

the messenger

Mid-America Reformed Seminary



CENTER FOR MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM UPDATE

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

“THE CHURCH PROTECTED AS SHE WITNESSES TO THE NATIONS”



“Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, ‘Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.’” (Revelation 11:1-3)

In the vision of Revelation 11, the apostle John sees a striking vision of Christ’s protection of His church until the end of redemptive history. John sees a “moving picture” of the church lovingly preserved by Christ and authorized to bear witness to the gospel throughout this present age. Though the church’s witness will be opposed and rejected by many, even appear at times to be extinguished, Christ will come to judge the nations and vindicate the cause of his blood-bought bride, the church. When Christ comes to judge the peoples and nations who opposed his kingdom, the church (led by the “twenty-four elders”) will sing the grandest Hallelujah Chorus that has ever been sung (see verses 15-19)!

Notice how the sequence of visions in Revelation 11 focuses upon two scenes or acts. In the first of these scenes, John is given a “rod” to measure the inner court of the temple but not the outer court (verses 1-2). In the second of these scenes, John hears a heavenly voice (a tacit reference to Christ Himself) narrating the prophetic ministry, eventual martyrdom, and final resurrection triumph of those whom the voice calls “my two witnesses” (verses 3-13).

The opening scene alludes to the prophet Ezekiel’s final, climactic vision during which he was carried to “a very high mountain” (Ezek. 40:3; cf. Rev. 21:10) to view the temple the Lord will build in the last days (Ezek. 40-48). In Ezekiel’s vision, the temple’s dimensions are measured by an angel (40:5), but in Revelation 13 the angel gives John a “measuring rod” to mark off the dimensions of “the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it.” The measuring of the temple symbolizes God’s decree to protect the temple or the church of Jesus Christ (cf. Rev. 3:12). The prohibition against measuring the outer court symbolizes that, while what is measured is protected by God, what is unmeasured is still exposed to assault by the nations and powers of this world.

The time frame for this period of the church is “forty-two months” or “1,260” days. Consistent with the following visions in Revelation 12 and 13, this period spans the time from Christ’s first advent until his second advent. It recalls similar periods in Israel’s history that find their fulfillment in the church’s history: the period of Israel’s exodus and subsequent wandering in the wilderness before entering the promised land (42 years); Daniel’s prophecy of end-time tribulation and ultimate victory for God and His people (7:25; 9:27; 12:7, 11-12); Christ’s ministry for three and a half years as “the faithful witness” (Rev. 1:5), leading to his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, etc. All of these periods typically represent times of divine protection in the face of unbelief and worldly opposition, culminating in the triumph of God’s kingdom and the vindication of His people.

In the second scene of the vision in Revelation 13, John sees a more extended picture of the church, represented by “two witnesses,” whose testimony goes forth with authority and power to all the nations. Why “two” witnesses? There are several reasons: 1) reliable testimony can only be given by two or more witnesses (Deut. 19:5); 2) the church’s witness is a powerful fulfillment of the ministry of the two greatest prophets of the Old Testament economy, Moses and Elijah; 3) the church’s witness fulfills Zechariah’s “night vision” in which he saw a “lampstand” in the temple that was fueled by “two olive trees” (Zech. 4:11-14); and 4) the church’s witness is authorized by Christ who is Himself “the faithful witness” (Rev. 1:5). Though the church’s witness is resisted and even appears to be snuffed out by the beast who arises from the bottomless pit, it is vindicated at Christ’s coming. The apparent defeat of the church’s witness lasts only “three and a half *days*” (not years!) before Christ comes and breathes resurrection life into his people who will dwell with Him forever in the new Jerusalem.

The encouragement this vision gives us should be evident. We may lament the world’s opposition to Christ’s kingdom and the church’s witness. But do not be surprised and discouraged by it. Until Christ comes for His bride, He will protect her in the wilderness and demonstrate the truth of Zechariah’s words regarding the true power of her witness: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 4:6).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cornelis P. Venema".

Dr. Cornelis P. Venema
President of Mid-America Reformed Seminary

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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome back to *The Messenger*, friends. I hope that in the Lord's providence, you are doing well. There is always so much news to cover in this issue as the last couple of months in our academic year are always the busiest. It can be difficult to cram it all in!

