

## Mid-America Professors Commemorate Calvin in Geneva

### Calvin: His Life and Legacy

The rustic setting of the Machen Retreat and Conference Center, located in a remote Appalachian mountain area near McDowell, VA, was the site of a recent OPC ministers' conference on Calvin.

Dr. Cornelis P. Venema and Rev. Alan D. Strange spoke to about 15 conference attendees, including Mid-America alumni Rev. Tim McClymonds (2007) and Rev. David Robbins (2008).

Three OPC pastors, Rev. Brent Ferry, Rev. Dan Knox, and Dr. Richard Gaffin, Jr., preached at evening worship services.

Dr. Venema gave four addresses on Calvin: "Calvin's Life," Calvin's Legacy," "Calvin's Doctrine of the 'Twofold Grace of God,'" and "Calvin's Doctrine of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness: Another Example of 'Calvin Against the Calvinists?'"

Rev. Strange dealt with Calvin's legacy in North America by first describing his influence in the British context up to the Westminster Assembly, and then dealing with three principal North American Calvinists: Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge, and J. Gresham Machen.

Dr. Venema says, "The conference was fairly intense and provoked a good amount of discussion."

Director John Jameson hopes the conference will become an annual event.

The spire of St. Pierre Cathedral dominates the center of Geneva, Switzerland, and visibly links the city to its famous citizen, **John Calvin**, whose theological impact is being celebrated in this 500th year of his birth.

Calvin preached in the Cathedral from 1536 to 1564, launching the biblical teaching that would influence and guide Reformed churches to this day.

Two Mid-America professors, Dr. Cornelis P. Venema and Dr. J. Mark Beach, were in Geneva May 28-30 to speak at the **Sixteenth-Century Studies Conference** (SCSC), which was held in Geneva to commemorate Calvin's 500th.

Dr. Beach spoke on "**Calvin's Treatment of Gal. 3:15-22 and Its Implications for the Covenant of Grace: A Prelude to Federal Theology**." He demonstrated how Calvin's exegesis of the passage (particularly the phrase from verse 16: "and to your seed, that is, Christ") informed and shaped subsequent Reformed tradition about the testamentary character of the covenant of grace. "Testamentary" here meaning "a bequested inheritance as a divine gift."

Dr. Venema spoke on "**Union with Christ and the 'Twofold Grace' of God in Calvin's Theology: Comments on a Recent Debate**." He addressed the relation between justification and sanctification (the two benefits or "double grace" of God), which is a question frequently discussed among Calvin scholars.

"It may seem a little arcane," Dr. Venema says, "but it goes to the question of the continuity between Calvin's view and that of later Calvinists, and even the much-disputed question today regarding the nature of faith in its office as instrument of justification."

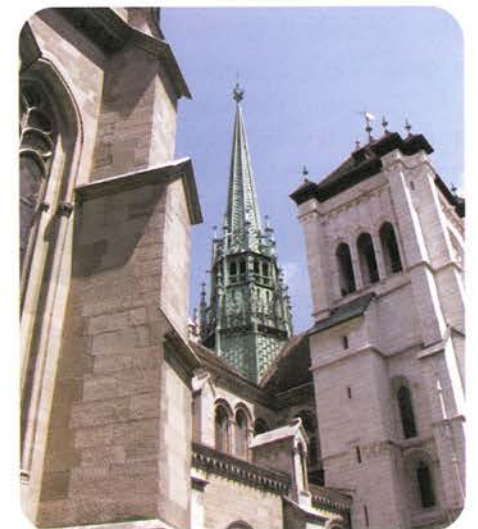


*Geneva's Reformation Wall depicting Farel, Calvin, Beza, and Knox*

The professors were among scholars from around the world who gathered in Geneva.

"It was wonderful to visit Calvin's Geneva and enjoy walks through the old city," says Dr. Venema, "including St. Pierre's where Calvin delivered most of his sermons and many of his lectures. However, it was disappointing to observe limited interest among SCSC participants in Calvin's legacy as a Reformed commentator, pastor-preacher, and theologian."

"Geneva is a beautiful city and the setting in which the city is situated is also majestic," says Dr. Beach. "Geneva has a much more multi-ethnic populace than I was expecting. With banners along the streets, the city was advertising (and thereby owning) their famous citizen, **John Calvin**. The museum about Calvin, set up on a temporary basis to celebrate his birth, was also impressive."



# Development Report



## Willful Planning

by Keith LeMahieu

In the last issue of the *Messenger*, we considered how philanthropy and stewardship differ. We said that philanthropic giving is characterized by the idea of giving what is *ours* for the sake of others; it is a humanistic approach to charitable giving. Stewardly giving, on the other hand, is characterized by the principle that our generosity seeks first the kingdom of God. It recognizes that all we have belongs to God and we serve as trustees of these resources for His kingdom (Matthew 25:14-30).

Since estate planning is a crucial part of godly stewardship, we will review several important aspects of it in future issues. Some years ago in the *Messenger*, we looked at several aspects of estate planning: needing an estate plan, setting priorities, planning basics, requiring a will, selecting an executor, explaining a revocable living trust, and defining charitable gift annuities. In coming issues, I hope to expand on this previous series by examining wills and living trusts and a few issues in their creation and maintenance. Keep in mind that it is always important to obtain professional legal and tax planning advice when developing an estate plan.

