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Christian Education Journal 25th Anniversary CD-Rom

The 25th Anniversary collection of the first 25 years of the *Christian Education Journal* on CD-rom is available for purchase (\$50). It includes over 500 articles and 250 book reviews. You can order it on the journal website: <www.biola.edu/cej>. You will also find other resources and services at the website, including ordering reprints, custom issues (collections of past articles), indexes of articles and book reviews, and information on ordering subscriptions.

Hotel is almost full. Reserve your room today!

“Equipped Through Teaching”

DENVER CONFERENCE October 19-21

Robert Drov Dahl, Conference Vice-President

In *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* Christian Smith documents the disturbing biblical and theological illiteracy among Christian adolescents. (Had he researched the religious and spiritual lives of adults the results may have been similar.) Smith characterizes typical contemporary adolescent faith as “moralistic therapeutic deism” - far afield from the content of historic Christian faith.

We who are called to the Church’s teaching ministry must surely find Smith’s research disquieting. People are not born moralistic therapeutic deists – they *learn* faith from those who *teach* faith! What teaching/learning forces are at work producing these results? What can Christian educators do to counteract these forces and nurture people in biblical faith?

Our Denver conference focuses on answers to these questions. Richard Osmer, our featured speaker, has given his professional life to teaching and writing about the teaching ministry of congregations. He brings a distinctively theological voice to the practice of Christian education. As Charles Foster notes in his recent review (*Religious Education*, Summer 2006) of Osmer’s latest book, “*The Teaching Ministry of Congregations*...is a provocative book arguing that notions of ‘teaching ministry’ rather than ‘religious education’ more adequately account for the role of theology in thinking about how congregations educate.”

In addition to Osmer’s plenary sessions this year’s conference will feature eight workshop intensives. These two-hour sessions will focus on varied aspects of teaching ministry. Check out the options at <<http://www.napce.org/archives/confer06/confer06.html#workshops>>.

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Excerpts from the Work of Richard Osmer

From *A Teachable Spirit*:

The restoration of a church that can teach with authority, however, may be *the* pressing issue ...today. A strong teaching ministry is especially in the face of modern individualism and counter-modern authoritarianism that are so prevalent in American society. (p. 5)

Church membership takes on real meaning for most persons in the concrete relationships, projects, worship and service that congregations offer. If Christians do not gain a sense of the transforming, dynamic quality of the Christian life at this level, it is unlikely that they will gain it from denominational leaders or professional theologians. (p. 175)

In short, the most important task of the church's teaching office is to ensure that the church has a living witness to the gospel in its preaching and teaching. (p. 96)

From *Teaching for Faith*:

Teachers in the church should be clear about one thing: *the basic purpose of their teaching is to create a context in which faith can be awakened, supported, and challenged.* Their teaching is for faith. (p. 15)

Denver continued from page 1

Add to these headliners nearly 30 research presentations, networking and affinity opportunities, mealtime conversations, and an attractive downtown venue and you have all the ingredients for a great conference. Make sure you are part of it by registering now! For full information on registration and room reservations visit the NAPCE website. <www.napce.org> See you in Denver! ■

We cannot force persons to have faith or grow in faith any more than we can build a tower that reaches all the way to heaven. What we can do is serve as an instrument in the meeting of the Holy Spirit and the human spirit, the Word of God and human words of confession. Accepting the limits of our teaching is a way of acknowledging the mystery that is a part of faith. Our task, as a teacher of faith, is simply to be "stewards of God's mysteries" (I Cor. 4:1), as the apostle Paul once put it. We can do no more, and we dare do no less. (p. 37)

From *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations*:

Paul's letters provide us with the earliest and most direct route into the New Testament's treatment of our topic: the teaching ministry of congregations... With the exceptions of Romans, his letters are written for congregations he helped establish and knew intimately. When we study this correspondence closely, we gain insight into the sort of teaching ministry Paul and his coworkers appear to have carried out in these congregations, a ministry they equipped others to continue in their absence. (p. 4)

In Christian communities, teaching is a form of ministry; ministry is a way of building up congregations for mission; congregations discover their mission within the missions of the triune God. These sorts of convictions and the practices that embody them inform the understanding of the teaching ministry... (p. xiv) ■

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Christian Education Journal Announces New Editorial Advisory Board

The *Christian Education Journal* is a collaborative effort between Talbot School of Theology and the North American Professors of Christian Education. To help strengthen this collaboration, we have recently invited several professors from across North America to join a new Editorial Advisory Board to help the editors give direction to the development of the journal. In particular we have asked them to take on the following responsibilities:

1. Identifying important issues/topics for future theme issues of the journal and possible personnel to approach to be involved in these efforts as guest editors and authors.
2. Periodically evaluating/assessing the quality of the publication to provide feedback to the editors for improvement.
3. As needed, helping in the development of editorial standards and procedures for publication to strengthen the quality of the journal (e.g., refinement of review process, orientation materials for new reviewers)

4. Providing suggestions for the ongoing development of promotional efforts for the journal and ways to encourage its use in academic and ministry contexts.
5. Brainstorming other areas for the improvement and development of the journal.
6. Encouraging and praying for those involved in carrying out the work of the journal (e.g., editors, book review area editors, book reviewers, article reviewers, authors).
7. Assisting in communication between the editors of the journal and the NAPCE Board and NAPCE members.