While we spend time reflecting on God's goodness to us this past academic year, we also look forward to the following things, the Lord willing:

- Our campus expansion project is beginning.
- Our Center for Missions & Evangelism National Conference.
- New students arriving on campus for Summer Greek.
- Our students enjoying fruitful internship opportunities during the summer.

Before turning you loose into this exciting issue, I should mention that we are incredibly thankful for your continued support – both through prayer and your financial gifts. The Lord sustains us through your kind partnership. Thank you!

Well, all that's left is to say, "Turn the page and enjoy!" Thanks for reading.



Michael B. Deckinga
Vice-President of Advancement



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Our Mission

Mid-America Reformed Seminary seeks to serve Christ and His church by assisting in the formation and preparation of servants for the Kingdom of God. Our primary purpose is to train men for the gospel ministry of Jesus Christ. Guided by this focus, we are also committed to providing solid theological training for others among God's people whose life calling may be enhanced by theological education.

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DEVELOPMENT REPORT: “CELEBRATE AND ANTICIPATE”

Today is the day after commencement. Of course, by the time you read this, commencement will be ancient history, but it's pretty fresh when writing this article. Yesterday, families, friends, professors, colleagues, and the Board of Trustees celebrated and bid farewell to the class of 2023. This class was exceptionally gifted, and the Lord has already revealed some of His plans for these brothers.

In the academic year, commencement is my favorite activity. We witness the culmination of years of study, preparation, and examination. We get to see the results of all that hard work. We watch, applaud (some even whoop and holler), and give God all the glory for the great things He has done. We shake hands, hug, take pictures, and say goodbye.

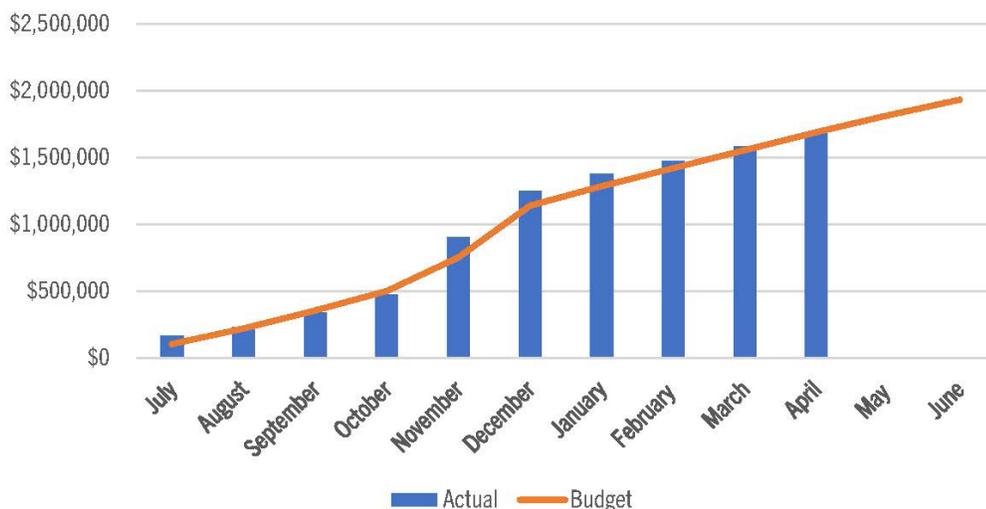
Then, we get back to work. We bid farewell to the class of 2023, and in just a few weeks, we will welcome the next incoming class to Summer Greek. We celebrate, and we anticipate.

The same can be said of our financial situation. I'm happy to show you our results year-to-date. What you see here is the Lord's faithfulness to us through you.

We are 100% to budget, at least through the end of April. We have \$252,000 left to raise to cover our operating expenses for this fiscal year. To help achieve this, please consider a generous fiscal year-end gift to our work here at the Seminary.

The Board of Trustees approved a budget increase of 9.9% for the 2023-24 fiscal year. That's a sizeable increase, but it reflects an actual increase in “the cost of doing business,” so to speak. Furthermore, this past year's increase was 15.8%.

2022-23 Fiscal Year General Fund Contributions



We are happy to see things level out some.

