

the messenger

Mid-America Reformed Seminary

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Introducing the Center for Missions and Evangelism

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

“PREPARING MISSIONARY-PASTORS FOR THE CHURCH”



When I was a seminary student in the 1970's, the “church growth” movement was in its heyday. Donald McGavran, the dean and principal proponent of the movement, argued that many Protestant churches suffered from a “preservationist” mindset. The unexpressed assumption of these churches was that the Great Commission was for all intents and purposes fulfilled. Missions and evangelism might still be a priority on the “mission field” overseas. But in the “Christian” nations of Europe and North America, the calling of the churches was primarily focused upon the maintenance or preservation of an already-established church.

One of McGavran's oft-repeated claims was that the preservationist mentality of many Protestant churches stemmed from the absence of any missionary impulse in the classic confessions of the Reformation. In his seminary courses, McGavran would require his students to write an essay on their particular church's confessions with one question in mind: what do these confessions say about the church's missionary calling to disciple the nations and peoples of the earth? The aim of the exercise was to make the students more self-conscious about the confession's lack of attention to the growth of the church through the ministry of the gospel to unreached peoples.

I do not mention this because I was then, or am now, a partisan of the “church growth” movement. While McGavran properly emphasized that the church's ministry is defined by the Great Commission, he contributed to the emergence of a rash of “new measures” and strategies for ensuring the church's growth. Many of these approaches departed from the biblical emphasis upon the Holy Spirit's use of the (ordinary) “means of grace” in fulfilling the church's calling. Rather than relying upon the means the Lord has appointed, the proclamation of the biblical gospel and the administration of the sacraments, the church growth movement spawned a host of dubious schemes for gathering the lost into the church. Ironically, a generation after the birth of the church growth movement, many churches in Europe and North America are losing members and find themselves in societies that are increasingly unchurched.

Remarkably, one of the best rejoinders to McGavran's complaint against the Reformation confessions is found in Lord's Day 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism. In answer to the question, “What do you believe concerning the holy catholic church?” the Catechism says: “That the Son of God, out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself, by His Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith, a Church chosen to everlasting life” (Q. & A. 54). Whether or not Reformed churches have acted in ways that conform to this confession may be debated. Sadly, they often have not done so. But it cannot be denied that this is one of the most beautiful confessions of the missionary nature and calling of the church. The Triune God is a missionary God: the Father sends His only Son into the world to provide for the salvation of His people; the Son, having purchased their salvation through His shed blood, grants His Spirit to the church; and the Spirit, ministering on behalf of the Father and the Son, is gathering, defending, and preserving His people through the gospel Word. The Great Commission is ultimately about the mission of God (*missio Dei*). *Through the church's ministry of the Word*, God is at work *gathering* those whom He has chosen unto eternal life. Though God also defends and preserves the church He gathers, He will *continue to gather His church until the end of the age*.

This confession has profound implications for our work as a seminary. In order to prepare our students for the gospel ministry, we need to train them to become thoroughly acquainted with the gospel. A thorough and academically rigorous preparation of our students in the classroom is an indispensable pre-requisite to gospel ministry. After all, who can wisely, winsomely, and urgently proclaim the joyful message of the gospel without an intimate acquaintance with the Word that must be preached? But at the same time, who can be properly furnished for the ministry of the gospel without being trained in the work of the ministry—preaching, teaching, pastoring, evangelizing, discipling?

In this issue of *The Messenger*, there is an article by Dr. Eric Watkins that describes an important new initiative at Mid-America—the establishment of a Center for Missions and Evangelism under his direction. As I indicated in the press release announcing the establishment of the CME, I cannot overstate my excitement with this new enhancement of our preparation of students for the gospel ministry. “Consistent with our long-standing emphasis upon preparing our students both academically and ministerially, the CME will help equip our students to be missionary-pastors in an increasingly secular world where many have little acquaintance with the gospel message regarding Christ's coming kingdom” (Press Release, July 15, 2021).

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

This. This issue right here – the one in your hands – this one has some big news. The kind of news we have been excited to share since plans for the Center for Missions & Evangelism (CME) were originally jotted down on a napkin at “Tandoori Time” in Toronto ON, Canada. Mid-America is excited for the launch of this new initiative, and you can read all about it on page 6.