The following people have agreed to serve on this new Educational Advisory Board. We welcome them to this new role and encourage our readers to interact with them about what you would like to see happen with the journal in the future, including theme issues, regular features, special resources on the website, etc.

Michael Anthony, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, La Mirada, California
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Research Grants Available Through Group Publishing

Group Publishing is pleased to announce the availability of \$10,000 in grant money for a limited number of individual and collaborative research projects undertaken by professors, faculty, and graduate students. The purpose of this grant effort is to stimulate research on practical ministry in the church that assists with the growth of a deep and transforming faith and to

encourage its application in local church settings. This new grant initiative is another way of helping Group accomplish its purpose: to equip churches to help children, youth and adults grow in their relationship with Jesus. For more information and the application process, go to www.groupresearchgrants.com. ■

Reserve
Date Now!

NAPCE
Annual Conference
2007

~
October 18-20

~
San Jose, California
(San Jose Marriott)

Refocusing NAPCE

Eileen Starr, President

For the past 4 years the NAPCE board has been discussing the current state of our discipline and the best strategy to follow to serve our members. Out of these discussions has come a refocusing of our mission statement. Our intent has been to clarify what is important to us. The term Christian Education is rarely used in academic circles today. In its place many different terms are used each with a slightly different focus, i.e. Spiritual Formation, Discipleship, Leadership, or Christian Ministry. NAPCE members represent a large spectrum of professors from different academic departments. In the years to come we may want to revisit our name. But for now we have tried to refocus our mission statement to reflect the current needs of our organization. The board is open to your comments and suggestions regarding the new statement. You may send them to Dr. Eileen Starr at EStarAK@aol.com.

MISSION STATEMENT

NAPCE exists to enhance the intentional teaching mission of the church through the cultivation of personal and professional growth of professors in the broad field of educational ministries.

PURPOSE STATEMENTS

The purposes of NAPCE are:

- To promote research, writing, and discussion which gives focus, direction, and theological integration to educational ministries.
- To explore interdisciplinary issues germane to our mission.
- To advance educational ministries in multicultural and cross-cultural contexts.
- To enhance teaching and research skills.
- To cultivate the next generation of professors of educational ministries.
- To provide opportunities for fellowship, networking, and mutual encouragement. ■

Christian Educators of 20th Century Project Hits 100 Entries

The “Christian Educators of the 20th Century” project, funded by the Lilly Endowment, has now hit over 100 completed entries. The full project will have about 160 entries, including approximately 40 evangelical Christian education leaders. Each entry includes a biographical essay, an essay on the person’s contributions to the field of Christian education, a bibliography of their publications (and publications

about them), excerpts from a few publications, and a recommended reading list. New entries are posted on the website as they are received and formatted and we hope to have the full project completed in the coming year. Check out this valuable research and teaching resource at the project website: ce20.org. ■

New Board Members Nominated to Serve on Board

Eileen Starr, President

A nominating committee has selected a slate of potential board members to be voted on at the 2006 NAPCE Conference in Denver. The slate was selected to keep a balance that reflects NAPCE’s membership in geographical location, type of school, nationality, ethnic background, and gender. Nominees were sought who have attended recent NAPCE conferences and who can make significant contributions to the future of NAPCE. Suggestions for nominees were received over the last year and reviewed by the nominating committee. The following people have been nominated: **Holly Allen, Michael Anthony, Claire Budd, Freddie Cardoza, and Dennis Fledderjohann.**

As chairperson of the nominating committee, I would like you to prayerfully consider these nominations and be prepared to vote on them at the Denver Conference. If you have any questions about the nominating process, or comments on the nominees please contact me before the conference at EStar_AK@aol.com.

Rotating off the board will be Eileen Starr, Kevin Lawson, Karen Jones, Norma Hedin (a one year replacement for Gary Bredfeldt), and Steve Kang. Those who will be continuing on the board for another two years are Paul Bramer, Bob Drov Dahl Elaine Becker, Roger White, and Rick Yount. ■