

the messenger

Mid-America Reformed Seminary

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IN-PERSON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

“LOVE CONQUERS ALL”



The Beatles told us decades ago that “all you need is love.” There is a sense in which this is right, if rightly defined. Our Lord told us in Matthew 22: 34-40 that all the law reduces to two great commandments: love the Lord your God with all your being and your neighbor as yourself. Thus, in one quite true sense, all you need is love, which is obedience to the first (love God) and second (love your neighbor) tables of the law.

At the same time, everything Jesus taught (think of His spiritual exposition of the law in the Sermon on the Mount) brings us up short in the love department as He shows us that the law demands a sort of obedience that, since the fall, we’ve never rendered for a moment. Though we’ve been commanded from Eden to love, made only clearer at Sinai and even more so in the New Testament, we’ve miserably failed at it, in thought, word, and deed. Adam failed, and all of us in him have failed to obey the command

to love. And if we think we haven’t, our Lord told us that the seed of murder and adultery was hatred and lust in the heart. All have clearly fallen short.

Much talk remains, though, about the wonder of love and the need to love, even among unbelievers. Everyone knows that love is important. It’s written about, sung about, sought after, fought over, and lived and died for. The great Latin poet Virgil wrote, “*Omnia vincit amor*” (love conquers all), and Caravaggio depicted it in his great painting of the same name, with a number of books, films, albums, songs, etc. sharing that sentiment as a title— “Love conquers all.”

Of course, the world, including our mop-top friends from Liverpool, doesn’t rightly define love. For the world, the nature of love is something sentimental and self-serving: if someone loves me, they will only and ever affirm me in everything. In other words, our fallen notion of love is something that is utterly self-centered and self-serving, quite unlike the self-giving nature of love of God and others. And yet, because of God’s common grace, even unbelievers can know a measure of love that is self-giving.

Believers, on the other hand, being renewed by the Holy Spirit, begin to be restored here below in what love truly means, the sort of self-sacrificial, other-centered, extended definition given to love (the Greek word there is *agape*) in I Corinthians 13:1-7. Yet, because of remaining sin, we make only a small beginning in this regard (Heidelberg Catechism 114), though we do begin to live, in some measure, according to all of God’s commandments. We begin to love in this life, if only in small measure and feebly.

Of course, this little love that we exercise as part of our sanctification would never give us a right standing before a holy God. The love that we have as believers is instead an expression of gratitude because we *have* full and free access due to the work of Christ. Our love of God and others is always deficient, but Christ’s wasn’t. It was perfect, and it was entirely for us, appropriated by the empty hand of faith. In other words, we need a righteousness that can never come from our law-keeping, from our loving, but only by faith in Christ (Phil. 3:9).

Back to that I Corinthians 13 definition of love. As we consider all its aspects, we cannot help but conclude, as the Corinthians should have as well, that we grossly lack love. The Corinthians did not manifest self-giving but misbehavior at the Lord’s Table, placing a greater premium even there on wealth, rank, gifts, and knowledge rather than on love. What Paul exposes in Corinth is a whole catalog of sins, from division and boasting to winking at heinous sin, fractious lawsuits, and even resurrection-denying worldliness. He challenged them about being more committed to knowledge, abstracted from love, that puffs up, instead of gifts used in love that build up (I Cor. 8:1).

Here’s the situation: we lack love, but thanks be to God, Jesus embodied it. His love was the moving cause of the atonement for the Godhead (John 3:16) and the reason Jesus came below to live and die for us, as Bonar notes (TPH 240). In fact, if one peruses those qualities that make up love in I Corinthians 13:4-7, they present us with a beautiful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, in Him, all of us are called to embody love, to begin to walk in love as He did, for our and others’ good and His glory.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan D. Strange".

