

THE MESSENGER

MID-AMERICA REFORMED SEMINARY

Adjunct Faculty by Glenda Mathes

Mid-America's Board recognizes the value of sabbaticals for the Seminary and Christ's church. Sabbaticals also provide an opportunity to utilize qualified adjunct instructors. This year four adjuncts bring expertise and experience to the classroom.

Dr. Camden Bucey, pastor of Hope OPC in Grayslake, IL, teaches Anthropology. He obtained his MBA in 2004 from Bradley University and designed systems to test prototype machines at Caterpillar. He attended Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, graduating in 2011 with his MDiv and in 2014 with a PhD in Historical and Theological Studies, concentrating in systematic theology.

"While I greatly enjoyed my job," he says, "through involvement in my local church, and much theological study, I felt called to seek further theological training in a seminary with a view to gospel ministry."

Mr. Shawn Goodwin teaches Summer Greek. He received a Masters degree in Biblical Exegesis from Wheaton College with honors in New Testament Studies. He then studied the Old Testament and Near Eastern languages at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He teaches classes on the Bible and the Ancient Near East at Bethel OPC in Wheaton, IL, and plans to pursue his doctorate in Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Studies.

"I love studying the historical connections between languages and learning philological explanations for peculiarities we see in the texts in front of us," he says.

Dr. Nelson D. Kloosterman formerly taught at Mid-America and now teaches preaching (Homiletics). He is an assistant pastor at Lincoln Square Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Chicago, IL. He has a B.D. from Calvin Theological Seminary, a Th.M. and Th.D. from the Theological University of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in Kampen.

He describes Mid-America as a "valuable, essential, and flagship ministerial training academy." He says, "The Seminary continues to hold in high esteem the teaching and application of Scripture through the church's ministries of the gospel within the 21st century church."

Dr. A. Craig Troxel, pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Wheaton, IL, teaches Christian Spirituality. He received his M.A.T.S. (New Testament) from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and obtained a Ph.D. (Systematic Theology) from Westminster Theological Seminary.

He believes seminarians are "ideally trained by good theologians and crack exegetes, but they must also become acquainted with ministerial life by those who have substantial experience and are presently swimming in its depths." He adds, "My affection for Mid-America revolves around the people there, who are marked by Christian hospitality and a love for the church."



*Dr. Nelson Kloosterman,
adjunct professor of Preaching (Homiletics)*

New Staff by Glenda Mathes

Two part-time employees joined Mid-America's staff this year. Sonja Vooys began as Bookkeeper on January 26 and Jared Luttjeboer started as Assistant Manager of Marketing and Digital Media on September 8.

Sonja was an accountant for 22 years in New Zealand before moving to the US in 2013. She works about 24 hours per week at the Seminary, processing donations, student billing, and all other financial aspects. She recently has been preparing for the annual audit of the Seminary's accounts.

"I enjoy working in a Christian environment where men are being trained for service in God's kingdom," she says. "I like the flexibility of being able to work part-time around my husband's work schedule."

Jared works less than 20 hours per week, after classes as a full-time MTS student. He documents people and programs at the Seminary through video and photography content. He also markets Mid-America via social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

He enjoys the challenge and creativity of crafting effective content for various people and projects. He believes stretching our God-given talents helps us understand our character, which allows us to "understand the ultimate Creator's character more fluently, and that is a wonderful thing."



Shawn Goodwin, adjunct professor of Summer Greek



The President's Message: "What the Seminary Owes the Church" (1)

by Dr. Cornelis Venema

In recent issues of *The Messenger*, I have addressed the topic of the church's role in seminary training. In this and subsequent messages, I would like to turn to the topic of the seminary's role in service to the church. While it is appropriate and biblical to expect the churches to support seminary education with their prayers and gifts, it is likewise proper to expect the seminary to recognize its responsibility to the churches.

My focus in this message is upon the seminary's responsibility to encourage aspiring pastors to "keep a close watch" upon themselves. Though we often think narrowly of seminary education, emphasizing the importance of the study of God's Word and its teaching, we must not neglect the study of ourselves. By that I mean, students need to be encouraged in various ways to cultivate the kind of godliness that will fit them for effective service in the ministry.

At our recent opening convocation/chapel, I called the students' attention to the encouragement the apostle Paul gave to his spiritual son, Timothy, in 1 Timothy 4:15-16: "Practice these things, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers."