I'm asking you to do this with us again. We are thankful for your help this past year, but we don't pause to celebrate long. When done well, our work results in students coming and going; therefore, new financial obligations are identified just as soon as the former ones are satisfied. In the Lord's providence, we look forward to a renewed and increased partnership with you all.

I want to pivot to our capital campaign, “Foundation for the Future.” This past year (again, through April), we were blessed with nearly \$700,000 in contributions towards our goal of \$4.5 million, bringing our total funds raised to over \$2,000,000. We are aggressively fundraising over the next several months as we intend to begin the project at the end of this summer.

Our institution has been, and rightly so, described as “spoon-fed” as it relates to fundraising, with a significant portion of our donations coming from the church through budget line items or offerings during the worship service. I think this is crucial. As a seminary, we are accountable to the church. Schools drift from their mission when their endowments become large enough to sustain them. Over time, they no longer depend on the church for their daily bread and lose sight of their purpose and mission. By God's grace, your modest and regular support of

our work has kept us grounded and focused on the very thing you entrust to us: the responsibility to train the pastors for your churches. You also have every right to assess what you expect of us.

This is not true for a capital campaign. When raising money for a building project, we're looking for bold and significant giving that will get us where we need to be quickly – not over a year, but over a few months. Perhaps you're a business owner looking to invest in the kingdom. Maybe you are making one last change to your estate plan. You may be looking to get rid of a car or rental property and want to make good, tax-wise decisions. Perhaps you're funding our expansion plans already, but in a manner consistent with your annual support. I want to challenge you to give courageously and sacrificially, knowing that your investment in our future is an excellent deposit to advance the Lord's kingdom through our graduates' fruitful and faithful ministry. I invite you to contact me to make a pledge or a gift today. From all of us here, thank you for your support.

Michael B. Deckinga
Vice-President of Advancement

To make or plan for a gift today, contact Michael Deckinga, VP of Advancement, at mdeckinga@midamerica.edu

2023 COMMENCEMENT

Mid-America Reformed Seminary's Thirty-Eighth Commencement was held on Thursday, May 11, 2023, coinciding with the Spring meeting of the Board of Trustees. This was the culmination of a week of celebrations, including a Tuesday night graduates' dinner and an open house on Thursday from 11:00 am -1:00 pm.

The graduates' dinner was held at Briar Ridge Country Club with students, faculty, administrators, and wives, as well as area Board members and their wives. The dinner included a time of reflection for both graduating seniors and faculty members, and several students spoke warmly about their time at Mid-America Reformed Seminary. The faculty also spoke affectionally and respectfully of the students, reflecting that this was a great class with some particularly gifted men and that they would be missed.

The open house is a luncheon given annually for the families of graduating students who come in to share the accomplishments of the various graduates. Quite a number of families came in and were able to meet faculty, administration, and others who had been a part of the life of the students in their studies at the seminary.

At the graduation ceremony, retiring Board President Jim Sawtelle gave the commencement address. Rev. Sawtelle is a long-time pastor in the RCUS, serving in recent decades in Minneapolis, MN. He delivered the commencement address from Hebrews 13, urging the graduates to imitate the faith of the faithful but, above all, to follow Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

President Cornelis Venema welcomed all, led us in prayer, and introduced our speaker. Dr. Venema also later gave special recognition to the wives of the graduates for their support during the arduous training of their husbands. President Venema was joined by Board President Sawtelle in the conferring of the degrees. This year ten students

received M.Div. degrees. Students will go on to a variety of opportunities for service, including overseas missionary work, internships, preparation for candidacy exams, and assistant pastorships. Given the class size, it was noted that this was a large and appreciative crowd in attendance at the graduation.

After receiving their degrees and the hearty applause of the audience, the graduates received a charge from Dr. Mark Beach, who was on sabbatical this semester. The faculty takes turns in giving this annual charge. The graduates enjoyed hearing final words from Dr. Beach, who gave a stirring call to "listen to Him (Jesus Christ)" as he reflected on the heavenly voice at the Mount of Transfiguration, instructing Peter, James, and John, to hear and obey, Christ above all.