Dr. Alan D. Strange
President of Mid-America Reformed Seminary

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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Just like that, another academic year has come and gone. In this issue of *The Messenger*, we report on the pinnacle of our year – commencement. We celebrated 11 graduates this year. It is such an encouragement to see an increasing number of graduates each year, and by the grace of God, this year was no exception. The class of 2025 is academically bright, pastorally aware, and particularly friendly – their presence on campus will be missed. As we close the door to the 2024-25 academic year, we look forward to opening the door to our summer Greek students in a few short weeks, in advance of the 2025-26 academic year. At least 16 students will be joining us in the fall – our largest incoming class. More and more students are discovering the benefits offered here at Mid-America Reformed Seminary. One of those benefits is expertly articulated by a recent graduate from Mid-America in this month's feature article. Please share it with a friend, family member, or colleague who might be actively discerning the Lord's will as they contemplate seminary studies.

Thanks for your unwavering support this academic year – it remains vital to our work. Enough here. Turn the page, and enjoy!



Michael B. Deckinga
Vice-President of Advancement



Editor

Michael Deckinga, Vice-President of Advancement

Contributing Writers

Dr. Alan D. Strange, President

Michael B. Deckinga, Vice-President of Advancement

Dan Fletcher, Vice-President of Operations

Rev. Paul Ipema, Assistant Professor

of Ministerial Studies, Ministerial

Apprenticeship Program Director, Dean of Students

Dr. Andrew Compton, Professor of Old

Testament Studies, MTS Program Director,

Registrar

Rev. Ryan Swale, 2018 Alumnus

Rev. Bill Pols, 1991 Alumnus

Layout and Design

Rachel Luttjeboer, Secretary of Media &

Publications, Assistant to the Registrar

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.

Website

www.midamerica.edu

Address

Mid-America Reformed Seminary

229 Seminary Dr.

Dyer, IN 46311

Phone:

219-864-2400

DEVELOPMENT REPORT:

“RIGHT ON TRACK”

Another academic year at the Seminary is swiftly drawing to a close. About this time last year, we were eagerly anticipating the commencement of our building project. Granted, it had begun, but the summer months were to be “prime time” for construction. This year – no more dust, no more noise, no more displacement – we’re looking forward to a somewhat quiet and ordinary summer around here.

It’s not quiet for our students, though, who hit the road for their summer internships. It’s not quiet for our graduating seniors, who prepare for or undergo their candidacy exams in anticipation of receiving a call to serve a church. Seminary life continues, even if it is “out there” instead of “in here.” In fact, it won’t be quiet here for long, as our Summer Greek students arrive in just a few short weeks.

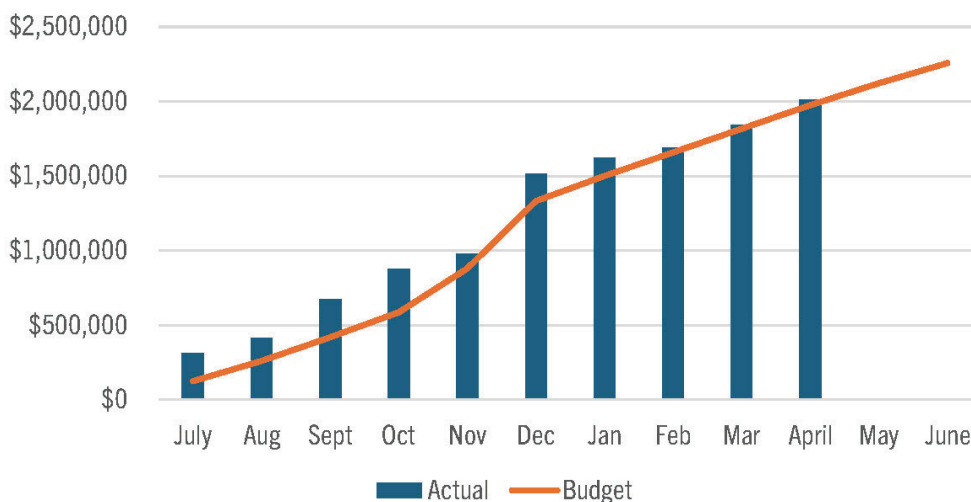
It’s the ordinary rhythms we enjoy here – God’s constant and dependable good providence in the life of our institution, providing what we need, when we need it, for His glory, and of course, our good.