By God's grace, Mid-America Reformed Seminary has partnered with the church in training her leaders for 40 years. Throughout those 40 years, we have ensured our fidelity to our mission, and our purpose has remained strong. Dear readers: it is stronger than ever, and the CME is a robust extension of our institution, designed to enhance our partnership with you and your churches by better equipping and encouraging her pastors, leaders, and congregants to make disciples. To God be all the glory, for He indeed does great things.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Deckinga".

Michael 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: “FISH FOR BREAKFAST?”

He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. John 21:6.

I was once a paint salesman. Now I am a fundraising professional. What do you do? Truck driver perhaps? Maybe a medical doctor, carpenter, or a farmer? A pastor? Lawyer? Social worker? Politician? Student? Full-time mom? (Arguably the hardest job there is). I can't hear your answers – a column in a news magazine is pretty much one-way communication after all. One thing stands out to me – God can and does use ordinary people to do extraordinary work.

Think of creation. All that God made was entrusted to mankind to steward. There wasn't a series of tutorial videos that Adam could watch beforehand. He had to trust God to provide him with the ability and knowledge to do the job well. Consider Moses, King David – the list goes on and on. Even the disciples, those closest to Christ, were common men with regular “day jobs” as we would call them. They used their God-given abilities and the tools He entrusted them with to do their jobs well. Yes, our risen Lord provided the disciples with a great catch that day off the shores of the Sea of Galilee, but the men who were on that boat were experienced fishermen. They had a boat. They had nets. They likely thought to take provisions for a fishing trip lasting all night and into the morning. I doubt they had a depth finder rigged up, but they had the equipment of the day necessary

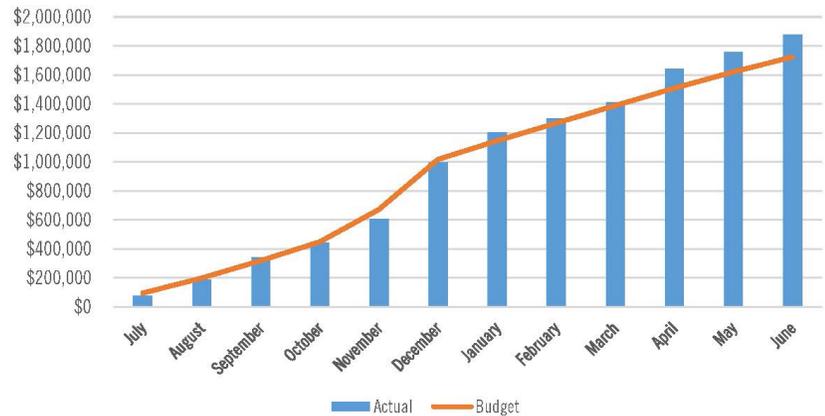
to catch fish, and they were using it. The Lord blessed them through those means.

How has the Lord equipped you for the work He's called you to do? If you're a surgeon, He's provided you with a mind capable of learning the intricacies of the human body. He's provided you with a knowledge of the various equipment found in an operating room. If you're a truck driver, He has given you the means necessary to purchase that 18-wheeler, and the mental and physical fortitude to log many miles safely. My point isn't to cover every occupation, but to highlight this simple fact – the Lord gives us all the tools and knowledge we need to do our jobs well. He has equipped us.

The account of the miraculous catch continues to include a breakfast meeting with Jesus Himself, using a portion of the haul as food. Fish for breakfast? Pay that no mind; rather, consider this: the great catch was used first to satisfy their hunger. They presented the first of their catch to the Lord, and He used it to fill their needs. God provides a harvest, and we can and will rightly use that harvest to feed ourselves, having presented the first of that harvest to the Lord for His use in the Kingdom. I imagine the rest of that catch was sold in the fish market, and the money earned poured right back into the ministry journey the disciples were about to embark on.

