

Re-introducing Sabbath for a 24/6 World

THE TROUBLE WITH SABBATH, THAT “ANCIENT” TRADITION, IS THAT, WELL, IT SEEMS LIKE TOO MUCH WORK. Within the North American mindset, in particular, it’s been difficult to articulate, much less practice. And in the absence of clarity it can too easily be perceived as a set of obsolete rules to which we should adhere.

Our striving for the American Dream, reconciling the gap between expectations and reality, leaves



us frustrated and weary from the pursuit of acquiring. Even within the faith community Sabbath is often presented in a pragmatic, consumeristic way according to Dr. Matthew Sleeth, founder of [Blessed Earth](#) and keynote speaker for the [Faithful Stewards Community Enrichment Day](#) in November. Sabbath

is a loaded word that needs some deconstruction so that we not only know what we are talking about but how we might better embrace it.

After a sequence of work days, the culmination of creation is the Sabbath and so, posits Sleeth, it is part of creation care to remember it and keep it holy—it is part of faithful stewardship. He suggests that honoring the Sabbath means we accept that there will be enough manna for the “seventh day,” not in a prosperity theory sort of way or that there will not be hardship, but that

God is always sustaining and is ultimately in charge. He also intones that restoration is entwined with observing Sabbath pointing to the fact that the only miracles Christ performed on the Sabbath were miracles of healing.

For Sleeth such a theology fosters remembering and enjoying God’s provision and provides freedom to rest and celebrate. It invites us to play with ideas and be imaginative about restoration.

- Reflect on the element of “holy” that may be embodied in routine activities
- Do what you can’t do on other days and don’t do what you can do on other days
- Swap roles with someone else during a Sabbath—to have a true break from the usual responsibilities
- Create a space for asking “what is God saying to me?”
- Look for a miracle every day and write it down
- Secure support from within the ministry like asking the congregation to connect with pastors when they are not observing Sabbath
- Practice personal Sabbath-keeping to inform the instruction of others
- Minimize commercial transactions that require work from others

Without Sabbath our lives are like a “multi-page, run-on sentence,” according to Sleeth, with no punctuation to catch a breath—no space for revival at the personal or community level. His challenge is to try a couple ideas, observe the Fourth Commandment for a month, and see what God does.

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Art Exhibit *Work: Curse or Calling?* ■ Upcoming Events ■ Community News

To Clarify ... Articulating Sabbath

IN RESPONSE TO THE FAITHFUL STEWARDS COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT DAY the [Seminary's blog](#) features the reflections of a few students and alumni who attended the lecture by Dr. Matthew Sleeth.

Intention



As much as I could relate to the numerous people reminiscing about resting, worshipping, singing, or eating with family, the thing that most came to mind was how much my grandmother did on Saturday to make sure that Sunday's Sabbath was both possible and pleasurable. From setting the table to preparing dinner and laying out clothes she took the time

to do even the most mundane of things in order to make the most of her time to rest and be restored on that special day. Considering the lengths that she went to keep the Sabbath as it was intended, even walking to the store in the rain or cold the day before to purchase groceries and other necessities ahead of time, it has caused me to consider what things I could and should be doing in the same vain to model Sabbath keeping for my church and family.

—Randy LeBaron, M.Div. '03

Orienting

Last year I traveled to Peru to talk with some pastors about the importance of self-care in ministry. Most were bi-vocational and poured themselves into their ministry whenever they had the opportunity. The idea of taking a rest each week, while acknowledged as important, was also experienced as a real challenge—and it's not just

pastors who struggle with Sabbath-keeping. Even those who have jobs that offer specific "time on/time-off" parameters also struggle with Sabbath-keeping. Because the struggle isn't so much about finding the time as it is about orienting ourselves correctly. Sabbath-keeping is about pausing and appreciating God and his gifts. In his book *24/6: A Prescription for a Healthier, Happier Life*, Matthew Sleeth says this about Sabbath-keeping: "Resting one day a week by any name is holy—the point is to stop on that day and look for God." I realized how closely Sabbath-keeping is connected to contentment. When we stop to "look for God" we are remembering that He is the source of our contentment.

