

from the president's desk



Dear Friends and Colleagues:

At its annual meeting in May, I announced to the Board of Trustees my desire to retire from this office on June 30, 2004. That will complete for me fifty years of ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—twenty-nine in the pastorate and twenty-one here at the Seminary. It has been a wonderful road to travel.

Accepting my request, the Board appointed a presidential search committee to discern the one God has chosen to be the sixth president of Princeton Theological Seminary. It is a strong committee of able people who in due season will be seeking comments and suggestions from alumni/ae and from the church-at-large. Please keep them in your prayers.

Meanwhile, the beat goes on at Princeton Seminary. You will hear it in the lovely tribute by Professor Beverly Gaventa to our faculty colleague Donald Juel, whose untimely death in the spring semester devastated the Seminary community. You will hear the beat also in the articles featuring our two new mission and ecumenics professors, Dr. Luis Rivera-Pagán and Dr. Darrell L. Guder. The beat is very strong in the feature article on the inauguration this summer of the Joe R. Engle Institute of Preaching, which received rave reviews from the forty young pastors invited to participate.

With every good wish, I remain

Faithfully yours,


Thomas W. Gillespie



Memories of Mentors

Your articles on mentoring [spring 2003 issue] struck many memories! Now at 77, I have many “senior moments,” one an inability to recall the name of the man who said, “I can never look down on anyone from whom I have learned something and I have learned something from everyone.” So, too, my mentors were numerous, but two stand out.

The first was the minister of Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. I think I learned more from Rex Clements and his wife, Marian, than from anyone else. To the people of a wealthy and well-educated congregation, he preached simply, from the heart. No seminary professor could have criticized them. I’ll never forget them!

Another minister who really challenged me was a young graduate of Austin Seminary. She and I were associate interim ministers in a large, urban congregation we laughingly called “First Interim” because all the staff were interims. She taught me how to be a pastor. We went our separate ways, she to a succession of congregations. Last year she wrote that she was tired of being a CEO and had accepted a call to serve on the pastoral staff of another congregation where she could do what she loves best.

Now retired, I live in a retirement/nursing residence. I’m learning new skills: how to accept the ministry of others, and how to serve one another within a very diverse community. I love it! I am no longer a pastor, but “doing unto others as I would have it done unto me.”

James K. Egly ('51B)
Portland, Oregon

A Civilian Chaplaincy?

As I read Jack Moriarty’s comments [spring 2003 Letters to the Editor], I recalled the old debate about a civilian chaplaincy for the military. Having [chaplains] in civilian clothes like Red Cross workers was raised during the Vietnam era. A soldier was quoted as saying to a civilian reporter: “How do I feel about my chaplain? You wouldn’t understand. You weren’t there.”

The chaplain *is* there. Sharing all the joys and sorrows of military life. One denomination, I remember, did not wish chaplains to give Holy Communion to their members. They flew a civilian minister to Vietnam, and it was a great task to keep him safe, fed, and housed in a combat zone. Imagine a hundred or so civilian ministers in a combat zone, each ministering to his/her denomination, all in civilian clothes, some making very special demands, of course.

I served thirty years as an army chaplain and two enlisted as an army draftee. I served as an interim pastor from 1992 to 1995. In my experience, military chaplains, active duty and retired, often receive very cold treatment from civilian Presbyterian clergy.

Glenn Myers ('78M)
Rio Rancho, New Mexico

When I read “We love to hear from you!” I decided to respond, first, in appreciation of your excellent editorial work, and second, just to let my 1942 classmates know that I had two new story books published this last year, one in Korean and another in the Turkana language of Kenya.

And, just for your information on the subject of chaplaincy, the military does employ auxiliary chaplains, who are civilian ministers. I served for a number of years in Taiwan in such a capacity, in charge of an air force chapel, holding services at remote missile bases, and also then in charge of a naval Sunday school of 500.

David Woodward ('42B)
Alhambra, California