We’re thankful for the Lord’s kind provisions here at the Seminary. I’m always amazed at the generous outpouring of gifts – time, talent, and treasure – that many of you contribute throughout the year. We strive to cultivate a community of cheerful stewardship for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom through the good work being done here. If you’re reading this, it’s because you’re a member of that community. We’re glad you’re here and couldn’t do this without you.

There are two main areas of focus that need your attention, and I humbly ask that you consider a gift of any amount towards each:

- Foundation for the Future remains underfunded by ~\$800,000, even though the construction is complete. We have begun borrowing money from other areas of our program so we could keep the project going, but now we need to begin replenishing those funds. Your gifts and pledges are critical to the completion of this campaign.

2024-25 General Fund Actual vs. Budget



- Support for our General Fund remains urgent as well, as we are soon heading into the lean summer months. We are looking to raise an additional \$250,000 by June 30, 2025, to finish at budget. Thus far, we’re on track, being 100% to budget since the start of our fiscal year (July 1). The General Fund is the financial lifeblood of our institution. Sufficient funding is essential for us to deliver on our mission and to continue being the school you’ve trusted us to be for a long time.

Would you please sacrificially and joyfully steward the resources the Lord has entrusted into your care towards the opportunities listed above?

If you’d like to discuss your giving intentions, or planned giving options, feel free to drop me a line anytime: mdeckinga@midamerica.edu. I look forward to hearing from you!

Thank you for your prayers and gifts. We thank God for you regularly.

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, 219-864-2406

MID-AMERICA'S 40TH COMMENCEMENT

On Thursday, May 15, 2024, the Seminary community, friends, and families, gathered at Redeemer United Reformed Church in Saint John, IN, for the Seminary's 40th commencement. This year's ceremony marked not only four decades of conferring degrees but also the first commencement led by Dr. Alan D. Strange as the Seminary's newly appointed President—officially installed just hours earlier that same day.

The ceremony began with the steady and stately organ processional, *Be of Good Courage* by Georg Philipp Telemann, played by Nancy Venema. The faculty—joined this year by several adjunct professors—marched in, followed by the eleven graduates and members of the board of trustees.

After a welcome from Dr. Strange, the congregation sang “God is Our Refuge and Our Strength” with a fulsome sound that rivaled the stormy, windy weather outside the church. The commencement address, entitled “The Mystery of Ministry” and drawn from Mark 4:1-34, was

delivered by retiring board president Rev. Todd Joling. Encouraging the graduates to adopt the mindset of a faithful farmer—casting seeds and trusting God for the growth—Rev. Joling ably handled the text and modeled a hopeful, confident exposition for these future pastors.

After high praise and warm thanks to the wives of the various graduates by Dr. Strange, Rev. Joling conferred the Master of Divinity degree (M.Div.) upon the eleven men: Jeremy Ellis Sung-Ming Chong, Kevin Thomas Godsey, Daniel John Hofland, Bryce William Klasen, Alexander Robert Scott Proudfoot, Christian Blaise Ryan, Anthony Hideo Sato, Joshua John Savage, Franz Von Stagl, Joel V. Trinidad, and Jeremy Daniel Vander Lei. Each graduate was hooded by Drs. J. Mark Beach and Marcus A. Mininger and moved to the front and center of the sanctuary to receive a standing ovation in celebration of completing their studies.

Soprano Maria Luttjeboer followed with a fitting rendition of “He Shall Feed His Flock” from George Frideric Handel's *Messiah*. Dr. Strange then gave the charge to the graduates. Dr. Beach led the assembly in a litany, and Dr. Mininger



offered the closing prayer.

The faculty, graduates (and their wives), and board members recessed during the final hymn, “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah,” followed by the triumphant postlude: the virtuosic Toccata from Charles-Marie Widor's *Symphony for Organ No. 5*.