From my vantage point here at the

2020-21 Fiscal Year General Fund Giving, Actual vs. Budget



Seminary, I can see clearly that many of you understand the concept of using all the Lord has equipped you with to do your job well, reap a harvest, give back to the Lord, satisfy your needs, and funnel the rest back into repeating that process over and over in God's providence of time. I wish to remind you of this: that “Kingdom portion” you give back to the Lord for Kingdom use is our daily bread. It's what we receive from you so we can use the tools we have – our campus, our professors, our library, our network of churches for internships; and we are tremendously humbled and encouraged by all that you have shared with us this year. The chart here illustrates our fiscal year-end financial contribution results against the budget for 2020-21. Take a look at what the Lord did through you! Let's enjoy some breakfast and get back to work – not for our glory, but for the glory of the one who has equipped us to do His work.

I'll end with this – please contact me! I'd love to hear your “fishing story.”

Michael Deckinga
Vice-President of Advancement

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

NEW STUDENTS

Master of Divinity



Brian Bowen married Kelsey in May, and graduated from Olivet Nazarene University with a degree in Pastoral Ministry. Brian is from southern Illinois, and he and Kelsey are members of River Valley Christian Fellowship in Bourbonnais, Illinois.



Kevin Godsey and Cami were married in 2019, and both graduated in May from Olivet Nazarene University. Kevin studied Biblical Studies and Theology, and he and Cami are members of Cross of Christ Fellowship in Naperville, Illinois.



Eric Heida and Emma were married in May, and they come from Grimsby, ON, Canada. Eric graduated from Brock University in April 2021 with a degree in Child and Youth Studies. Eric and Emma are members of Adoration URC in Vineland, ON.

Patrick Russell and Rachael were married in 2018, and they are members of Covenant Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Chicago. Patrick graduated in 2015 from Western Michigan University with a degree in Business Administration, and he is continuing his employment at Bosch while studying at seminary.



Daniel Rust and Liz were married in September 2020, and come from the Zion Evangelical & Reformed Church (E&R) in Garner, Iowa. Daniel was employed as an equipment operator. He graduated in 2015 with an Economics degree from Iowa State University.



Christian Ryan married Megan in June 2020, and recently they welcomed their first child, daughter Bronwyn. Christian is a National Guardsman for Wisconsin, anticipating an Army chaplaincy after seminary. Christian and Megan are members of Resurrection Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Christian graduated in 2019 from Ripon College, studying Politics and Government.



Luke Schmeltzer and Jess graduated from Olivet Nazarene University and were married in May. Luke studied Pastoral Ministry, and comes with lay ministry experience. Together, Luke and Jess work as camp and retreat staff in north-central Illinois. They are members of One:Seven Church in Bradley, Illinois.



Jeremy Vander Lei and Lindsey are married 8 years. They grew up together in the Burlington URC in Burlington, Washington. Jeremy was a motorcycle officer for the Everett City Police Department in Everett, Washington, and Lindsey is an emergency room nurse. The Vander Leis have four children and a fifth due in December.

Master of Theological Studies



Landon Jones had considered teaching English in China before coming to seminary. Landon comes from Morris, Illinois, and graduated from Olivet Nazarene University in May, studying Political

Science. Landon enjoys theater and journalism. His goal remains long-term missions. He is a member of One:Seven Church in Bradley, Illinois.



Jake Kutschke is from Orland Park, Illinois. He graduated in May from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, studying Pastoral Studies, and plans to join New Covenant Community Church (OPC) in Joliet, IL. Jake is learning Russian for the possibility of a future ministry.



Bill Venhuizen is teaching high school history while studying in seminary. Bill lives in Lansing, Illinois, and is a member of Lynwood URC in Lynwood, Illinois. He is a Calvin University graduate, having studied Business and History, and he also earned a Master of Arts in Human Resource Development from Webster University. Bill hopes his seminary training will add important Reformed perspective to his history teaching.



Ben Verdonk is from Brantford, ON, Canada, and has Spanish-speaking ministry aspirations. Ben is a member of Living Water Reformed Church (URCNA) in Brantford, and he graduated in April with a degree in Biblical Studies and Languages from Toronto Baptist University.

