

THE MESSENGER

MID-AMERICA REFORMED SEMINARY

New Technology Expands Mid-America's Reach by Keith LeMahieu



The lectures at Mid-America Reformed Seminary will soon be available to a far wider audience, thanks to the installation of new technology.

“The equipment being installed in the classrooms is the culmination of a technology campaign to raise \$90,000,” says Mr. Keith LeMahieu, Director of Promotional and Financial Development. “This was spurred by a desire to expand the reach of the Seminary to make

the good things going on here more available to the outside world.”

New hardware includes high definition video cameras, video encoders, flat screen monitors, and laptop computers in classrooms. These tools capture and create digital video files. The computers and monitors allow professors access to a variety of material—such as maps, illustrations, text, or video—with the ability to display it in the classroom. A cloud-based (web-based) software will control and manage recordings.

“Cloud-based software interfaces with the hardware to allow all classes to be recorded and stored in the cloud for future viewing,” explains Mr. LeMahieu. “It also gives us the ability to live-stream any classroom activity. This permits us to open our public evening classes and fall lectures to anyone around the world for live or later on-demand streaming.”

Some files will be available to everyone, while only students with assigned usernames and passwords can access course content. The automated system will be more convenient than current recording methods.

“The software allows us to automate the recording process so we can set up class times for the entire semester and tell the equipment in each classroom when to begin and end recording each day for each class,” says Mr. LeMahieu. “Each night the system will ‘publish’ that day’s classroom videos to the cloud for on-demand viewing the next day.”

The Seminary is only beginning to explore the system’s possible uses and potential benefits. Auditors could “attend” or Board members could “sit in” on classes without being on site. Students considering Mid-America could visit classes without traveling to the campus. Churches could use classes or lectures for church education classes or Bible studies.

Classroom lectures have been recorded and stored for many years, but the process was time-consuming and the cumbersome equipment was becoming increasingly unreliable. The Seminary is excited about the new equipment and its possibilities for sharing Mid-America’s vision and teaching with the broader Reformed community.

Fall Learning Opportunities

New technology at the Seminary will allow people in distant locations to take advantage of special lectures this fall.

On October 23 & 30 and November 6 & 20 (Thursday evenings), Professor Mark Vander Hart will celebrate “Living in the Psalms.” The class will explore how the rest of Scripture sees Jesus sketched in the Psalms and answer questions such as: Who is the truly ‘righteous sufferer’ of the Psalms?

“The Psalms have for centuries been a dearly-loved section of the Bible: for devotions and meditations, for singing, for giving expression to the full range of emotions in the Christian life,” he says. “But there is more to the Psalms than what first meets the eye. I hope that we will be able to study these various psalms, gain a feel for their purpose and passion, but also gain their rich content in the melodies of our souls.”

On November 4 & 5, as part of the annual fall lecture series, Dr. William B. Evans, Younts Professor of Bible and Religion at Erskine College in Due West, SC, will speak on “Union with Christ in Theological and Pastoral Perspective.”

His initial lecture, “Three Current Models of Union with Christ,” will evaluate three current approaches to the theme of the believer’s union with Christ. In his second lecture, “From William Ames to N. T. Wright: Resurrection Justification in Historical and Theological Perspective,” Dr. Evans will examine how various theologians have sought to clarify the connection between union and justification. His final lecture, “Where’s the Beef?: Why the Theme of Union with Christ Matters Theologically and Pastorally,” explores implications of union with Christ for theological problems, the Christian life, Reformed ecclesiology, and social transformation.

“The President’s Message: The Role of the Church in Seminary Training” (1)

by Dr. Cornelis P. Venema



In previous messages in this column, I have touched upon the question of the relationship between the work of a seminary, which trains its students for the gospel ministry, and the churches. The relationship between seminary training and the churches can be viewed in two ways. The first way views this relationship in terms of how seminaries may serve the churches. The second way views it in terms of the church’s role in serving the seminaries that train students for the ministry. In my column this month and in following issues of *The Messenger*, I would like to focus on the second of these: how can churches contribute to the work of a seminary like Mid-America Reformed Seminary?

Since there are several ways in which churches play a role in seminary training, I will only focus upon one of them in this article: what role should the churches play in cultivating, preparing, and qualifying aspiring pastors for seminary study? In my answer to this question, I believe there are at least three tasks that belong to the churches.