In the narthex, friends and family offered congratulations, hugs, and warm words over coffee and cookies. Once again, the Seminary community experienced the bittersweet joy of saying farewell to students and their families as they go forth to follow the call of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. R. Andrew Compton
Professor of Old Testament Studies,
Registrar

SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS

Supervised ministry training remains one of the distinctive features of Mid-America's field education program. In addition to working closely with local pastors and congregations throughout the academic year, seminarians also participate in summer internships designed to apply classroom theological instruction and refine practiced ministry skills. The following seminarians will be participating in ministries throughout North America:

Student

Andrew Baugh
Thomas Bell
Dane Bothun
Michale Hakze
Leo Joewono
Nathan Korten
Henry Marin
Zeke McMurtry
Kelvin Morales
Abraham Kakileti
Greg Ritzema
Jared Strong
Jon Vos
John Waldrop

Church

Grace OPC
Grace URC
Covenant Reformed Church (OPC)
Christ Reformed Church (URCNA)
Calvary CRC
Trinity URC
Lynwood URC
Salem URC
Indy Reformed Church (URCNA)
First CRC
Salt & Light Reformed Church (OPC)
Christ the King Reformed Baptist Church
New Life OPC
Borculo CRC

Location

Sheboygan, WI
Kennewick, WA
West Plains, MO
Nampa, ID
Flamborough, ON
Visalia, CA
Lynwood, IL
Bowmanville, ON
Indianapolis, IN
Orange City, IA
Port Orange, FL
Niles, IL
Montoursville, PA
Borculo, MI

BOARD REPORT

The Board met on May 15, led one final time by Chairman Rev. Todd Joling, and meeting for their second time in the newly constructed Board Room of the East addition.

After opening devotions and roll-call, the Board dove into the weightiness of Presidential Succession. After serving the Seminary faithfully and aptly, Interim President Alan D. Strange was unanimously recommended as the next President of the Seminary by the Faculty and Presidential Succession and Executive Committees. After an interview with Dr. Strange, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Strange to be the second President of the institution. Dr. Strange immediately and graciously accepted the appointment, Chairman Joling administered the Oath of the Office of President, and a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing was offered. Dr. Strange becomes President on June 1, 2025.

Regarding faculty, Dr. Strange was reappointed as Professor of Church

History, and pending an interview by the Executive Committee, appointed Rev. Paul R. Ipema as Associate Professor of Ministerial Studies. Both are four-year terms, beginning July 1.

Turning inward, two candidates were approved to fill the vacancy left by retiring Trustee Rev. Todd Joling, who has served the maximum nine-year term. The Seminary Association will select the next Trustee over the Summer. Trustees John Bokestyn, Jeff Huizenga, Paul Huizenga, and Rev. Ed Marcusse were interviewed and reappointed to three-year terms.

Finally, the Board tended to the collection of standard reports, noting:

Enrollment – 2025/2026 is shaping up solidly with 16 new students confirmed and several others still in the application process.

Accreditation – With great thanks, the Seminary celebrates its recent 10-year reaccreditation by the Association of Theological Schools, the longest period of accreditation offered.



Facilities Expansion – The construction and expansion project is essentially finished, with events held regularly in the new Chapel. Finishing work continues on technical and audio-visual systems throughout.

Financial Position – Blessed with strong financial support, the 2025/2026 budget of \$2,939,750 was approved, containing a 4% COLA for Faculty & Staff, representing a year-over-year increase of 9%.

The Board will reconvene on Thursday, October 2, 2025, prior to the CME Conference

Dan Fletcher
Vice-President of Operations

FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE UPDATE

Over half of my employment years here at Mid-America have been devoted to facilities expansion. We've been working on this since 2020. Meeting, after meeting, after meeting. We've interviewed architects, engaged site engineers, met with the town of Dyer and its planning commission, interviewed general contractors – the list goes on. It seemed like a never-ending season of "hurry up and wait." Fast forward through an incredibly active and productive construction season, and here we are. Working and learning in a newly renovated, state-of-the-art facility that's grown by over 50%. All that remains is the tying up of a few loose AV ends, and we're done.