When Paul first wrote these words, he did so for several reasons. In the first place, Timothy appears to have been rather retiring or timid in his person and, by the standards of the day, relatively young (see 1 Tim. 4:12; cf. 2 Tim. 1:7). Timothy was also confronted with teachers in the church who were likely seeking to undermine his ministry. Furthermore, since Timothy was sent by Paul to Ephesus, he did not serve in Ephesus as an "insider," as one who was called and approved by the congregation he served. Recognizing Timothy's natural tendency to shrink back in the face of these challenges to his ministry—especially when some of the elders in Ephesus were opposing his teaching and seizing upon these challenges to his disadvantage—Paul aims to stiffen Timothy's resolve to remain steadfast.

Remarkably, the first thing that Paul tells Timothy is that he must cultivate godliness. Rather than beginning with a defense of Timothy based upon his lawful commission from God through the laying on of hands by the body of elders (the "presbytery"; cf. 1 Tim. 4:14), Paul says: "Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (v. 12). If Timothy's ministry is to be an effective one, he must, among other things: 1) discipline his tongue; 2) pursue a godly walk in the presence of the congregation; 3) demonstrate steadfast love for God and patient love for the flock under his care; 4) be reliable and trustworthy; and 5) cultivate purity. Whether in word or in deed, Timothy must pay careful attention to his own person and character as a servant of the Lord and a minister of the gospel.

The implications of Paul's encouragement to Timothy for an aspiring minister's preparation for the ministry are clear. Although the responsibility rests especially upon a would-be pastor to give attention to the formation of his character in godliness, the seminary must be attentive to this as well. The task of the seminary is not exhausted in what could be described as the transmission of information. Forming the minds of students in the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not enough. The hearts and lives of the aspiring minister must be formed as well for the challenges of an effective ministry.

In order to underscore the urgency of this task, the apostle Paul concludes his charge to Timothy with a sobering reminder of what is at stake: "Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (v. 16). Since I cannot improve upon Calvin's comments on this reminder, I shall conclude with them: "The zeal of pastors will be greatly increased when they are told that both their own salvation and that of their people depends upon their serious and earnest devotion to their office. ... [J]ust as the unfaithfulness or negligence of a pastor is fatal to the Church, so it is right for its salvation to be ascribed to his faithfulness and diligence. This ministry is itself entirely God's work, for it is He who makes men good pastors and leads them by His Spirit and blesses their work so that it may not be in vain."

Fall Retreat

by Dr. Alan Strange

Every academic year starts with a retreat at a nearby lakeside retreat center. The purpose of such is to afford new students and their wives, whether first year or transfer students, opportunity to begin to get to know upperclassmen and their wives and for the community as a whole to hear a speaker on a theme appropriate for ministerial students. The retreat is on Tuesday of the first week of school, the day following New Student Orientation and Registration and before the first day of classes on Wednesday.

As we gathered this year at the Retreat Center, we enjoyed a day of unusual warmth given the relatively cooler summer. After the initial welcome and coffee time, and a devotional word brought by Dr. Beach, the student body broke up in groups according to counselor assignments. Each student is assigned a faculty counselor with whom he meets weekly for prayer, as well as at other times, as needed. Each group chose a spokesman who then introduced all in that group to the others. This is the first time for the community to come together in this way and the occasion usually abounds with humor and bonhomie.

While we customarily ask outside speakers to bring the talks that we enjoy in the morning, this year we asked the Rev. Jeff DeBoer. Rev. DeBoer brought two challenging and encouraging talks on "self-control" and "courage" in the ministry. After a hearty lunch, there was a time of fun and games, giving further opportunity for students to get to know each other.



New Students Eager to Learn by Glenda Mathes

Excitement and new faces fill the halls of Mid-America at the beginning of each academic year. This year's juniors vary in age and ministry experience, as well as geographic and ecclesiastical background, but they share a common enthusiasm for seminary training and a desire to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jonathan Beall grew up in the Washington, DC, area as a dispensationalist, becoming Reformed in college. He and Kimberly with son Elias belong to New Covenant Community Church (OPC) in Joliet, IL. After 15 years in the cell phone industry, he seeks the MDiv and hopes for pastoral ministry.

Dan Beezhold grew up in Mid-America's "shadow" and felt called to ministry since his youth. A Dordt graduate with a history major, he seeks his MDiv with a pastoral ministry goal. He believes ministers should be "thorough exegetes of God's word... that the gospel might be truly preached and heard."

Paul Freswick is pursuing his MDiv with the hope of being called to the pastoral ministry.

He graduated from the pre-med program at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids and believes a biology background "can be very helpful, especially in light of all the attacks science is making on Scripture."

