



# The Western FRONT

November 2015

where the gospel meets the world



Photo by Daniel O' Sullivan

*Loving others as ourselves includes loving others' children as our own, including outings like fishing trips, baseball games, ice skating, and swim parties.*



## IMPORTANT DATES

**Western Seminary will be closed:**

Nov. 26-29	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec. 24-25	Christmas
Jan. 1, 2016	New Year's Day
Jan. 18, 2016	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

**NOVEMBER 11**  
Veterans Day - Remember those who've sacrificed for and served our country.

**JANUARY 13, 2016**  
Discover Coaching Event (see page 3)

**MARCH 15, 2016**  
Alumni Connect & Co-Labor Event (see pg. 4)

Other [Community Calendar](#) Dates

## A Call To Minister - Eyes to See

By Mark Fisher, Western alumnus '15

On June 22, 2012, an online news report announced that a woman had been shot to death and found on a highway on-ramp in Oakland at 1:30 a.m. This homicide received four sentences. The last sentence was, "No arrests have been made." I didn't hear about this atrocity online, however. I heard about it from the executive director of a community-based organization that serves minor girls victimized by commercial sexual exploitation— sold as children for sex throughout the Bay Area. This young woman was a client of

this organization and eighteen years old. She was on the cusp of escaping captivity; then her window to freedom was shut by a gun. Understandably, the founder of this organization for trafficked girls was inconsolable.

I spent days between tears and rage, prayers and sleeplessness. This precious child of God was shot and tossed aside like garbage after years of being sold like a commodity. I thought about all those who failed her during her short, painful life: her family, her neighbors, her school, the police, and social services. All the

churches in her community. The entire Body of Christ.

I had been supporting local anti-trafficking organizations, including this one, for a few years. But the brutal injustice to this victim, paired with the raw anguish of my friend who loved her, was a tipping point in my heart.

So within two weeks, I applied for admission to Western Seminary to pursue an M.A. in Ministry and Leadership. This was

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**WESTERN SEMINARY IS HIRING!**

Western Seminary San Jose is looking to fill a number of part-time positions. Complete details of each position (and Portland positions), as well as an application, can also be found on our website at [www.westernseminary.edu/friends/employment](http://www.westernseminary.edu/friends/employment).

- **Marital and Family Therapy Program Assistant**, *San Jose campus*
- **ReGeneration Online Communications Assistant**, *San Jose campus or Santa Cruz area*
- **ReGeneration Event Coordinator**, *Portland or San Jose campus*

**WESTERN SEMINARY CTC COACHING PROGRAM REACHES A MILESTONE!**

As of October 23, 2015, the International Coach Federation (ICF) officially recognized Western Seminary's [Certificate in Transformational Coaching \(CTC\)](#) program as an Approved Coach Training Program (ACTP). This is the highest ICF designation, awarded to all-inclusive programs that provide basic to advanced training and produce professional-level coaches. Western is one of only two seminaries in the world designated with ACTP training! [Read more.](#)

**MISSED THE FINANCIAL EVENT?**

On September 19, David Brock from [Thrivent Financial](#) sponsored a Western Alumni Gathering, a special informative financial event and breakfast. He shared his financial expertise on savings/budgeting, investing, insurance and retirement. If you missed this event, David invites you to send him an email at [david.brock@thrivent.com](mailto:david.brock@thrivent.com) or make an appointment with him at 408-828-1830 to go over your unique financial questions, concerns and goals.

**CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION FROM THE REGENERATION FORUM**

On October 24, Christ Community Church in Milpitas hosted Western Seminary's ReGeneration Forum. About 350 pastors, church leaders, theologians and students gathered to discuss the difficult questions being posed by the next generation about faith and Christianity. The new ReGeneration Project website will be launched soon with articles on tough questions about

faith, encouraging stories, and ways to stay connected. If you want to be notified when the website launches and receive other ReGeneration news, visit our website and register at [www.regenerationproject.org](http://www.regenerationproject.org).

**BUY ON AMAZON, WESTERN BENEFITS**

Western Seminary in Oregon and California are Amazon Associates. Whether you're planning to buy books, e-books, a laptop, or purchase your Christmas gifts or gift cards, any purchases made through our Amazon Associates account will mean that 4%-15% of each qualifying purchase price will go back to Western Seminary. The proceeds will be used to help underwrite seminary scholarships. In order for Western Seminary

to receive the benefit, you must make your purchase through the Amazon portal at the bottom of the [San Jose Students page](#).

**MINISTRY & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

We receive regular contact from churches and para-church organizations. Please see the Ministry and Employment Opportunities and Counseling binders in the lobby on campus for more information about current listings or post a position by emailing [Lisa Mueller](#). You will find a condensed version of these postings in the most current edition of the [Western Wave](#) student newsletter. You may also check out other [ministry opportunities](#) or post your own ministry ad.



*From left to right: Anthony Bong ('14), Charmaine Williams (current student/staff), Shadia Hrichi ('14), and Daniel Chen ('15) were among the many Western Seminary students and alumni who attended the Preach the Word conference.*

## PREACH THE WORD

Venture Christian Church in Los Gatos held a conference on October 6 and 7 called Preach the Word. They gathered some of the nation's leading communicators to equip, encourage, and empower pastors and teachers for transformational teaching that changes lives and revitalizes churches. Approximately 175 people attended. The speakers were Chip Ingram, Francis Chan, Bishop Claude Alexander, and Lance Witt. Western students and alumni were offered a great discount and were in high numbers at the event. It was like a mini reunion! Venture Church plans to offer this conference annually. Don't miss it next year! For more information about the conference, visit [www.preachtheword.cc](http://www.preachtheword.cc).