Drs. Beach and Marcus Mininger assisted in the ceremony by placing academic hoods on the new graduates. Additionally, the new professor of ministerial studies, Rev. Paul Ipema, led a responsive litany, and Dr. Alan Strange offered a prayer for the blessing of the new graduates, specifically mentioning the ministry opportunities that lay before each one. Adding to the festivity and beauty of the ceremony, Nancy Venema (organ) accompanied the singing of the hymns as well as played the processional and recessional (in addition to prelude and postlude), and Maria Luttjeboer beautifully sang the lovely air "O Rest in the Lord," from Mendelssohn's Elijah.

Following the ceremony, the graduates



Top: Mid-America 2023 Graduates; Bottom: Mid-America Graduates with the Faculty and Rev. Jim Sawtelle, President of the Board of Trustees

and their wives received congratulations from family, friends, faculty, students, and others, while enjoying a time of refreshments. It was a lovely evening, capping off a seminary career of three (and in some cases, more) years of study, preparing the students to serve the Lord in gospel ministry, wherever the Lord might call them to such service.

Please pray for the students as they leave seminary and take up positions throughout the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Please also pray, as these brothers leave, both for those who continue and new students who will be entering soon to study summer Greek and to begin regular classes in the fall.

Dr. Alan D. Strange
Professor of Church History; Registrar
& Theological Librarian

SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS

The seminary campus grows quite quiet once exams are completed and commencement exercises have been held. Many students who are in the M.Div. program then disperse to their respective internships. This field education component of the degree is quite essential for the students as they learn to apply what they have learned in preaching classes, in liturgies, and in pastoral care. This summer, 17 students will serve the following congregations:

Student	Church	Community
Johnathan Allen	First Orthodox Presbyterian Church	South Holland, Illinois
Thomas Bell	Covenant United Reformed Church	Kansas City, Missouri
Brian Bowen	Covenant Fellowship Church (PCA)	South Holland, Illinois
Jeremy Chong	Momence Orthodox Presbyterian Church	Momence, Illinois
Kevin Godsey	Hope Orthodox Presbyterian Church	Grayslake, Illinois
Eric Heida	Grace Reformed Church (URC)	Jersey City, New Jersey
Daniel Hofland	Providence United Reformed Church	Strathroy, Ontario
Bryce Klassen	Kaunas Reformed Church	Kaunas, Lithuania
Alexander Proudfoot	Bethel United Reformed Church	Woodstock, Ontario
Christian Ryan	Resurrection Presbyterian Church (OPC)	Oshkosh, Wisconsin
Anthony Sato	Immanuel United Reformed Church	DeMotte, Indiana
Joshua Savage	Grace Reformed Church (RCUS)	Rapid City, South Dakota
Joel Trinidad	Redeemer Reformed Church (RCUS)	Minneapolis, Minnesota
Jeremy Vander Lei	Pompton Plains Reformed Bible Church (URC)	Pompton Plains, New Jersey
Ben Verdonk	Covenant Reformed Church (URC)	Toronto, Ontario
Franz von Stagl	Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church (PCA)	Valparaiso, Indiana
Michael Wall	Trinity Reformed Church (URC)	Lethbridge, Alberta

Pray for these men and their families, such that God will give them and the churches they serve His gracious blessing.

Mark Vander Hart

Associate Professor of Old Testament Studies,
Ministerial Apprenticeship Program Director & Dean of Students

MID-AMERICA PROFESSOR'S PH.D. CONFERRED



In 2019, Mid-America Reformed Seminary Professor Andrew Compton began an academic journey with the University of Pretoria in Pretoria, South Africa, culminating in his Ph.D. in

Old Testament and Hebrew Scriptures. This degree is in the department or “faculty,” as it is referred to in South Africa, of Theology and Religion.

Fellow Faculty and staff joined Andrew in the Seminary’s conference room to watch the commencement, which took place in South Africa on April 24, 2023. While

Professor Compton was not attending the graduation ceremony, it was still a momentous occasion to witness and celebrate with him.