Brian Blummer
Director of Enrollment
Management





INTRODUCING THE

CENTER FOR MISSIONS & EVANGELISM

by Dr. Eric Watkins

FEATURE

Rationale for the Center for Missions and Evangelism

When Jesus rose from the dead, He gave a most beautiful promise to this church, “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” This promise is the engine that drives the Great Commission. It is through His church that Jesus carries out His mission of gathering a people for Himself—and He promised to be with His church until the end of the age, thus guaranteeing that neither sin, Satan, nor death could ultimately thwart the mission of the church.

It is helpful to remember this promise that Jesus is with us. Who could deny that these have been trying times for the church? We have experienced many humbling challenges in recent years as churches have had to deal with the reality of a pandemic, social justice and covenantal drift (the slow drift of some of our young people away from the church). At the same time, a providential stage is now set for the church to proclaim the hope of the gospel to a world that is lost and limping. The nations now live in our backyard, and gospel opportunities abound. People from all walks of life are coming to Christ, new disciples are being made, and many of our young people are sensing a desire to serve God in faithful yet creative ways. What the world needs most from the church is for us to remain faithful to God’s Word and to hold forth that message of gospel truth which alone can save souls and change lives.

In the midst of these challenging yet fruitful times, there are legitimate questions before the church.

How shall we reach people with the gospel in an ever-changing, pluralistic society? How can local churches reach people who are unfamiliar with the Reformed faith? How can we plant churches together that will reach the lost while remaining committed to the ordinary means of grace (the preaching of God’s word, the sacraments and prayer, and the Reformed confessions?) Where will the next generation of missionaries come from, and how can we best recruit and prepare them for the work that lies ahead? Finally, how can we continue to uphold and encourage those who are already serving “in the trenches” so that fewer church leaders will experience burnout, discouragement, and attrition?

It is because of important questions like these that the Center for Missions and Evangelism (CME) has been instituted at Mid-America Reformed Seminary (MARS). Seminaries exist to serve the church, and it is a privilege not only to participate in the raising up of the next generation of pastors, church planters, and missionaries; it is also a privilege to contemplate all the ways we might come alongside those who are already doing kingdom work. It is also important to note that God is raising up young men and women who want to grow in their theological understanding and find ways to serve Christ’s church faithfully. Though MARS does not admit women into the M.Div. program (our pastoral track), it does offer a Master of Theological Studies (MTS) for men and

women who want to grow spiritually through theological education in order to be better equipped for other forms of ministry and church leadership. Our enrollment is on the rise. These are exciting times for the Seminary and for the church!

Overview of the Center for Missions and Evangelism

There are four parts to the Center for Missions and Evangelism: Classes, Conferences, Cohorts and Internships. Before describing these in detail, it is important to note that the core of what exists in the current Seminary curriculum will remain unchanged. The Faculty and Board of Trustees are keenly aware of the potential for “mission drift” that tempts all institutions. Thus, there is an unwavering commitment to retain the classes and instruction that cultivate a high

degree of competence in the central areas of reading the Bible in the original languages, sound hermeneutics and exegesis, church history, apologetics, preaching and pastoral theology. The new additions of the CME will be exactly that—additions to what the Seminary has historically taught, stood for, and faithfully maintained. But as we recognize that more is needed to help pastors, church planters, and missionaries to meet the challenges of ministry, the CME will seek to develop:

1. **Classes.** New classes will be added that seek to prepare students to think biblically and confessionally about practical areas of ministry. Such classes will be designed not only for seminary students contemplating the ministry but will also be scheduled and structured in a way that might make it possible for ministers to come and take a class if they wished. Thus, some classes will be offered in one-week, intensive

formats instead of being spread out over a semester. Such courses would cover timely, important subjects such as Healthy Churches Planting Healthy Churches, Social Justice and the Church in Reformed Perspective, Recognizing and Addressing Abuse in the Church, Staying Healthy in Ministry, Foreign Missions in the Age of Pluralism, Preaching Christ in a Post-Everything World...and more.