—Vern Saile, M.Div. '01

Practice

People are hurting for Sabbath. I am hurting for Sabbath. I am only practicing the best I can. As I practice, my ability to slow down and focus on God grows. As I practice, I seek to share this Sabbath practice with others. I need rest. I see that the teens I work with need rest. The adults in these teen's lives, need rest. We NEED to let the divine healer spend time with us. We NEED to learn to play and pray together. Can we be angry when we're sharing milk and cookies; probably not? In a recent lecture, Dr. Matthew Sleeth speculated that it is impossible to break the 10 Commandments while one is napping. And in her book, "Keeping the Sabbath Wholly," Marva Dawn made a connection between Sabbath-keeping and peacekeeping. In particular Sabbath-keeping teaches us to grow in compassion and understanding with one another. Sabbath keeping in community causes us to play and pray together.

—Sarah Grice, M.Div. '15



Doctor of Ministry Program Information Webinars [register](#)

Wednesday, Dec. 3	11:00 a.m.—noon
Tuesday, Jan. 20	4:00—5:00 p.m.
Monday, Mar. 2	11:00 a.m.—noon



Connecting the Next Generation to Creation Care

BEFORE SPEAKING IN CHAPEL ON THE DAY OF HIS VISIT, DR. MATTHEW SLEETH MET WITH A FEW UNDERGRADUATE CLASSES—some 80 students in all—to discuss questions they had about creation care. The students had prepared for these sessions by reading and answering questions on Old and New Testament texts that address our duty to tend the earth. In their written responses, many showed a desire to care for Creation, but they also claimed not to have thought about a biblical mandate for this task, as in these responses: “[Creation care] is not something that my denomination thinks about or talks about often,” and “I am not sure what my denomination’s confession about creation care says; I do not know if my denomination has given



Dr. Matthew Sleeth

Creation care much thought.” Many students also struggled to reconcile their faith with the claims of science, as in these questions: “I know that, biblically, the earth is something like 6,000 years old, but science teaches it is 4.5 billion years old. So who’s right?” and “I wonder how a Christian view of environmental science differs from a secular perspective.” In the class sessions, the conversation ranged broadly, from the purpose and meaning of Sabbath to human responsibility for space junk. In his discussion of a handful of biblical passages, Dr. Sleeth gave his view on how faith and science might be reconciled.

—Tim VandeBrake, professor of English
Roberts Wesleyan College

Regional Advisory Councils Provide Insight

SEMINARY LEADERSHIP IS ACCESSING THE COUNSEL of business, professional, and church leaders from the four regions in which classes are offered. About 40 individuals join the Rochester-based councils to work with the president and vice president to:

- Advise on financial, marketing, resource and/or program development, problem solving, and strategic planning matters
- Identify resources of business, professional, and church communities for assisting the Seminary in its mission
- Foster communication between the Seminary and its constituencies
- Identify developments within the culture and community related to the Church, ministry, and theological education
- Strengthen the status of the Seminary in the business, professional, and church community by providing influence and endorsement
- Help increase the Seminary’s network of relationships with people who would be interested in its mission

[Complete list of members.](#)



President Porterfield hears about the state of the church and ministry from Rev. Ted Anderson and Rev. James Simmons.



Members of the NY Capital Region Council discuss the spiritual climate of the region and current ministry needs.

Master’s Program Information Meetings [register](#)

Rochester	Tuesday, Dec. 2	6:00—7:30 p.m.	2265 Westside Drive, Rochester
Syracuse	Thursday, Dec. 4	4:30—6:00 p.m.	Onondaga Community College, Syracuse
Capital Region	Tuesday, Feb. 3	4:30—6:00 p.m.	Hudson Valley Community College, Troy

President's Inaugural Symposium
Thriving in Leadership: Celebrating Heritage, Affirming Excellence, Embracing Hope
September 26, 2014