The space has been a joy to use. What seemed like 45 seconds after the chapel was completed, we welcomed Dr. Kevin De Young

as our guest speaker for the Spring Student Lectures. Since then, we've used our new auditorium for our three-time weekly chapels, and even for a bit of entertainment during our spring banquet.

You need to stop by and see it! We are planning for an open house and dedication service in the fall of 2025. Stay tuned for more information.

For now, please join me in thanking our committee, who have selflessly given of their time, talent, and treasure over the last several years: Carolyn DeYoung, Dan De Young, Jeff Huizenga, Trent VanderZee, and Dan Fletcher. Special thanks also to Pete Vander Wall, John Boersma Jr., Fred Colvin, and Scott Snyder of Knudsen Construction, Inc.


Finally, thank you to all of you who have given and pledged support for this project. We're not funded



fully, but we're close. We need to cover the remaining gap of ~\$800,000. Please partner with us in securing the remaining funds so we can close the door to this phase and open up into the next: student housing.

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, 219-864-2406



IN-PERSON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

by Rev. Ryan Swale

In a day where many seminaries are expanding their programs to include online degree offerings, I am so thankful to God for the things I learned at Mid-America that only a residential education could have taught me. The professors who taught me, and the students who I sat with in class, challenged me in areas that I needed to be challenged; they taught me how to “disagree agreeably,” as a churchman; and they formed me not only as a student of the Word but as a

Christian, and as a pastor.

Coming into the reformed tradition as an “outsider,” I had done a lot of self-study, and had come to many of my own theological conclusions – some of which were more “fringe” or minority views within the reformed tradition. And, had I pursued online training (as I considered, and, for a time, even did), I fear those views would not have been sufficiently challenged in the ways that they needed to be. To be sure, I

could have listened to lecture material that would have challenged some of my theological convictions. But even though online lectures might have exposed me to alternative viewpoints, I would have been engaging with those in the privacy of my own mind, and would have been free to simply shrug them off (indeed, I think I would have). Residential education, on the other hand, forces you to process things in community. I was free to disagree with my professors

or classmates, but the communal nature of residential education forced me to defend *why* I disagreed.

I am afraid that many, like myself, who have come into the reformed tradition from outside of it – and who receive most of their theological formation through podcasts, blogs, and authors of their own choosing – who then go on to pursue seminary education at a distance, will miss out on this vital aspect of theological formation. Self-study leaves too many holes, and it doesn't provide the kind of pushback that these types of students (like myself) need.

My professors saw my weaknesses and my blind spots, and they challenged me in ways that I needed to be challenged. As a result, certain convictions that I held with gusto as a first-year seminary student, I held more charitably by my second year, and perhaps not at all by my final year. Mid-America exposed me to a more broadly and classically reformed education than I would have received had I been able to pursue the kind of self-study that many distance education programs offer.

I understand that even online degree programs have their students engage in online discussion forums and the like, but there is something very different between hashing out disagreements online and doing so in person (just peruse any Facebook comment section for evidence of the way that people interact differently behind a screen than they do in person). Gospel ministry is in-person, and God used the real in-person interactions with my professors and classmates to polish and soften me in the ways I needed to be polished and softened.

This leads to a second reason why I'm thankful for the in-person education I received at Mid-America: our professors very intentionally taught us to "disagree

agreeably." They taught us, in the midst of our discussions and disagreements, to behave like churchmen. Whether it was in our ethics class, learning about differing views on how to apply certain theological principles to difficult real-life situations, or New Testament background, dealing with manuscript traditions and they constantly reminded us: "You are going to go to classis, or presbytery meetings, and will interact with brothers who hold different theological positions on these matters." And our professors were careful to prepare us to engage in those debates with kindness, composure, and charity, treating our fellow presbyters as "fathers and brothers" (1 Timothy 5:1), and avoiding the youthful passions that often lead to foolish controversies that are not characterized by gentleness (2 Timothy 2:22-25).