2. **Conferences.** Only part of the CME’s work will be done on-site at the Seminary campus. A significant desire of the CME is to bring Christ-centered, Reformed, practical content to local churches who wish to spend a weekend focusing on timely subjects. The local church is irreplaceable. Insofar as the Seminary exists to serve the church, we want to spend time with local church leaders and members, presenting material and engaging in conversations that may help stir the church to greater faithfulness and excitement about participating in Jesus’ mission for His church. Possible conference topics might include those listed above but could also include subjects deemed vital to the local church. It is not the prerogative of the CME to tell the church what it should be considering, but to listen to the church and help bring in speakers that can actually help address the issues before the church in a way that honors Christ and promotes the health of the church.

3. **Cohorts.** The difference between a conference and a cohort is that conferences are open to the public and designed to draw a crowd; a cohort, in contrast, is usually a more low-key, informal, invitation-only event. Cohorts are a way for church leaders to get together and talk about the things that weigh most heavily and urgently upon their hearts. Rather than a speaker standing at a podium in front of crowd, cohorts usually bring in a speaker who sits in a room full of church leaders who



Dr. Eric Watkins and Ryan Cavanaugh doing street evangelism with Mid-America students.

listen to some presentations, but then spend a lot of time talking openly about issues. Cohorts provide plenty of time to pray together as well as down time just to build friendships; and yes, there is usually plenty of food!

4. Internships. When young men contemplate going to seminary, they are often unsure where that path will lead. Some may have a desire to serve local churches that are in need of a pastor; others may have a desire to plant churches in new areas or with core groups that are desiring to become a new church together; and yet others may even contemplate going to the foreign mission field and serving Christ in places far from home. How does a young person discern which way to go? Internships are an invaluable part of preparation for gospel ministry. They help ministerial candidates discern their call in the context of being mentored by an experienced pastor, church planter, or missionary who can only help the seminary student ascertain whether or not they should go to one field of service or another. Internships also help ministerial candidates sharpen and refine their gifts for the ministry under the oversight of someone who has already done the work and can thus teach and model what a seminary student needs to learn. Thus, a significant desire of the CME is to develop stronger relationships with faithful pastors, church planters, and missionaries in various faithfully Reformed denominations so that seminary students might be paired with them for internship experience.

What Is My Role as the Director of the CME?

First, it needs to be understood that I am actively serving a local congregation—Harvest Orthodox Presbyterian Church in San Marcos, California. The church has very graciously agreed (voted unanimously) not only to allow me to serve as the director of the CME but is also calling an associate pastor to help me with the work of the church. My heart is in the local church. I love the church. But I also believe that seminaries exist to serve the local church,

and I count it a privilege to help lead a program that has an interest in raising up and encouraging a generation of servants in Christ's church. I am excited about this program; I am also profoundly aware of my own weaknesses and limitations. Most of my experience has been in the area of church planting and evangelism. While there are some areas I may be able to speak to, I have—for instance—never been a foreign missionary. I thus find it exciting to look beyond myself, and even beyond the resident MARS faculty, to find faithfully Reformed, experienced servants in the church who will be able to help serve in some of the areas described above.

Thus, the CME should be viewed as a collaborative effort. Neither the MARS faculty nor I can do all of the things we list above on our own. We need (and intend) to draw on the wealth of wisdom and experience God has given to others who have expertise that goes beyond our own. We intend to partner with other faithfully Reformed seminaries in an effort to share resources and co-labor with one another as those who are committed to Christ and his kingdom. In these challenging times, like-minded Christians need to bind together whenever and wherever we can. The unity and catholicity of the church demands it. We need each other—now more than ever.

What to Expect Next

At one level, the CME has been contemplated for some time by faculty, board members, and friends of the Seminary. At the same time, it has only come into more concrete form in the month of July. The Board of the Seminary has appointed an advisory and oversight committee to help with and oversee the CME. We are planning to have a soft launch this fall with a small conference at the Seminary in conjunction with the meeting of the Board of Trustees on October 14 & 15. We are then looking to have an off-campus “hard launch” sometime in early 2022 at a desirable (think—warm!) location addressing subjects that would be of great use to the

church and church leaders. We are considering the theme, “The Mission of the Church in a Post-Everything World.” Sometime this fall, our catalog will be updated, our webpage will be up and running, and we even hope to have promotional materials in place to share with churches and prospective students.

