**“Dialogue, Bridges, and Boundaries”**

**Dr. Golemon, for Opening Student Prayer Service, WTC**

**September 12, 2013**

I want to welcome you on behalf of the community of 12 schools and institutes of the Washington Theological Consortium, bound together in the mission of theological learning, pastoral formation, and public service.

The age we live in is auspicious but fraught with danger. This is true for our world and for our society and our Church.

Our world—teams with people, at a birth rate that will send the nations scrambling for more land, water, and increasingly cheap human labor. The world needs increased means of, dialogue, bridge building and boundary crossing to move ahead with any stewardship or hope.

Our society—An economist just charted current economic trends into the next two generations, you will see a gradual disappearance of the middle class, a gradual increase in the rich, and a explosion of the struggling class of workers and the poor. Americans (and our neighbors) need new means of negotiation, new kinds of bridge-building, and new boundary crossings to move ahead with any justice or hope.

The Church—continues to splinter, and collapse in the historic middle Protestant middle in this land, rising up one side the Classical and Catholic Church—always inviting unity, and on the other charismatic and independent churches promising revitalization and and –re-formation in a spirit-filled life. This is the church’s challenge today: how to bring unity and re-formation together, and to do that she needs more dialogue, more bridges, more boundary moving and opening.

The Church, my friends, is only one religious family in the mix of many spiritual and ethical voices calling for human hope and dignity. And the Church’s ministers and priests remain but the shepherds of a whole people of God caught up in a mission of testimony and service. Yet the church is special, because its mission is defined by the *missio dei,*  which is one of God’s eternal grace and endless love.

My friends, embrace the age you are in. Throw yourself into seminary life, and embrace Consortium studies in classes, student events, shared library research and more to help shape your ability to form dialogue, build bridges and cross boundaries… for a world and society and for Church that so desperately need them… Given and age auspicious and fraught with danger, we must join hand in hand as Christians to share a gospel ecumenism—based on a core witness of the cross of hope—that this world is hungry for.

Dialogue, bridges, crossing boundaries—these could define your ministry, a renewed and united Church, and a new hope for society and world.