## FELLOWSHIP NIGHT

On October 3, [Thrivent Financial](#) sponsored a Fellowship Night at an Earthquakes soccer game. Some 78 Western Seminary students, alumni, staff, faculty and their friends and family attended. The San Jose Earthquakes played against the Vancouver Whitecaps. It was an exciting game - tied 1 to 1. After the game, Quakes Middlefielder JJ Koval came to speak openly about his passion for the Lord and soccer.



## FREE DISCOVER COACHING

**January 13, 2016  
7pm-9pm**

at Western Seminary San Jose

Learn how to help people  
navigate their lives from where  
they are to where they aspire to be.

**RSVP by Jan. 6**

Learn more about [coach training](#).



## Thank You

We wish we had the time to personally write each one of you and share how your life has touched us here at Western. By the grace of God, many of you have stood in the gap for our students so that they may continue their seminary education. You are a beacon of hope in a land where darkness often looms in the lives of those in our families, neighborhoods, churches, and communities at large. You are an encouragement to those searching for answers. Hope is found in Jesus Christ who redeems people from darkness and hopelessness into the marvelous light. We thank God for the power of His Spirit that resides in each of you. The book of Ephesians identifies you as His masterpiece created in Christ Jesus to

do good works which He has prepared in advance for you to do. As we celebrate this Thanksgiving season, our hearts are appreciative of your kindness, prayers, volunteer time, and financial support. Our existence at this location (five years ago this month) is a testament to the lavish love you display in many more ways than we know or acknowledge. If you would like to continue to support Western through the Western Seminary fund, the Radmacher Fund, student scholarships, or some other area, you may make a gift through the [Donation Page](#) or contact [Charmaine Williams](#) to discuss this and other ways you may invest your time, talent, or treasure. Enjoy your Thanksgiving and Christmas season. May God richly bless you!

**“A CALL TO MINISTER - EYES TO SEE” CONT. FROM PG. 1**

the first step in walking away from a 20-year career of sales and marketing in companies such as Bass Pro Shops, Remington Arms, and ESPN.

Five years before that woman's death was planned by her murderers in 2012, I was planning my own death in Seattle in 2007. I had just walked out of a second marriage after less than six months of matrimony, and I was mired in a couple of long-term addictions. I went to sleep every night plotting my suicide, and I woke up every morning hung-over. That was when Jesus left the ninety-nine and brought me back into his flock. A year later in May 2008, I was living in Livermore, California, attending Cornerstone Fellowship and starting a new sales director job.

At Cornerstone, I met an elementary school teacher in Hayward who shared that two of her students had never experienced Christmas. She didn't mean their Christmas presents were disappointing. She meant they had never had a Christmas tree, a Christmas decoration, a Christmas stocking, or a Christmas gift. Ever. A few days before Christmas 2008, she brought them to a Christmas tree lot, a dollar store, second-hand stores, and other places to patch together a hint of what most American children take for granted. She sent me text pictures at every stage, ending up with the girls laying on the floor in a pile of cheap gifts, used toys, wrapping paper, and stockings. All I could do, from the sidelines, was text her encouragement and tell her I would repay her whatever she spent. It was a genuine Christmas miracle through a Christian proclaiming the Gospel through deeds. And it was unfolding before me as a spectator.

I thought, “I want to be part of a Christmas miracle.” God's answer seemed to be, “Then put on your seat belt and roll up your sleeves.” What became known as “Hidden Treasures” was then birthed by this sister in Christ and me as an outreach ministry to the young in under-resourced homes in the East Bay, bringing them to church, taking them to baseball games, and filling in for dads at “father-daughter” dances. It includes helping mothers with food, gas, utilities, and

rent while lending a sympathetic ear and praying with them. The outreach extended beyond these families. It went to kids in juvenile hall, youth programs, and foster homes who have suffered the pain and trauma of neglect, abuse, homelessness, sexual assault, sex trafficking, addictions, domestic violence, and shootings.

So now, as a Western grad, I'm a semi-employed urban missionary and founder of a charitable organization called “Seek and Save” (<http://bit.ly/seekandsave>). Its mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to under-resourced urban communities through words of God and acts of love. Its harvest field is low-income housing, juvenile hall, foster

homes, shelters, and organizations for at-risk youth. It also assists churches through workshops and projects as they equip servant-disciples who literally go forth.

I don't know if that 18-year-old murdered in Oakland in June of 2012 was ever sought with acts of love and words of faith—whether at home, school, neighborhood, community center, juvenile hall, or foster care. But my “year-round Christmas miracle” seems to be doing so for many of the young treasures in the Bay Area who are oppressed with poverty, maltreatment, and crime as children while overlooked to the point of being hidden from adults.



## The Alumni Connect & Co-Labor Event

*Be our guest - dinner and fellowship included!*

**Topic:** **Salting (not Steamrolling) the Marketplace: a Christian Perspective on Work**

**Date:** Tuesday, March 15

**Time:** 6:30pm-9:00pm

**Speaker:** David Gill

**Location:** The Old Spaghetti Factory in Downtown San Jose  
51 North San Pedro Street, San Jose 95110

**RSVP:** Via [www.westernseminary.edu/sj-alum-connect](http://www.westernseminary.edu/sj-alum-connect)  
by March 8. Seating is limited.

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