Conclusion: God Uses Means

I am currently preaching through the Gospel of Mark. One of the things that strikes me is that while the Triune God has a mission to seek and save the lost, He is pleased to use means. The agent that He uses to carry out the Great Commission is the church. God works through the ordinary means of grace. Through the transformed lives and testimony of His church, God is continuing to gather His Bride unto Himself just as Jesus promised, “to the end of the age.” It is a great blessing to be a part of Christ's church. Not only do we have the hope of heaven in our hearts—the great comfort of belonging to Jesus—we also have the great privilege of carrying that gospel to men and women, boys and girls from every nation, tribe, and tongue. Whether they live across the ocean or down our street, people need to hear the gospel. Jesus said, “Go.”

Please remember to pray for the work of the Seminary and the CME. Pray not only that we will remain faithful to God's word and the riches of the Reformed faith; pray also that we will be able to help stir up and equip a rising generation to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Dr. Eric Watkins
 Director of Center for Missions
 and Evangelism

ALUMNI PROFILE: PAUL BERGHAUS

In March of this year, Paul Berghaus ('05) started a civilian faculty position at the United States Military Academy at West Point. He is the Spiritual Wellness Advisor for the Character Integration Advisory Group (CIAG), a new organization at the Academy created by the Superintendent to better coordinate the character development of cadets across the Academy's academic, military, and physical education and training programs. In his annual report to Congress, Lieutenant General Darryl A. Williams described his vision for the new team that Paul recently joined: "I have elevated the character development program and character integration to my level of command through the creation of a Character Integration Advisory Group (CIAG). This group is comprised of ten newly hired personnel that will integrate character development across our 47-month experience in a deliberate and progressive fashion. Rooted in the Army values and the West Point motto of Duty, Honor, Country, our character development program is predicated on the idea that character is caught through culture, taught through developmental experiences, and sought by inspired individuals."¹

This is Paul's third tour at West Point. His first began in the summer of 1991 when he reported as a new cadet, graduating four years later as a member of the Class of '95. He returned in 2010 with his wife Mary, and their family, and served for two years as a regimental chaplain and a

¹ LTG Darryl A. Williams, "Update on the State of the United States Military Academy," (accessed at <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP02/20210302/111267/HHRG-117-AP02-Bio-WilliamsD-20210302.pdf>)

pastor at Cadet Chapel. Paul reflects on his history at the Academy by saying, "I wasn't admitted the first time I applied to West Point, but by God's grace I made it in when I applied again a year later. So, receiving an offer to serve here for a third time was a tremendous blessing and seemed like a perfect fit given my vocational and academic background since graduating from my rockbound highland home over twenty-five years ago."

Paul returns to West Point while finishing a doctoral program in philosophy at Georgetown University where his research has recently focused on soldiers' exposure to a certain type of potentially morally injurious event in which their best intentions and actions in combat result in egregious violence and harm. His dissertation develops an alternative framework for explaining such experiences and recovering from them. According to Paul, "Most of the literature addressing this type of event appeals to the quality of an agent's intentions to relieve them of moral responsibility for its harmful consequences. However, soldiers often find it difficult, if not impossible, to excuse themselves of the grave outcomes of even their very best intentions and actions." He hopes that his research will help soldiers from religious as well as non-religious backgrounds to come to terms with this weight of responsibility by affirming the value of their own lives so that, ultimately, they might renew or find hope in the person and work of Christ. He is also excited that his new position at West Point provides the opportunity to prepare cadets to sustain themselves, and the soldiers



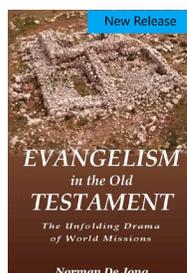
they will lead as commissioned officers, through such tragic circumstances.

As the Spiritual Wellness Advisor for the CIAG, Paul develops initiatives that help cadets be more deliberate in their worldview formation—to better understand what they believe and why they believe it—and consider whether their consistent application of these beliefs could help them meaningfully respond to the adversity and tragedy that are an inevitable aspect of life in this world and, especially of life in the profession of arms. He is also very excited that his faculty position includes a teaching assignment in the Department of English and Philosophy, where he will teach an introductory course in philosophy and ethical reasoning.