...the most common motivator for writing a will is the birth of one's first child. Parenthood has a way of making us look to the future...

Probably the most common motivator for writing a will is the birth of one's first child. Parenthood has a way of making us look to the future as perhaps nothing else can. Your will allows you to specify who will care for your children and manage their property if you are unable to do so.

If a parent dies before the children reach adulthood, the surviving parent usually assumes responsibility for children and property. When both parents die or a single parent dies, however, there is not another parent to assume responsibility. A will allows you to name a guardian for your children. If the court agrees that your choice is in the child's best interest, they will usually appoint this guardian as a surrogate parent. If both parents write a separate will, it is important to name the same guardian for each child. Covenant parents who view their children as a gift from God will want to select a guardian who will raise the children in the Lord. Leaving documentation regarding guardians may be especially important if you are concerned that the court may question your choice. Next time we will consider how your will relates to matters of property.

Mid-America is a member of the Barnabas Foundation. The Barnabas Foundation provides quality planned giving and estate planning services. The goal of the Barnabas Foundation is to help Christians apply sound principles of Christian stewardship while accomplishing individual and estate planning goals. Their services are completely confidential and free of charge. If you wish to contact the Barnabas Foundation to discuss your planned giving or estate planning needs, you can contact them by phone at 888-448-3040 or you can find them online at [www.barnabasfoundation.com](http://www.barnabasfoundation.com).



Mid-America's annual Golf Outing will be held at a new time as well as a new location! This year's Outing is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on September 3 at White Hawk County Club in Crown Point, IN.

Enjoy a great day of fun and fellowship with other supporters of the Seminary. Register with your friends in teams of four or request placement on a team.

Even if you're not a golfer, this is a great opportunity to support the Seminary through sponsorship. Gift sponsors donate prizes. Hole sponsors (\$100) are listed in the program and your family or business name is displayed on a sign by one of the tees. Event sponsors (\$500) receive a program listing and tee sign as well as two golf and lunch registrations. Sponsor registration is due by August 21.

Register online by clicking the "Golf Outing" icon on the Seminary's website or call the Seminary at 888-440-6277.

## Summer Schedule

Development Director Keith LeMahieu is busy traveling during the summer months as he takes promotion of Mid-America on the road to major ecclesiastical assemblies.

On May 12-13, he traveled to the RCUS Synod in Hamburg, MN.

From May 27-June 1, he was at the OPC General Assembly, held on the campus of Kuyper College in Grand Rapids, MI.

From June 16-19, he attended the PCA General Assembly in Orlando, FL.

On July 8, he addressed the PCA Chicago Metro Presbytery in Chicago.

On July 14-15, he attended Classis Central US of the URCNA in Pella, IA.

And on July 21, he and Dr. Venema attended Classis Michigan of the URCNA in Eastmanville, MI.

# Alumni News

At the Classis Central US of the URCNA meeting on July 14 & 15, 2009, in Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, IA, two Mid-America alumni successfully sustained examinations.

Matthew Nuiver (2004) sustained his ordination exam and was installed at Wellsburg URC in Wellsburg, IA, on July 31. He and his wife, Lisa, have three daughters: Madeline (5), Abigail (3), and Sophia Grace, born on June 11.

Zechariah Schiebout (2009) successfully sustained his candidacy exam. He is serving the URCNA church plant in Springfield, MO, through mid-September. Oak Glen URC (Lansing, IL) has approved a proposal for him and Mr. Chris Moulton (2009) to cooperate in a tent-making ministry in Chicago.



Rev. John Vermeer (Oak Glen URC) offers a prayer of thanks following Classis Central's announcement that Mr. Matthew Nuiver successfully sustained his ordination examination.



Zech and Rachelle Schiebout with daughters Miriam and Abigail shortly after Classis Central announced he had sustained his candidacy exam.

Rev. Doug Barnes (2004) and wife, Grace, were blessed with the birth of Jesse Abraham on Dec. 10, 2008. Rev. Barnes is the minister at Hills URC (Hills, MN).

As of Jan. 31, Dr. Norman De Jong (1993) accepted a call as the "organizing pastor" of Fremont OPC in Fremont, MI, a church plant he has led since May 11, 2008. He recently authored *Lies, Lies, & More Lies: Waging War with Satan*, published in 2009 with Xulon Press.

Mr. Nick Lammé (2007) sustained his ordination exam at Classis Michigan of the URCNA on July 21. Trinity URC

(Caledonia) has called him to serve with Rev. Bill Green in Costa Rica. He was ordained on July 26 at Trinity URC.

Mr. Peter Lindstrom (2009) is in the PCA, seeking God's direction in a call.

Rev. Rudy Poettcker (1988) has been a missionary with Reformation Christian Ministries since 1994. After 13 years in Suriname, he and his wife live in Florida where he co-pastors King's Reformed Presbyterian Church (Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Churches). He is headmaster for Suriname's Christian Liberty Academy and serves as Dean of Studies with Reformation International College and Theological Seminary.