The first role played by the church is clearly mandated in the Scriptures. We are all likely familiar with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 9:37: “The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” These words were spoken by our Lord when he was moved with compassion, seeing the crowds of people who “were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36). If the churches of Jesus Christ are to heed this mandate, they must be churches where the prayers of the congregation, whether offered by pastors in congregational worship or the members in their daily devotions, regularly include an earnest petition that the Lord would raise up from within the congregation men who would be willing to be prepared for and go into the Lord’s harvest field.

The second role played by the church is the calling to encourage those who aspire to the ministry to pursue this aspiration. It is not enough for the churches to pray fervently that the Lord raise up workers who will go into his harvest field. As Paul reminds Timothy, the church has a responsibility to identify and encourage those men whom the Lord has gifted for the work of the ministry (cf. 1 Tim. 3:1ff.). The saying, *ora et labora* (“pray and work”), has application here as elsewhere. If the churches’ prayers are sincere, then they must be accompanied by an active preparation of men for study for the ministry.

In this connection, I am reminded of a wonderful program that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) has undertaken in recent years. In the OPC, local church sessions are encouraged to nominate young men in their congregations, who exhibit gifts for the ministry, to attend what is called a “Timothy Conference.” Several such conferences have been held in recent years at seminaries that serve the OPC, including Mid-America. At these conferences, the attendees visit seminary classes and are addressed by pastors and seminary teachers with the challenges and demands of pursuing seminary education in preparation for the ministry. These conferences offer a model that could well be followed by other church communions.

The third role played by the church in the preparation of students for seminary study follows appropriately upon these preliminary roles. When students apply for seminary study at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, they are asked to submit recommendations from their pastor and church consistory or session. The assumption underlying this requirement is that the churches are sufficiently familiar with the student applicant to be able to offer an informed recommendation. By their recommendation, the consistory or session expresses its support for a student applicant’s aspiration to pursue the ministry, and pledges its support for him in this pursuit.

Fall Retreat

It is always a delight to come together in the fall of every year, a day after New Student Orientation and Registration, and a day before the beginning of classes, to have a Fall Retreat. The Retreat affords the Faculty and students an opportunity to begin the year together, meeting off campus, once again at the beautiful Conference and Retreat Center in nearby Cedar Lake, IN. The purpose of the retreat is to introduce the new students to the community so that new and old alike may get to know each other. The day consisted of a time of refreshments, a devotional, introductions, talks from the Rev. Danny Olinger, a delicious lunch and afternoon recreations.

Rev. Olinger, a ministerial member of the Presbytery of Ohio (OPC) and General Secretary of the Committee on Christian Education (OPC), gave two talks on Geerhardus Vos. His first talk was on “Communion with God” (that we enjoyed in creation, lost in Adam’s fall, and had restored in Christ). His second talk was on “The Glory of God” (that Adam failed to achieve for us in the probation and that Christ achieved, so that in glory we are brought to our final state and have no further probation).

Rev. Olinger gave us extensive biographical details on Vos’s life, both in the Netherlands and in the United States, particularly his many years spent as Professor of Biblical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. Vos was the first Reformed biblical theologian of note, taking what had been a discipline pioneered by liberals in their anti-systematic theology approach to Scriptures and putting it instead in the service of orthodoxy by examining the unfolding revelation of God in redemptive history.



Meet Mid-America's New Students by Glenda Mathes

Mid-America welcomes the following students this year:

Originally from Mexico, Jonatan Azpilcueta taught martial arts in West Chicago for five years. He and Linda, with son Matthias, belong to Nueva Esperanza congregation (Christian Reformed) in Wheaton, IL. He hopes for full-time pastoral ministry with his church planter, Pastor Al Guerra.

Joel Fregia and his wife, Leigh, and their infant daughter, Anna, were members of Trinity OPC in Huntington, WV. He came to Mid-America at the recommendation of his supervising session and pastor, Rev. David Robbins (2008). Joel hopes for ordination in the OPC.

Tad Groenendyk worked for eight years as a draftsman for a design company in Grand Haven, MI. He and his wife, Karena, have two children, Marijka and Natalia, and belong to Faith URC in West Olive, MI. Tad seeks ordination in the URCNA.

Joel Irvin works full-time while attending seminary. He and his wife, Jamie, are members of Michiana Covenant Church (PCA) in Granger, IN. Already a ruling elder and licentiate, Joel hopes for pastoral ministry as a teaching elder, possibly in a church planting context.