Shirley Hoogstra, Deana Porterfield, Danielle Coll-Gonzalez, Jo Anne Lyon

AFTER THE [INAUGURATION CEREMONY](#) OF THE NEW ROBERTS WESLEYAN COLLEGE AND NORTHEASTERN SEMINARY PRESIDENT, DR. DEANA L. PORTERFIELD, the Seminary hosted a symposium to honor women in leadership. The theme for the afternoon was *how do women in leadership bring us toward the fulfillment of God's design for humanity and bring hope to future generations?* Dr. Porterfield addressed the symposium attendees proclaiming, "As a female leader in Christian higher education there is a world where we have the opportunity to embrace differences, not just in gender, but in ethnicity and different thinking ... anchored in our tradition is the belief that all people contribute and that all people bring something different, and so today that's the focus."



President Porterfield shares a vision for leadership .



Dean Doug Cullum frames the day with B.T. Roberts' legacy.

Dr. Porterfield was followed by, Daniele Coll-Gonzalez, M.S., chief operating officer for Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA), Shirley V. Hoogstra, J.D., president of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU), and Rev. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, general superintendent of The Wesleyan Church, who each were given 10 minutes to respond to the theme question.

Dr. Douglas R. Cullum, also provided a theological foundation for the proposed question by discussing how these beliefs grew out of B.T. Roberts' legacy of affirming women in leadership. Following the keynote discussions was a question and answer time for attendees to address the panel of speakers directly.

DVDs of the symposium are available for purchase by contacting Maria Rambuski at Rambuski_maria@nes.edu or 585.594.6420.

Art Exhibit

Work: Curse or Calling
November 13-December 15, 2014

WORK Curse or Calling? is a traveling exhibition sponsored by Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA), that brings together the work of 31 artists and 37 artworks. Northeastern Seminary has partnered with the Davison Art Gallery at Roberts Wesleyan College to bring this exhibit to campus.

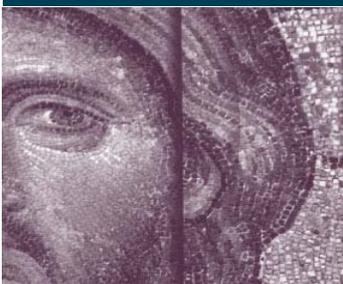


Sam Wagner, mixed media painting, *Worktrip*

The artworks differ in appearance, media, concept, and genre, just as we are creatures differentiated by "appearance, personality, and gifts." Each piece touches, in some way, the concept of work in double entendre, uncanny



Alan Vales, mixed media, *Cursed Earth*





juxtapositions, mysterious landscapes, or still life. Some artists examine historical images of work; others push conventional boundaries; still others consider the spiritual, social, and familial meaning of work. Others consider work “on the job” in a variety of fields, including missions and art making.

Accompanying the exhibit is an excerpt from a recent presentation by Dr. J. Richard Middleton, professor of biblical worldview and exegesis, [A Sacred Call for Sacred Work: Why Are We Here?](#) Here Middleton presents a scriptural base for the sacredness of work. Also highlighting the exhibit is a poem by Thomas Worth, M.Div. '03, D.Min. '07, titled [Calling and Naming](#) in which he draws attention to the particularity of God’s call to us—“Only he can call you from the shadows and shades of what you might be / Into the solid, substantial and glorious reality of who you must be in Him.”

Fourth Annual Christmas Gala **December 6, 2014**

Make sure to RSVP for this year’s Christmas Gala on **Saturday, December 6, 2014**. Seminary students, faculty, and staff are invited to a special reception with President Deana L. Porterfield. Enjoy desserts and fellowship with our new president and stay for a special Christmas performance from various Roberts Wesleyan College ensembles as they perform yuletide music including J. S. Bach’s *Magnificat* for choir and orchestra.

To reserve your complimentary tickets for you and a guest please call 585.594.6420 or email alumni@nes.edu by Wednesday December 3. For full event details click [here](#).