Dr. Compton’s dissertation is entitled “A Priest Coping with a New Place: A Vocational Psychology and Trauma Reading of Ezekiel’s Priestly Identity,” and he comments, “Interpreters have long observed the priestly shape of the book of Ezekiel, but a flurry of publications from 1998-2005 grappled with whether Ezekiel should be called a priest or merely a former priest. This research enters the discussion using vocational psychology’s hitherto unutilized (or at least underutilized) tools. Applying job-crafting techniques and trauma

responses observed among present-day migrants to key themes and passages in Ezekiel, this contends that Ezekiel’s priestly vocational identity remains active, though it has been modified due to his locale far from the Jerusalem temple.”

The Seminary community, joined by Dr. Compton’s wife, Dr. Pamela Compton, their children, and extended family, enjoyed a small reception on campus to commemorate this special occasion.

Congratulations, Dr. Compton. To God be the glory, and may He be pleased to use your academic endeavors to further His kingdom through your work at Mid-America.

Michael B. Deckinga
Vice-President of Advancement

FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE GROUNDBREAKING

On Thursday, May 11, 2023, the Board of Trustees, joined by students, their families, faculty, and staff, participated in a ceremonial groundbreaking ceremony to begin phase one of the Seminary's campus expansion plan: Foundation for the Future.

Mr. Michael Deckinga, Vice-President of Advancement, began the ceremony by thanking all present and offering remarks on the original intent of the expansion being already identified back in 1995 when the current facility was built. He also commented on the anticipated timeframe for construction.

Dr. Cornelis Venema, President of Mid-America, then offered remarks of his own, taking time to comment on Psalm 127 as it relates to the building campaign. He concluded his speech with a prayer, invoking the Lord's blessing in the expansion process.

Two commemorative shovels were used in the event. One, in particular, was used in the groundbreaking ceremony in the early 1990s in anticipation of our current facility's construction. Rev. Jim Sawtelle,



President of the Board, used the original shovel. Interestingly, it is the same shovel his late father-in-law, Rev. Jelle Tuininga, used all those years ago.

The official beginning date for construction is scheduled for later this summer. The process will start with the cafeteria expansion, new board room, and staff office portion, and proceed westward to the chapel addition.

The Seminary is actively raising funds for this project and is grateful for the support received thus far. Additional details and ways to support the project can be found on the campaign website: www.midamerica.edu/capital-campaign.

Michael B. Deckinga
Vice-President of Advancement

SPRING BOARD REPORT

The Mid-America Board of Trustees conducted their annual spring meeting in a whirlwind one-day session on May 11, ably led by President Jim Sawtelle. All members were present save one who joined via Zoom.

In customary order, the Board conducted the following business:

Trustees – The Board approved an extensive list of nominees to fill the spots of retiring Board members Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Phil Grotenhuis, Mr. Tom Kooienga, and Rev. Anson Lee. Over the Summer, the Seminary Association will vote to select the next Trustees. The Board reappointed Trustees Mr. Tim Beezhold and Mr. Bob Clausing to additional three-year terms.

Faculty Appointment – Ministerial and Doctrinal Studies Professor Dr. J. Mark Beach was interviewed and re-appointed

to another four-year term beginning July 1, 2023.

Reports - The Board took up the traditional collection of reports from standing committees, Faculty, and Staff. As President of the Seminary, Dr. Venema's report led off, giving a broad summary of the Seminary's activity, with subsequent reports delving into further details. Of note:

Enrollment – 2023/2024 promises to be another year of solid enrollment with representation across denominational boundaries; a total of 31 students are anticipated, up one from this past year.

Center for Missions & Evangelism – The CME is gearing up for its second conference, taking place at Bethel CRC in Lansing, IL on October 6 & 7, 2023, entitled "Beyond the Walls: Faithful Mission in an Age of Adversity."

Facilities Expansion – Engineering and design work has finished, a General Contractor hired, with ground-breaking expectantly set for Fall 2023. Project fundraising continues, building upon ~\$2 million already donated. A brief groundbreaking ceremony was held over lunch to kick-off the construction phase of the project.

Financial Position – The Seminary continues to be blessed with strong financial support. The the 2023/2024 budget of \$2,584,300 was approved, including a 6% COLA for Faculty & Staff, and representing an overall increase of just under 10%.

The Board is scheduled to meet again on October 5, just before the CME Conference.