"The professors who taught me, and the students who I sat with in class, challenged me in areas that I needed to be challenged; they taught me how to 'disagree agreeably,' as a churchman; and they formed me not only as a student of the Word but as a Christian, and as a pastor."

In a day and age where the church is marked by schism and division, one valuable way to witness to the world around us of the transformative power of the gospel is to engage charitably in our disagreements. One author recently (sub)titled his book on this topic: *How to Keep Calm and Stay Friends in Hard Conversations*. Residential education

at Mid-America taught me how to do this. This has been an invaluable lesson not only at classis meetings and synods, but in the consistory room, or on pastoral visits. Our professors gave us the tools to behave like churchmen in the midst of our disagreements; and, even more importantly, they *modeled* this for us (which is another benefit of in-person education: simply being able to watch your professors live out the convictions that they are seeking to instill in you).

And when we fell short of the standard that they called us to, these professors were able to lovingly and pastorally correct us. This is a third reason why I am grateful for the in-person education that I received at Mid-America: there is a spiritual formation component to residential studies that simply cannot be replicated online. Our churches learned this lesson during COVID (i.e., that online engagement and the production of material for our members to consume is not the same things as the fellowship of the saints). Spiritual formation takes place in person. It takes place through the coffee discussions after class, through time in prayer with your professors both formally and informally, and through meals shared together.

Our professors pastored us from the lectern. They applied the contents of their lectures (whether in Old Testament or church history) to our worries, fear, and sins. They got to know our families. They truly cared for us. And now, even six years later, they continue to do so. When I have a question pastorally, they are quick to reply. When they are preaching in the area, they are quick to set aside time to spend with us. They *continue* to provide pastoral counsel and spiritual formation.

As Paul House has said, "Incarnational [i.e., in-person] seminaries do not simply give their graduates certificates and diplomas and send them off with good wishes and contact information

for the development office. They continue to offer resources and face-to-face counsel for improved ministry, and they visit the lonely.” And “from close contact with graduates in their churches, incarnational seminaries also have the privilege of learning how to prepare future generations of pastors” (*Bonhoeffer’s Seminary Vision*, 179). This is true of Mid-America.

And all of this is vital for the formation, and *ongoing* formation, of ministers of the gospel. We need to be concerned not just about producing theologians, but about producing *pastors*. And this kind of pastoral formation (as in the church) takes place *in-person*. Even as Paul said, “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us” (Philippians 3:17), our professors did the same (and continue to do the same). They invited us to observe both their doctrine *and* their life (1 Timothy 4:16) in a way that simply could not have been done online. Nor could they have been able to speak to our weaknesses and blind spots the way they did without getting to know us in real life. Spiritual formation takes place in the context of relationship, and it’s vital that our future pastors be formed as such.

In a day and age where we hear all too frequently of disqualifying sins from church leaders, or of an argumentative spirit that leaves them open to charges of spiritual abuse, I am firmly convinced that one of the ways we can best provide the church with gentle shepherd-leaders is through the spiritual formation that takes place in the context of in-person theological education.

This kind of education polishes us theologically in ways that we need to be polished, providing theological formation; it teaches us to disagree agreeably, providing interpersonal formation; and it forms us through face-to-face contact with pastor-professors who know us and love us,

providing spiritual formation. For all of these reasons, I am grateful to God for my education at Mid-America.

And though I studied not far from

“Spiritual formation takes place in person. It takes place through the coffee discussions after class, through time in prayer with your professors both formally and informally, and through meals shared together.”

my own home, so this doesn’t apply so much to me, perhaps one other reason for the superiority of in-person education is what we might call pilgrim formation. That is, it uproots us from our homes in a *good* way, and reminds us that this world is not our home.