Conference on Ministry ***Real Worship: The Presence of Christ Among Us*** **February 9, 2015**

Designing and leading effective worship—worship that pleases God—that’s real worship. Learn how to re-think the meaning of worship beyond the quotas of hymns and choruses and toward the fullness and depth that comes through integrating a wide variety of worship expressions, both old and new. This one-day event is not just for pastors and worship leaders but for lay leaders who want to be informed about worship as well.



Constance M. Cherry

Dr. Constance Cherry, keynote for the day, has been called to help leaders in the church become better worship architects. She is the author of *The Worship Architect* and serves as professor of worship and Christian ministries at Indiana Wesleyan University. She also has ongoing appointments at the Webber Institute for Worship Studies, Ashland Theological Seminary, and Evangelische Theologische Faculteit. Her hallmark for pursuing “real worship” is weaving together theology and praxis as she notes, “in the end worship is done, not just thought about.”

See www.nes.edu for details and registration.

Featured Courses Spring 2015

Jesus and the Poor

Contemporary
Ethical Issues

Advanced Seminar in
Biblical Preaching*

Pastoral Care

Congregational Renewal

Studies in Genesis:
Jacob and His Family

Celtic History
and Spirituality

For information about these and other courses for credit (\$468/credit hour) or auditing (\$150) options please contact Faith Sharp: 585.594.6623, sharp_faith@nes.edu.

*Prerequisite requirement



Community News

Student News

Doctor of Ministry students **Jonathan Bratt (C9)** and **Esther Gillie (C11)** both spoke in Roberts Wesleyan College Community Chapels in November. Esther spoke on "A Story of Thanksgiving" and Jonathan on "The Power of Your Words."

This fall **Rachel Lewis (C26)** announced her appointment as a staff pastor at Harvest Chapel Free Methodist Church in Fredonia, N.Y.

Sean Pritzkau (C30) has recently accepted the position as director of social media and website development at The Father's House located in Chili, N.Y.

Alumni News

Jonathan C. Perkins (M.Div., '14) celebrated his pastoral installation on Sunday, November 16, 2014 with family, friends, and community members at Mt. Calvary Church of God in Christ in Geneva, N.Y.

Melody Rutherford (M.Div., '14) is the newest chaplain at Sisters of Charity Hospital in Buffalo, N.Y.

As community leaders in churchUNITED **Anthony Bonds (D.Min. '13)**, **Julius Brunson (MAT '12)**, **Fred Johnson, Sr. (MAT, '01, D.Min. '07)**, **Reggie McGill (M.Div. '11)**, **Yulanda McKinney (MAT '04)**, **Weldon Thomas (D.Min. '13)**, and **William Turner, Jr. (MAT '01)** organized the third annual turkey dinner for residents in the communities around Flint Street and Edgerton Community Centers in the City of Rochester. ChurchUNITED was established to bear witness to the love of



William Turner, Weldon Thomas and Fred Johnson enjoy the fare as some 300 people were served at two community centers.

and faith in God through Jesus Christ, work together for empowering the people of Rochester, connect with and support the programs in the city, and respond to the needs of particular neighborhoods and community issues.

Photographs by **Tim Stockwell (MAT '12)** are regularly featured on RailPictures.net a website for train enthusiasts. Check out some of the [images taken](#) in the region around his home in Troy, N.Y.



Christopher (Cord) Sullivan (MAT, '14) accepted a position as campus staff minister with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

Tamara Thurber (MAT, '09) has recently moved to Bellevue, NE after her husband Tim Thurber joined the United States Air Force as a Protestant chaplain. This move had been a growing idea in the Thurber's hearts, but was reaffirmed after a military chaplain visited a Seminary class that Tami was attending a few years ago at Northeastern Seminary.

Sheritta Williams (MAT, '11) is presenting her research paper "Let Her Preach ...! The Pedagogy of Women Preachers from the Feminist, Womanist, and Mujerista Points of

ADVENT stars
prayers love
Inaugurate this season
Spirit, imbued
doubly bright
pack away doubts
glow beat trimmed chaos
expectation
prayers pack away
now doubly bright
stars pack away doubts
love burns impales

May the peace of Christ be yours in this Advent season.