Dan Fletcher
Vice-President of Operations

CENTER FOR MISSIONS & EVANGELISM UPDATE

**"DECLARE HIS GLORY AMONG THE NATIONS, HIS MARVELOUS WORKS
AMONG THE PEOPLES!"**

PSALM 96:3

BY DR. ERIC WATKINS

In God's kind providence, great things are happening at the Center for Missions and Evangelism at Mid-America Reformed Seminary. As the spring semester has concluded and summer begins, it is exciting to see our graduates headed out into Christ's harvest with a zeal to faithfully proclaim the gospel in church pulpits and in their communities as well. It was a privilege to attend the commencement service in early May. I remember when most of our graduates began. To see where they are now, where they are heading, and how they have grown spiritually—all these things occasion thanks to God for His kindness.

One of the courses that the graduates took this spring semester was on

Missions and Evangelism. It was a real joy to engage this subject with them and to consider together the heart of our Savior for the lost, and the various means by which we as a church might strive to reach them. Together we looked at a biblical theology of evangelism and then looked at key reformers and the reformed confessions as they so wonderfully articulate a concern to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ. One of my favorite lectures is "John Calvin the Evangelist" in which we considered together one of the lesser-known sides of John Calvin—his evangelistic side. Calvin's zeal for reaching the lost is inspiring and well embodied, not only in his writings, but also in his own personal ministry. In many ways, the history of reformed missionary work is part of

the evangelistic legacy that Calvin himself left behind. As Calvin's heirs, we do him and his theology the most justice when we embody it with a genuine desire to reach the lost at home and abroad. John Calvin had quite the heart for missions and evangelism, and those who claim to carry his mantle must as well.

Another key reformer we looked at was Cornelius Van Til. Though Van Til is best known for his apologetic method, he should also be known for his street-preaching in New York city, sharing the gospel with his neighbors, and for evangelizing people in the hospitals while he was there visiting people from his congregation. Van Til was bold for the gospel as well as for the reformed faith and he taught his students to be the same. He even took students with him when he did street preaching—and he made them do it as well!

Speaking of being bold, one of the last things we did together in the class on Missions and Evangelism was go out and do evangelism together for an afternoon. The class was split in two, and with the help of another minister, we took the groups into two different neighborhoods close to churches where our students attend. We had a remarkably fruitful time together! Each of our students found their way into conversations with complete strangers. We were able to not only share the gospel with many people that day but were also able to invite people we met to visit the local churches our students attend. We used three evangelistic tracts produced by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Their titles are “What is Truth?” “What’s Your Story?” and “What’s Your Only Comfort?” We found that different tracts seemed to connect better with different people, depending on their age, background, and personal stories. The tracts also have space on the back for labels with information about the local church.

As a professor, it made me very happy to see the students out in communities practicing what I preached to them in class. This bodes well for their future service in the church, as so much of the challenge before the church today is not simply remaining faithful to the gospel, but also in finding faithful, creative ways to bring the gospel to bear on the lives of people who have



Students Brian Bowen and Eric Heida evangelize in Lansing, IL.

very little knowledge about the Bible and the church. As a pastor, it was very encouraging to see these young men translate what they have learned in the classroom into language people on the street could understand. These young men are the future of the church and I am grateful for their zeal to reach the lost. To invest in these students, train them, and then see them putting these things into practice for the sake of the church is truly a blessing. As Paul told Timothy, so also do these young, aspiring pastors need to hear...”As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5).

CME Conference

We are also very excited about our Center For Missions and Evangelism 2023 National Conference: *Beyond the Walls: Faithful Mission in an Age of Adversity*. Throughout the ages, the church has experienced adversity in various forms. Opposition to the gospel is nothing new. But the grace of God never buckles under pressure and because of God’s grace, the church can be faithful to its mission—the Great Commission.

