem unaware of the gifts and strengths its students could offer in return, if the Seminary were willing to be as effective at learning as it is at teaching.

Princeton has years of strong tradition that have laid a firm foundation in Christ; but it has not kept up with other seminaries who seem more prepared to welcome the diverse mix of second-career, women, racial-ethnic, and part-time students who are re-sponding in increasing numbers to God's call to ministry.

Princeton has a clear identity and upholds sound theological positions and standards; but its overall diversity (theological, racial, generational, etc.) in faculty and student body has decreased at a time when the world's diversity is increasing, and, at a time when the denomination is struggling with difference within the body, it has often failed to model the image from 1 Corinthians 12 that the Body of Christ needs all of its different members to be complete.

Laurel Underwood Brundage (M.Div., 1996)  
Brodheadsville, Pennsylvania



World Christianity is shifting to Africa and Asia, I would like to see more courses and emphasis on global Christianity. Also, as seminaries witness greater enrollment of Asian Americans, I would like to see courses on Asian American Christianity, church history, and experience.

KeyOne Yu, (M.Div., 1999)  
Edison, New Jersey

