

# Convocation Keynote Speakers Encourage Workers

continued from page one

Three powerful keynote speakers addressed the President's Convocation:

- Dr. William H. Willimon, Bishop of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church; former dean of the Chapel and Professor of Chris-

Award in the category of The Church/Pastoral Leadership.

- Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, Associate Executive Director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; former parish pastor; frequent

always on the move. We have to learn that we follow a living Lord, not an interesting philosophy that will make life better . . . Your ministry is God's and Jesus' determination to give and get back to the world."

It's encouraging, Dr. Willimon noted, "to know that God put us into ministry here and He strengthens us."

Being rooted in Christ, Dr. Willimon said, imparts a "sense of adventure" to ministry. "It all comes down to being rooted and strengthened in Christ. We've got an interesting, on-the-move God . . . a living God who uses even us" to accomplish His work.

## Live in Him

Speaking on the Convocation subtheme "Live in Him," Dr. Dawn's emphasized that "we live in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit to the glory of the Father. We are mutually intertwined in the Trinity," she said.

"God has to give us the power to know Jesus," Dr. Dawn said. The love of Christ is "beyond human comprehension . . . This was God who died — that's how much God loves us. To love as God loves, we must die to self so that love can rise from the ashes."

We can "accomplish abundantly more than we can imagine or comprehend," she continued. "God wants us to have wild dreams — ask the unimaginable . . . Who knows how God might use us and what He might do through us?"

God has "called each of us to be living in Jesus . . . with our minds staying on Jesus. . . We are worthy because we are forgiven," Dr. Dawn said. "We go by the grace of God — wherever He sends us."

That grace from God will never run out, she concluded. "Each of us has unique spiritual gifts that no one else has . . . given by the grace of God. How do we live in today's world? By grace given through our gifts in our calling, we live in Him."

## Overflowing with Thankfulness

Wrapping up the Convocation theme, Dr. Lehenbauer described Jesus as "the perfect expression of the land of milk and honey described in the Old Testament. In the Lord, we overflow . . . and what an honor it is to be a vessel of our Lord, overflowing with grace."

We are also, Dr. Lehenbauer continued, "overflowing in grateful thanksgiving that God chose us — just like we are — to overflow and go forward." This is not to be confused with "the kind of thankfulness exhibited by the everyday human emotion of gratitude," he added.

In the face of suffering and trouble, we learn that God's "grace is more than enough grace than any of us could ever use," he said. "Suffering provides opportunity to reflect on the suffering of Jesus Christ through which God revealed His overflowing love and peace."

We cannot "separate who we are as individual Christians from the body of Christ — the Church," Dr. Lehenbauer emphasized. "We learn Christian gratitude by practicing it weekly in Church where Christ continues to come down and be among us. It's through the ordinary community called the Church that God comes and does His work."

The Apostle Paul, Dr. Lehenbauer noted in closing, "endured under tough circumstances. He stood firm and finished the work

— and he thanked God for the work. We, too, should thank God for the privilege of sharing in the best work on earth."

## Speaker's Panel

The three keynote speakers joined District President Gerhard Michael for an informal panel discussion on what the Convocation accomplished and how that ties together with nurture.

"We need to see the Church as a place where we equip the saints for mission," President Michael said. "We should not isolate ourselves but share and be challenged."

The panelists agreed that the emphasis should be on "vocation — living life to bear witness where God puts us. God has plans for each of us." □



EMMANUEL-DELRAY BEACH, FL, pastor Rev. Christian Airey led a workshop on "Gospel Ministry to Haitian People in Their Homeland and Diaspora with a Focus on the Evangelical Lutheran Church." □

tian Ministry at Duke University; former parish pastor, author of 50 books including *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony*; recipient of numerous honors and awards including designation in 1996 by an international survey by Baylor University as one of the 12 most effective preachers in the English-speaking world.

- Dr. Marva Dawn, theologian, author, musician and educator with *Christians Equipped for Ministry*, Vancouver, WA; Teaching Fellow in Spiritual Theology at Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia; author of more than 15 books including *Powers, Weakness and the Tabernacling of God* which was honored with the 2002 *Christianity Today* Book

speaker at pastoral conferences and other Church gatherings; contributor to various Synodical publications.

## Strengthened and Built Up

Speaking on the Convocation's opening day focus of "Strengthened and Built Up," Dr. Willimon told participants, "You're here for encouragement, for strength. I'm convinced that the only thing that can save you in ministry is the one who got you here: Jesus."

Emphasizing the need to balance the elements in life, Willimon described ministry as a "challenge, because we're working with this living God. We work for Jesus," he said, who "is



"IT'S ABOUT GOD," Convocation Bible study and devotional leader Rev. Victor Belton emphasized. "He's still the God of overflow — He comes into our lives with overflow." He encouraged Convocation participants to "do what you've been taught . . . start living what you believe. How can we become rooted with all that's going on so we're not overwhelmed? Jesus. He's the only reason . . . our only hope. We need to keep our hope in the One who has given all . . . We want to put down deep roots . . . We want to be built into a spiritual house — we're bricks in the wall." Pastor Belton reminded all that "God esteems each of us — a living stone in the wall as important as Moses or Paul in this day and time. Let's not build on any foundation other than that which has been given. We are rooted, built up and strengthened in Jesus." □



## ROOMMATE REUNION

Convocation keynote speaker Dr. Marva Dawn (center) was reunited with college roommates Barbara Dorlac (left) and Lynn Kernkamp (right), who are both on the faculty of St. Paul Lutheran School-Boca Raton, FL. The three met while students at Concordia University-River Forest, IL. □



A HEALTH FAIR incorporated into the President's Convocation offered services ranging from blood pressure testing to information on healthy lifestyle choices. □



TAKING A BREAK — LVS BOOKSTORE was one of the exhibitors at the President's Convocation. Also in attendance were representatives from social ministry organizations, ministry councils and commissions, financial planning groups, auxiliary ministries and Concordia University System schools. □