Paul and Mary have five children: Paul (13), James (10), John (9), Elizabeth (7), and Margaret (5). They welcome your prayers for their family and their next chapter of service to the cadets, staff, and faculty at West Point. Please let them know if you are ever in the area. Paul can be reached at paul.berghaus@westpoint.edu.

Keith LeMahieu
Vice-President of Operations

ALUMNI UPDATES



New Release

Norman DeJong (1993) has written a new book, entitled “Evangelism in the Old Testament: The Unfolding Drama of World Missions”, published by NorthStarMinistries.



Andrew Eenigenburg (2008) is at West Sayville Reformed Bible Church (URCNA) in Long Island, NY, which may be

the oldest continuing congregation in the federation (1876-Present). Despite that long history, the ministry challenges of turnover and change in this area have made them a congregation with more new converts and persons who are completely new to the Reformed faith than long-time members. They are thankful to God for many opportunities to be the first church that a number of people have ever attended as a believer. They also give thanks to God for providing newly-trained deacons after a two-year stretch where this important office went unfilled. The Lord has also heard their prayers and provided for marriages and new children in the body which is another generous gift. Pray for this congregation as they reach out with the gospel to those who have never heard! The harvest is truly plentiful, and the workers are few!



Cary Gephart (2020) accepted a call to Cottage Grove CRC in South Holland, IL and was ordained

in October 2020.

Cary and his wife Karese have four children, and, Lord-willing, another one on the way in October. Cary is very thankful for the seminary community and the education that he received (and continues to receive, since he is local and

can still come in and ask questions of the professors and use the library). To God be the glory, great things He has done.



Harrison Newhouse (1990) has retired from full-time ministry from Hancock CRC in Hancock, MN after 16 years of service there and 25 years of pastoral ministry in the denomination.



J.P. Mosley, Jr. (2010) was recently installed as Professor of Biblical Studies and Systematic

Theology as well as the Academic Dean and Registrar at Heidelberg Theological Seminary. Prior to this installation, Mosley served as the Pastor of Trinity Covenant Reformed Church (RCUS) in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He also finished his doctoral project and received his Doctor of Ministry degree in May of 2020. Mosley and his wife, Francesca, are the proud parents of six children. They now live in Sioux Falls, SD. Mosley has served in Terra Ceia Christian Reformed Church as a pastoral intern and in Hope RCUS Pierre, SD, and Trinity Covenant.



Kyle A. Sorensen (2002) has finished the course of doctoral studies at Heidelberg

Theological Seminary and was recently awarded the Doctor of Ministry degree in May 2021. His dissertation is entitled Pastoral Polity: The Shepherd's Calling. He continues to serve the saints at Salem Ebenezer RCUS in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where he lives with his wife Donielle and their four children. He has pastored there since his graduation from Mid-America in 2002.

IN MEMORIAM: TOM VANDENHEUVEL



The Mid-America Reformed Seminary community was deeply saddened with the news that one of the

Seminary's founders, Rev. Thomas Vanden Heuvel, passed away on July 7, 2021. Rev. Vanden Heuvel was one of several ministers who worked together when they were living and serving in Northwest Iowa in the late 1970s and early 1980s, ministers whose efforts led to the founding of the Seminary in 1981.

Rev. Vanden Heuvel had served Christian Reformed congregations in Wisconsin, Michigan, and California before coming to serve the First CRC of Orange City in 1979. He was a faithful pastor in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, devoted husband to his loving wife Laurie, and beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. Rev. Vanden Heuvel's Christian devotion in the ministry left a great impression on all who knew him. He never really retired, showing his love for preaching and leading Bible studies into his eighties.

In the passing of Rev. Tom, Mid-America has lost a great friend and example of pastoral devotion. May the Holy Spirit and the truths of the gospel give comfort to his wife Laurie, all the members of his family, and the many friends he leaves behind.



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**A CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH:
MINISTERING TO OUR CULTURE
WITHOUT LOSING OUR GOSPEL FOCUS**

with Dr. Alan D. Strange

Thursdays at 7:30 pm
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