David Jouf, adjunct professor at a local college, seeks foreign mission service, planting Reformed churches in France in cooperation with the Faculte Jean Calvin in Aix-en-Provence. He and Laura, with Samuel and Joseph, belong to Living Springs Community Church (RCA) in Glenwood, IL.

Ryan Noha and his wife, Wenny, expect a child in December. Currently members of the Chinese Christian Union Church North (nondenominational) in Highland Park, IL, they seek affiliation with Hope Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Grayslake, IL. He hopes for ordination in the OPC.

Bradley Robinson has formerly worked for New Life International, a Christian non-profit dedicated to water purification ministry. He and Emily belong to Midlane Park Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Louisville, KY. Emily teaches high school English, while Brad seeks ordination in the ARP.

Michael Veitz works full-time as Director of Youth and Family Ministries at Christ Community Church (PCA) in Carmel, IN. He and Suzanne have three children: Noel, Flara, and Judah. Under care of the Central Indiana Presbytery, he hopes for ordination to pastoral ministry.

Born to missionaries in Colombia and raised in Mexico City, Ruben Zartman previously worked for an engineering firm. He and Heidi belong to New Covenant Community Church (OPC) in Joliet, IN. He hopes for OPC ordination and Central or South American mission work.

Please join the Mid-American family in praying for God to bless the seminary work of these new students and their ministry efforts far into the future.



Smile for Mid-America by Keith LeMahieu



Okay, I'll admit it. I'm a fan of Amazon.com. I was an early-adapter, buying books and later music when the online retailer opened its cyber-doors in the mid-90s. As the company expanded its presence, I've used it to purchase everything from shorts to saws. I don't have to go to the store, the selection is almost unlimited, the prices are great, shipping is free. What's not to like? No wonder Amazon processes over 300 items per second every day.

Well, now there is something else to like about Amazon. The Seattle-based retailer announced a corporate philanthropy program called AmazonSmile which allows Amazon shoppers to direct .5% of their purchase totals to a charitable organization of their choice. Amazon has set up a special website for AmazonSmile at www.smile.amazon.com. The first time you navigate to this address you will be asked to sign in with your email address and Amazon password. If you are not an Amazon customer you can create an

Amazon account from this page. Amazon will then ask you to designate a charity which you wish to support when doing business with them. Amazon's database contains a list of all 501(c)(3) organizations (that's IRS lingo for registered charities), and you simply select the charity you wish to support. Once you're registered, your Amazon shopping experience will be just as it has always been.

From that point forward Amazon will send a quarterly donation equaling .5% for all the purchases you make. Of course we're not encouraging you to make Amazon your charitable giving vehicle, but why not let Amazon send 50 cents to Mid-America for every \$10 you would spend for the things you would buy anyway. It's a win-win for you and Mid-America.



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Golf Outing 2014 by Keith LeMahieu



The weather on September 6th could not have been nicer for this year's Mid-America Reformed Seminary golf outing. The Lincoln Oaks golf course in Crete, IL, was in good shape despite heavy rain the day before.

Teams hit the course at 8:30 am with Professor Mark Vander Hart making sure they were well fed and hydrated with ice water, candy bars and

licorice during their five hours of play. The teams arrived back at the clubhouse around 1:30 pm for a buffet meal of hamburgers, brats, hot dogs, chips and potato salad.

Last year's winning team repeated again this year shooting an 8 under par 63. The winners were Grant Dykstra, Ryan Worries, Rich Tameling, and Joel Worries. Each player received a \$75 Visa gift card. Coming in just behind them at 7 under par was a team consisting of Paul Beezhold, Tim Beezhold, Adam Beezhold and Lou Karr. The second place team received a \$50 Ace Hardware gift certificate.

Golfers also had the opportunity to compete for individual prizes. The two longest putt competitions were won by Bryan O'Neal and Nathan Brummel. There were two closest to the pin competitions that were won by Paul

Beezhold and Grant Dykstra. Kevin Jacobs hit the longest classic drive using a 40 year-old classic driver. The longest drive marker went missing when someone drove over it, pressing it into the soft ground. It wasn't until later that afternoon that the golf course called to report the marker had been found. The name on the marker at the time it was lost was Nick De Kryger. Another team reported that Kyle De Young hit a monster drive after the marker was lost, so a free round of golf at Lincoln Oaks was awarded to both Nick and Kyle. Finally, a host of prizes were awarded to golfers whose names were drawn from a list of all participants.

We thank the participants and all the generous sponsors for making this event possible. Mark your calendar for next year's outing scheduled for September 12, 2015.