One of the most compelling arguments often made for distance education is that it allows you to not have to uproot your family and move across the country. But what if such a move was actually a *good* thing? What if part of the design was that moving away to study in a faraway place for local church ministry prepared men to be more willing to move again when called to local church ministry? One of the benefits of residential seminary training is that it forces future ministers to relocate, thus loosening their roots, and preparing them to consider moving to faraway places (perhaps like Canada, where the URCNA has many vacancies).

There was a time when men seemed to be more willing to consider taking calls to far-off, and less “convenient”

places; and one wonders whether the rise in more convenient models of pastoral training has not contributed to a resistance to making inconvenient moves for the sake of the ministry. As Chad Van Dixhoorn has written, “One of the benefits of in-person seminary education is that it loosens our roots, and often transplants us... In-person classes usually require a move. And once someone has taken the baby-step of temporary relocation, they become a little more open – and a little better prepared – to contemplate the giant step of campus ministry on the other side of the country, church planting in a needy state, or missionary service on a foreign field” (“Send Them to Seminary” *Reformation* 21).

For all of these reasons, I am thankful to God for the in-person theological education I received at Mid-America. Studying with men from all over the world created a culture of being willing to relocate, and has also provided us with ministry friends for years to come. The mentorship of our professors formed us spiritually. And the communal nature of our learning more than doubled the impact of the things we learned. I realize there may be a place for distance education in certain emergency situations (or as a supplement to in-person training). But I, for one, am grateful for Mid-America’s commitment to in-person learning, and pray that many more men considering gospel ministry would not opt for the more convenient path of online learning, but for the greener pastures of residential pastoral formation.



Ryan Swale
2018 Alumnus

34 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION: SOME REFLECTIONS

ALUMNI PROFILE: REV. BILL POLS (1991)

At the Seminary board meeting last fall, I sat at lunch break with some students. The banter and good humor, mixed with seminary talk, brought me back to my time at Mid-America, located then in Orange City, Iowa. Those were good years. Over 3 decades later, here I was having lunch with a first year student, whose parents I married, and whom I baptized. I was moved by God's grace and faithfulness to the Seminary, to me, and to the young man across the table from me.

Through the past 34 years of serving Cornerstone United Reformed Church of Edmonton, I have remained gratefully aware of the tremendous benefits of attending Mid-America. I still find myself quoting my professors in my teaching and preaching. Dr. Cornel Venema's first year of teaching coincided with mine as a student. From the beginning, I and the one other student in his Theological Foundations class were privileged to learn from one of the "finest theologians of our time". This quotation of Derek Thomas is from his recommendation on the cover of Dr. Venema's book: *Christ and Covenant Theology: Essays on Election, Replication, and the Covenants*, (P&R Publishing), which Dr. Thomas calls "necessary reading." I could say the same of this and other writings of Mid-America professors, both their books as well as articles published over the years in the *Mid-America Journal of Theology*. They have continued to be of great help to me.

I have increasingly appreciated the richness and balance of the

theological training at MARS. Throughout my ministry I have worked my way through the major theological works of "heavy-weights" like Francis Turretin, Herman Bavinck, and Wilhelmus 'a Brakel, as well as Calvin. I am currently awaiting the publication of volume 5 of Petrus Van Mastricht's *Theoretical-Practical Theology*. While this continued study has deepened and sharpened my knowledge of Reformed theology, at no point has it led me to any substantial correction or adjustment of what I was taught at Mid-America. In a similar vein, while I hope I have become a better and more Christ-centered preacher over the years, the basic content of my preaching hasn't changed. On occasion, I have resorted to my collection of old sermons, sometimes preaching those from over 30 years ago. I've had to edit them for purposes of simplicity, clarity, and application, yet I've found that no major changes in theology or biblical interpretation had to be made. I give much credit for this to the sound foundation I received at seminary. I also received a foundation for interpreting Scripture that has enabled me to continually discover the uniqueness and special significance of the individual sermon texts. I have never run out of new things to see and say from the riches of God's Word.