Rev. Mark Stewart (1999) graduated from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA, with his M.A. in Biblical Counseling on May 28, 2008. He pastors Covenant Reformed Church (URCNA) in Newton, NJ.

Rev. Steve Swets (2007) serves Immanuel Covenant Reformed Church (URCNA) in Abbotsford, BC. He and Rachel have been blessed with a daughter, Madeline, and expect another child in September.

Rev. Hank Van der Woerd sustained his

ordination exam in Classis Western Canada of the URCNA on June 12 and was ordained at Trinity Reformed Church in Lethbridge, AB, on June 26.

Rev. Steve Van Noort (2008) has been serving the Lucas CRC in McBain, MI, since September of 2008.

Rev. Wes White received his Th.M. from Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in May. Rev. White pastors New Covenant PCA in Spearfish, SD.

The Rev. Deacon Gregory Yankey (1999) sustained his canonical exam in Dallas, TX, on June 12 and was ordained to the deaconate of the Reformed Episcopal Church. He will serve as a deacon at St. Michael's Church in Broken Arrow, OK, before he is ordained as a presbyter. He also teaches AP World History in Owasso Public Schools. He and Elisabeth have two sons: Christopher (3) and Noah (2).

Please don't forget Mid-America's financial needs. We especially need your help after a slow summer and as we begin this new academic year. We need your financial support now more than ever!

[www.midamerica.edu](http://www.midamerica.edu)

Seminary  
Website:  
New Look and  
New Content



If you haven't browsed the Mid-America website lately, it's time to check it out. Abby Schaaf has revamped the site's appearance and added content in user-friendly menus.

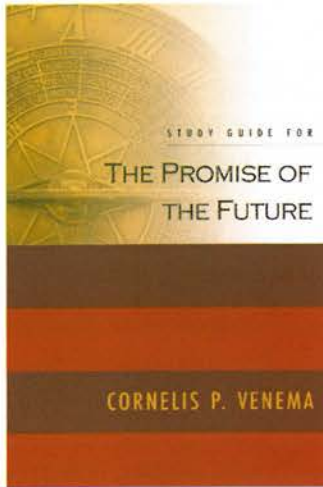
Wondering when a Seminary professor will be preaching or speaking in your area? Check the "Faculty Speaking Calendar" under "Quick Links." Looking for an article in the Mid-America Journal of Theology? Look up the MAJT archives under the quick link to the Journal. Search the library catalog or browse the academic catalog. Read recent news and become aware of current events on the home page. You can even click on a box to become a member of Mid-America's Facebook community!

While many unique features have been incorporated into the website's new design, Abby continues working to improve the site and incorporate additional information. Keep checking for updates!

## New Books by Dr. Venema

Mid-America Reformed Seminary is pleased to announce the publication of two new books by Seminary President Dr. Cornelis P. Venema.

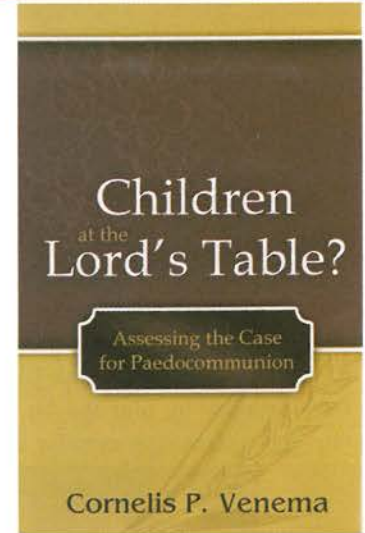
Just as the recent publication of *Christ and the Future*, a popular abridgement of his well-known *The Promise of the Future*, is making Dr. Venema's excellent eschatological teaching available to a



wider audience, the new *Study Guide for The Promise of the Future* will open the teaching found in Dr. Venema's earlier volume to a wider audience. Published by Banner of Truth, the *Study Guide* leads readers through biblical instruction on the future of the individual, the church, and the universe. It can be used profitably by individuals or groups for an exhilarating study of this fascinating subject.

In *Children at the Lord's Table: Assessing the Case for Paedocommunion*, Dr. Venema addresses a trend among Reformed churches to admit young children to the Lord's Supper. He insightfully analyzes the theoretical arguments promulgated by advocates of

*The Messenger* is published bi-monthly by Mid-America Reformed Seminary  
General Editor: Cornel Venema  
Managing Editor: Glenda Mathes  
Send information to:  
info@midamerica.edu



paedocommunion. He also considers the scope of church history regarding this practice in addition to the historical, confessional, and biblical prerequisites for participation in the Lord's Supper.

Published by Reformation Heritage Books, this book and the *Study Guide for The Promise of the Future* as well as other Bible study guides are available from the Seminary bookstore. Call 219-864-2400 or email bookstore@midamerica.edu.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT  
U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
DYER, IN  
PERMIT NO. 30

Tel: 219-864-2400  
Fax: 219-864-2410



Mid-America Reformed  
Seminary Association  
229 Seminary Drive  
Dyer, Indiana 46311-1069