This conference will bring encouragement to church leaders and lay people alike by focusing on what it looks like to do faithfully reformed, outward facing ministry in an age of adversity. Our speakers will address crucial topics that speak to the mission and identity of the church in a world full of darkness and confusion. Only the gospel of Jesus Christ offers any meaningful hope; and through God’s Word and Spirit, the Church continues to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Speakers & Topics:

1. Richard Bout
“Learning to Disciple the Nations—Nuts & bolts of Discipleship In a Modern Age”

2. Tom Hawkes
“Reformed Distinctives Vital to Church Planting In an Age of Adversity”
3. Marcus Mininger
“Careful, Deep Theology Tethered to Missions: Rethinking Romans”
4. Cornel Venema
“To The Ends of the Earth: Calvin’s Geneva and the Impulse of Reformed Missions”
5. Chad Vegas
“Discipleship from within: Raising up the next generation of Missionaries”
6. Eric Watkins
“Missing the Mission: What is the Mission of the Church?”
7. There will also be 2 Panel Discussions

Our conference will take place at Bethel Church from October 6-7 in Lansing, Illinois. It will begin at 9 am on Friday and go through dinner that evening and will resume Saturday morning from 9-12. Meals and childcare for kids up to age 4 are included in the price of admission. See the conference website for additional information, including registration information at www.midamerica.edu/cme/conference. Please join us as we seek to grow and learn together!

Please let us know if you have any questions or how we can better help your church engage the work of the Great Commission. That’s why we are here. That is what Jesus has called us to do!



Dr. Eric Watkins
Instructor of Ministerial Studies & Director of the Center for Missions and Evangelism

TIM SCHEUERS & DAN RAGUSA

Rev. Dr. Timothy Scheuers (class of 2013) graduated from Fuller Theological Seminary in the spring of 2021 with a Ph.D. in Historical Theology. His degree represents seven years of hard work and dedication, making it the most challenging academic journey of his life. To earn his Ph.D., he passed written examinations in three research languages, completed 73 upper-level units through seminars and directed readings, wrote four comprehensive examinations, and successfully defended a scholarly dissertation based on research in his major concentration. His dissertation focused on the contentious relationship between oaths, vows, and confessional subscription in Calvin's reform, highlighting the importance of protecting the individual conscience while bringing a new take on Christian freedom to Reformed communities.

His research is scheduled to be published by Oxford University Press in August under the title *Consciences and the Reformation: Scruples over Oaths and Confessions in the Era of Calvin and His Contemporaries*. His Ph.D. studies have honed his study skills, sharpened his ability to communicate complex concepts in an accessible way, and instilled an even greater appreciation for and commitment to the Reformed confessional tradition. He gained a keener sense of how Calvin and his pastoral colleagues dealt firmly yet sympathetically with weak and troubled consciences. Tim hopes to emulate their pastoral patience in his own ministry.

Tim is relieved and grateful to the Lord for allowing him to fulfill the strict requirements for his degree, all while juggling the joyful

responsibilities of full-time ministry and family life. He comments: "Genuine thanks belong to my family, our congregation, and the faculty of Mid-America for supporting me during this journey. May God be glorified through this accomplishment, and may it serve to promote the glory of His church."

Rev. Scheuers is the Associate Pastor of First United Reformed Church of Chino, CA, and an Adjunct Assistant Professor of History at Providence Christian College (Pasadena, CA). He occasionally serves Mid-America Reformed Seminary as a visiting professor of Dogmatics.

Rev. Dr. Dan Ragusa (class of 2016) recently graduated from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, where he completed his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology with a dissertation defense titled *Trinitarian Harmony: The Foundations of a Philosophy of Revelation in Early Nineteenth-Century Dutch Reformed Theology*. Dan's research aims to trace the lines of connection established by God between revelation and the created universe, as noted by Herman Bavinck, through a philosophy of revelation. His research is heavily influenced by the Dutch Reformed Romanticist Willem Bilderdijk, who significantly influenced other theologians, including Bavinck, Groen Van Prinsterer, Abraham Kuyper, and Geerhardus Vos.

Dan's primary source study of Bilderdijk uncovered the foundational concept of "trinitarian harmony," which Dan defines as the unity-in-diversity of creation ultimately founded in the Trinity. He further integrated the doctrine of the covenant into his research to create a distinctly covenantal philosophy of revelation.

During his studies, Dan had the privilege of serving as Stated Supply at Pompton Plains Reformed Bible Church in NJ from 2019 to 2020. In 2021, he accepted a call to serve Messiah's Reformed Fellowship (URC) in NYC, where



Top: Tim Scheuers and his wife Amanda and daughter Scottlynn, as well as one on the way!
Bottom: Dan Ragusa and his wife Susanna and their son Daniel Jr.

he currently resides. His research has informed his pastoral work, as he values a learned ministry where the Word of God is rightly divided. Being tested in new ways during his studies helped him sharpen his critical thinking abilities, benefiting his preaching, teaching, and counseling.