This past March I was privileged to meet up with some fellow 1991 seminary graduates at a pastors and missions conference. This reminded me of another great blessing of our time together at seminary. It forged bonds of love and friendship that endure through the years. As our class reaches the point where we are among the older guys, we also share a



deep sense of God's grace sustaining us in gospel ministry, and enabling us to see His faithfulness in so many rich and humbling ways. This includes seeing a growing number of colleagues, including those who seem to be very young, who exhibit soundness in the faith, with gifts and zeal for the advance of Christ's kingdom.

Looking forward, I am greatly encouraged by the steady course and increasing reach and maturity of Mid-America Reformed Seminary. I see very positive growth in its attention to evangelism and missions, training in pastoral counselling, effective use of media, and high standards of academic excellence and good organization. I also see an unwavering commitment to the Reformation Standards of the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Confession of faith, and to the original purpose of training godly men for the ministry of the Word and sacraments.

Rev. Bill Pols
1991 Alumnus

ALUMNI UPDATES



On May 9th, **Johnathan Allen** (2024) was ordained as an Evangelist of the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario (OPC) to serve Beacon Light Community Church (CRC) in Gary, IN, out of bounds as their pastor. The ordination and installation took place at Beacon Light.



In December 2024, **Stephen Corbitt** (2023) was called to serve as Pastor of Teaching and Discipleship

at Christ the King Reformed Baptist Church in Niles, IL. God has blessed their church with growth, and they have reached maximum capacity in their small sanctuary. They hope to purchase more land and begin a building project soon. And in answer to prayer, Stephen is excited to announce that he and his wife, Shawna, are expecting their first child in August—a precious baby girl that they have named Zoe. Also, he finished his first year in Wheaton College's PhD in Biblical & Theological Studies program with a concentration on the New Testament. In April, he successfully defended his dissertation proposal entitled "Seeing the Light of Christ: A Conceptual Metaphor of Faith in Hebrews."



Drew Eenigenburg (2008), at West Sayville Reformed Bible Church (URCNA), is pleased to have welcomed a newborn baby girl into his family's home through foster care. She is the sister of their 15-month old foster son, Gabriel. His family is pursuing the adoption of these two abandoned children, however, there is no guarantee that the outcome will be successful. They are excited to see lost men and women coming to the faith; a 48 year old man told Rev. Eenigenburg that he heard the 9th commandment for the first time in their worship a few weeks ago. The church is joyful to wash the feet of the mentally-ill as they are frequent attenders to their worship. Recently, they were invited to begin ministering to shut-in members of a nearby assisted living facility by leading a worship service there. They request prayers that God will provide them with more musicians as they must often do without musical leadership. They also thank the Lord for the births of several new children in their midst!



Peter Yoo (2022) and his wife Jane have been married for just over 2 years, and they continue to thank God for the gift of marriage and His many blessings upon them. The Lord has blessed them with new life in the

womb, and they're expecting two beautiful twin girls in the next several weeks! Peter and Jane have been living in the church property for many months, and they're looking to buy their own house in Dunedin, NZ, in which to raise their twins. Peter has also been the minister of the Reformed Church of Dunedin since September 2024, and they continue to see the Lord's faithfulness to their congregation in many ways, including a wave of incoming newborns into their congregation. They thank the Lord for His grace! Please pray for this new season of life that the Lord has in store for their family, their church family, and other first-time parents in their congregation.



Nathan Voss (2019) and his wife Lauren welcomed their third child, Adam, into their family in March.

Nathan is currently the pastor of Faith URC in Beecher, IL and had the blessing of baptizing his son just as he did for his daughters.

Alumni!

Send us your updates
any time to Rachel

Luttjeboer at
rluttjeboer@midamerica.edu.



MID-AMERICA
REFORMED SEMINARY

229 Seminary Drive | Dyer, Indiana 46311-1069

Tel: 219-864-2400

Fax: 219-864-2410

www.midamerica.edu



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