Warmly,
Northeastern Seminary

NES Gear For Christmas

\$15 Gift set includes a Ceramic Mug, Note Cube, and Stylus Pen

To order contact Maria Rambuski at 585.594.6420 or rambuski_maria@nes.edu. Give your name, email or phone number, quantity, and size, as needed. Pick up and pay for your order at the Seminary.



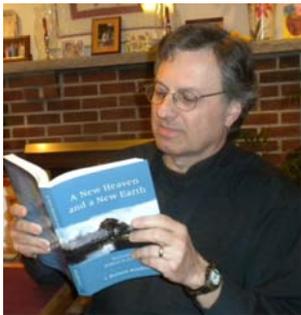
View” at the [World Conference on Women’s Studies](#). Sheritta will be traveling to Colombo, Sri Lanka for the conference in March 2015.

Faculty and Staff News

On Saturday, October 18, **Dr. Rebecca Letterman**, associate professor of spiritual formation, served as retreat facilitator for Bethany Presbyterian Church’s annual retreat. The theme for the day was “Discerning the Presence of God in Everyday Life.” The retreat was held at the Greece Canal Park, and included time for reflection, prayer, and worship among the fall foliage.

Dr. Elizabeth Gerhardt’s new book *The Cross and Gendercide: A Theological Response to Global Violence Against Women and Girls* was the focus of a panel discussion at the Canadian Evangelical Association conference in October in Toronto, Canada. Then on November 20, the Roberts Wesleyan College Social Work Department held an on-campus book reading and signing with Gerhardt. Students, faculty, staff, and community members gathered for this student-led event. Proceeds from book sales were donated to RESOLVE, a Christian organization working to provide counseling and resources for battered women.

A fourth book by **Dr. J. Richard Middleton**, professor of biblical worldview and exegesis, was released by Baker Academic and is titled *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology*.



J. Richard Middleton

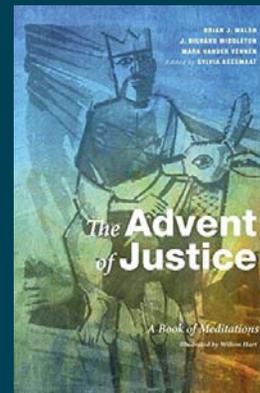
The book was selected by the Institute for Biblical Research for distribution to about 500 academics at a reception they hosted during the Society of Biblical Literature’s annual meeting in San Diego, CA. Middleton was on site to sign books. See a recent post on his [blog](#) where he discusses the journey over the last few years to publication.

Recommended Advent Reads

Prepare your heart and soul for the season of Advent this year with words featured by Northeastern Seminary’s J. Richard Middleton, professor of biblical worldview and exegesis, and Jae Newman, MAT student and adjunct professor of composition at Roberts Wesleyan College.

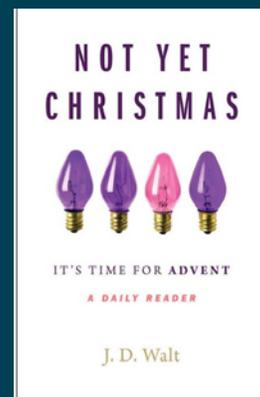
The Advent of Justice: A Book of Meditations

This collection of meditations focus on the hope filled waiting and arrival of Jesus Christ through lectionary readings, response, and meditation. The meditations reveal the varying perspective of four friends and authors: Brian J. Walsh, J. Richard Middleton, Mark Vander Vennen, and Sylvia Keesmaat. For information or to purchase this book visit [wipfandstock.com](#).



Not Yet Christmas: It’s Time for Advent

Not Yet Christmas is a call to reclaim the holy days of Advent instead of focusing on all that has gone wrong with the season in our society. This daily reader is a collection of poems and prayers written by “some of the best Christian poets of our time.” For information or to purchase this book visit [seedbed.com](#).



Jobs in Ministry

Check out the ever-changing list of job opportunities at the [career services website](#). Positions include worship leader, senior pastor, chaplain, and more. Also view a list of recent postings around upstate N.Y. [here](#). See if they are a good fit for you.



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