Dan's research topic has left him with a more profound impression of God's covenant and its implications for thinking and living in His exhaustively revelatory world for His glory. He expresses gratitude for the support and encouragement from many along the way, especially his wife, Susanna. The couple recently welcomed their son, Daniel Jr., into the world.

Jared Luttjeboer
Director of Marketing

ALUMNI UPDATES



Andrew Eenigenburg (2008) thanks God for the opportunity to share the gospel with the mentally disabled, drug addicts, homosexuals, the dying, the poor, and others who have never heard the good news! He is thankful to see those who were new to the faith only a short time ago now zealous for prayer, bible study, and service. Recently, God has answered the prayers of the congregation by granting the births of several children. Andrew has accepted a number of invitations to minister to dozens of homeschooling parents who are mostly unchurched but are sympathetic to the faith and need instruction on building godly homes and the Christian walk. Andrew and his wife Annaleah have been asked to speak together at some local parenting and homeschooling conferences with similar themes for building a Christian home. They are heartbroken over the removal of their foster baby whom they raised from the NICU until 15 months, and now they have just received a three year old boy. "God is our strength!"



In January 2023, **Jonathan Key** (2018) accepted a call to Providence Reformed Church (PCA) in Bakersfield, CA. Since

April 2023, he has been serving as PRC's solo pastor. As Jon and Lorissa work on the details of moving and settling into a new ministry, they are kept very busy by Eloise (1).



Harold Miller (2001) The Miller family (pictured above) arrived to serve the

Lord in Oak Lawn during the height of the pandemic - June 2020. "God's people gave us a very welcoming arrival, just as His people in Kansas City gave us a loving send-off after a tenure there of more than 11 years.

Oak Lawn is one of those beautiful suburbs of the greater Chicago-land, once the landing spot for many Dutch families. Our community now is strongly Roman Catholic but with a quickly growing Muslim population.

The congregation of First United Reformed Church (Oak Lawn URC) is very interested in the whole counsel of God, in biblically faithful worship and church life, and in bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to our neighborhood. We ask for your prayers that we would do all to the glory of God."

Harold and Carol are now "empty nesters" as far as children go, but have Harold's mother living with them as her struggle with dementia continues. Their children and grands all live within a 3 hour drive, so they are blessed in many ways! Soli Deo Gloria



Roger Sparks (1985) is filling an interim pastor assignment at the New Hope CRC in Bangor, Maine. He and his wife Dianne

began their yearlong work in Bangor on February 1, 2023.



Erik Stolte (2011) and his family (pictured above) has been serving the Reformed Church of Dunedin in the south of New Zealand for 11 years. In the past year they have celebrated two weddings of their children and their own 25 year wedding anniversary and enjoyed some of the scenery of the South Island on vacation. The coming year is one of

great change as they have accepted a call to Pukekohe, Auckland, in the north of NZ. This means a new church and leaving a few of their children behind. They thank the Lord for His bountiful blessings over the past years and look to Him for the future.



Nathan Tomlinson

(2012) continues to serve Christ Church of Franklin County (independent reformed), in western Massachusetts. He also serves on the Ministerial Relations committee and as historian for the Presbytery of New York and New England, Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He and Holly have been blessed with two children, Mia (5) and Ezra (9 months). Prayer for his small congregation is greatly needed, as they are one of the only reformed witnesses in a region full of cults and covens.



Peter Yoo

(2022) is now about 6 months into his year-long vicariate at the Reformed Church of the North Shore (RCNS). Pastor Daniel is his mentor and he has

continued to be a wise mentor and loving brother. Peter and Jane got married a little less than a month ago, and they're enjoying the blessings of married life! Peter is also attending a Ministers and Wives Conference held by the Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ) this week and he's looking forward to learning much from the guest speaker Rev. Dr. Peter Barnes from Sydney, Australia. Please pray that the Lord would (1) continue to train Peter for ministry for Christ's glory and honor, and (2) continue to bless his marriage with Jane.



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