Ehren Gaebler was raised in a Christian home, but didn't become convinced of God's existence until age 14. He graduated from Coe College with a physics degree. A member of Hope Evangelical Church (PCA) in North Liberty, IA, he is pursuing his MDiv degree with a pastoral ministry goal.

Arnold Lavaire, Jessie, Anthony, and Jeremy belong to Nueva Esperanza (PCA) in West Chicago, IL, where he serves as a Sunday school teacher. Raised in the Evangelical and Reformed Church in Honduras, Arnold hopes to receive his MDiv and become a servant, ministering the Word of God to others.

Jared Luttjeboer, from Maranatha CRC in Belleville, ON, married Maria Bouwkamp in August. He received his BA in digital media production from Dordt College and works part-time at the Seminary in that field. He seeks the MTS degree with a goal of teaching or serving in some other ministry.

A Philippine minister for 17 years, **Glem Melo** with Imelda and Yanan, Giona, and Rosh now belong to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bowie, MD (PCA). God has blessed Glem's ministries, and he seeks seminary training to help establish Reformed and Presbyterian churches in the Philippines and Middle East.

Jonathan Womack, his wife Katherine, and children, Moriah, Benjamin, and Adelyn belong to Covenant Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Chicago. An attorney in Crete, IL, Jonathan plans to continue practicing law while attending seminary. He discovered the Reformed faith during law school, and seeks his MDiv to share the gospel through pastoral ministry.



New students: (back, left to right) Ehren Gaebler, Jonathan Womack, Jonathan Beall, Paul Freswick, Jared Luttjeboer; (front, left to right) Andrew Pinson (second semester junior), Dan Beezhold, Arnold Lavaire, Glem Melo

Where There's a Will There's a Way by Keith LeMahieu

Do you have a will? Of course you do. The question is who designed your will? If you didn't design a written will, then the government designed one for you. Do you have minor children? How do you like the idea of the court deciding what is in their best interest and who should care for them if you die? I don't like that idea either. We are responsible to be sure our heirs and the assets God has entrusted to us are properly accounted for.

But, you say, "I have few assets. Why should I care?" A will is important no matter what size your estate happens to be. Don't forget the parable of the talents. It was the servant who failed to manage only a few talents that was called wicked and lazy by our Lord.

If you have never drafted a will, or your will is outdated (a will should be reviewed regularly), the process of drafting or updating your will is actually quite simple. It requires some personal reflection, a bit of study, and a little professional assistance. It is helpful to think of drafting a will

as a four-step process.

Step one is setting priorities based on what matters to you. Step two involves familiarizing yourself with a few basic legal terms used in will writing. Step three is a matter of gathering the information you will need to create your will. Step four is seeking competent technical counsel to assist in drawing up the legal documents.

If this sounds complicated, it's not. Through our relationship with the Barnabas Foundation, Mid-America can provide you with a no-cost, no-obligation, confidential review of your estate planning needs. Whether your will is simple or complicated, the Barnabas Foundation can provide the legal help you need to prepare a will that meets your needs. Call me at 219-864-2406 to arrange your confidential consultation with a Barnabas representative.



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Golf Outing by Keith LeMahieu



As you read this article you will wonder what it has to do with the Mid-America golf outing. Be patient, it will make sense if you make it to the end.

Unless you live in the Great Lakes region you may not be familiar with the term “lake effect.”

For those who live near one of the Great Lakes, the words “lake effect” can strike fear when used in a weather forecast, especially a winter weather forecast. Lake effect is a condition that produces precipitation when the wind and temperature are just right. Here’s how it works.

Air temperature on the lake can vary significantly from temperatures on land. When the water is cooler than the surrounding land you can have a wonderful “lake breeze.” When the water is warmer the wind picks up humid air found over the lake and when this humid air meets the colder air over the land the humid air condenses and turns into precipitation. When the wind blows from the north over a 300 mile stretch of Lake Michigan it can produce lots of precipitation.

The morning of the golf outing we were greeted to temperatures well below normal and a stiff wind directly out of the north. The result was a band of steady, cold rain about 15 miles wide and 30 miles long that persisted until late morning. By now you have guessed that Lincoln Oaks Golf Course was located right in the middle of this band of “lake effect” rain. Since not even the most die-hard golfers seemed interested in golfing in the cold rain, the outing was cancelled.

Each year golfers receive a gift for their participation in the outing. Ironically, this year’s gift for participating golfers was going to be an umbrella! Perhaps next year we should choose sunglasses or sunscreen...