

Training Reformed Pastors to Go into the World

Introducing Pablo...

Pablo Landázuri was born in Quito, Ecuador in 1977. He and his wife, Verenisse have three young children.

Raised in a Catholic home, Pablo came to personal faith in Christ in 2005. He began attending a newly independent Reformed church, where he is active in church leadership. When his teaching and evangelistic gifts appeared to validate his internal call to ministry, he began searching for a conservative Reformed seminary.

"I feel God has called me for two main tasks," Pablo writes, "to plant a church in my country that needs it so desperately; and, to establish a seminary in order to prepare the future Latin-America ministers of the Word."

Mid-America was one of the seminaries he initially contacted, but at that time funding support was not available to assist him. Other doors opened, but each successively closed.

"It was time to have a serious conversation with my God," he writes. "I very respectfully told Him that I was never going to apply again unless someone calls me and asks me to go. I left everything in His hands."

Then Keith LeMahieu contacted Pablo and told him that Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, IA, had offered to help sponsor an international student.

"I want to go there because if I get to go there, it will be because God wants me there," he writes. "After all, He initiated this process and for sure He will complete it."

Graduates of Mid-America are bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the four corners of the earth (Revelation 7:1). From Myanmar to Mongolia, from Nigeria to New Zealand, pastors trained at Mid-America are sharing the good news of salvation through Christ alone. What better way to support the mission enterprise of the church than to support the training of a gospel minister who will return to his home country and spread the Reformed faith through preaching and teaching?

Churches, study groups, and individuals can build Christ's church throughout the world by contributing to the [International Student Aid Fund](#) and supporting an international student at Mid-America.

Supporting a foreign missionary is an expensive proposition; it can cost up to \$100,000 per year. But an investment of only \$75,000, spread over three years, will support an international student's entire seminary education at Mid-America. He then can return to his country of origin to teach and train others, while supporting himself as a Minister of the Word.

"The foreign missions opportunities God has given Mid-America are unique," says Mr. Keith LeMahieu, Director of Development. "Foreign students who come to us for training do not face the kinds of cultural, language, or racial barriers that foreign missionaries often face."

"Mid-America has gained a reputation in the international community as a good place to study," he adds. "We receive many more international applicants than we are able to admit due to financial limitations."

Messiah's Independent Reformed Church of Holland, MI, is an example of how a church can support the [International Student Aid](#)



Pablo Landázuri, his wife Verenisse, and their children Martin, Emilio, and Benjamin

Fund. For several years, it has designated a portion of its general fund offerings for the International Student Aid Fund at Mid-America. Last year the church committed 4% of its general fund, which is a small percentage of a total budget but a large contribution to the [International Student Aid Fund](#).

Designating a portion of the annual budget is a great way for a congregation to help support international students at Mid-America.

Another way to support international students is by specific sponsorship. The Missions Committee of Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, IA, recently decided to help support a man from Ecuador named Pablo Landázuri, who hopes to begin attending the Seminary this fall (see side-bar).

"This decision goes beyond simply sending money," says Mr. Ken Veenstra, chairman of Covenant's Missions Committee. The church wants to maintain an ongoing relationship with the student that includes reports and visits so the congregation has a "more intimate involvement with the student."

Pablo still needs additional support. A commitment to the [International Student Aid Fund](#) multiplies the effectiveness of mission dollars. Please consider how your church, group, or family can support the [International Student Aid Fund](#) in addition to your regular gifts to Mid-America's general fund.



Development Report

Charitable Giving



by Keith Le Mahieu

2009 proved to be a difficult year financially for Mid-America. A significant decrease in donations to the Seminary has left Mid-America with a sizeable deficit in the reserve fund, and because the Seminary needs a healthy reserve fund to make it through the summer months, we must replenish reserves soon to meet anticipated obligations.

Let me explain. Mid-America seeks to maintain a cash reserve to cover unexpected expenses or fluctuations in income. About 20% of all annual giving to Mid-America generally comes in the last six weeks of the year. This allows the Seminary to start the new year in a positive cash position. As the year progresses, the Seminary depletes general fund savings and then begins to draw from the reserve fund to cover expenses until the end of the year, when the cycle repeats. Due to the decrease in donations during 2009, Mid-America never recovered the operating fund balance and began 2010 with a sizeable reserve deficit.

Anticipating that the troubled economy would negatively impact charitable giving, the Board of the Trustees wisely voted to

freeze the 2009-2010 fiscal year budget. Seeking to be good stewards of the resources God provides, Mid-America has historically operated with an austere budget. With no place to cut the budget and a significant decline in charitable giving, Mid-America has been forced to use reserves to pay operating expenses since the beginning of the year.

The Giving USA Foundation recently reported that in 2008, the decline in total charitable giving was the greatest since ... 1956.

Mid-America isn't alone in this crisis of charitable giving. Many other organizations that rely on charitable donations have had a very difficult time over the past 18 months as well. The Giving USA Foundation recently reported that in 2008 the decline in total charitable giving was the greatest since the organization began tracking charitable donations in 1956. The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) reports that in 2008 and 2009 the combined expenses

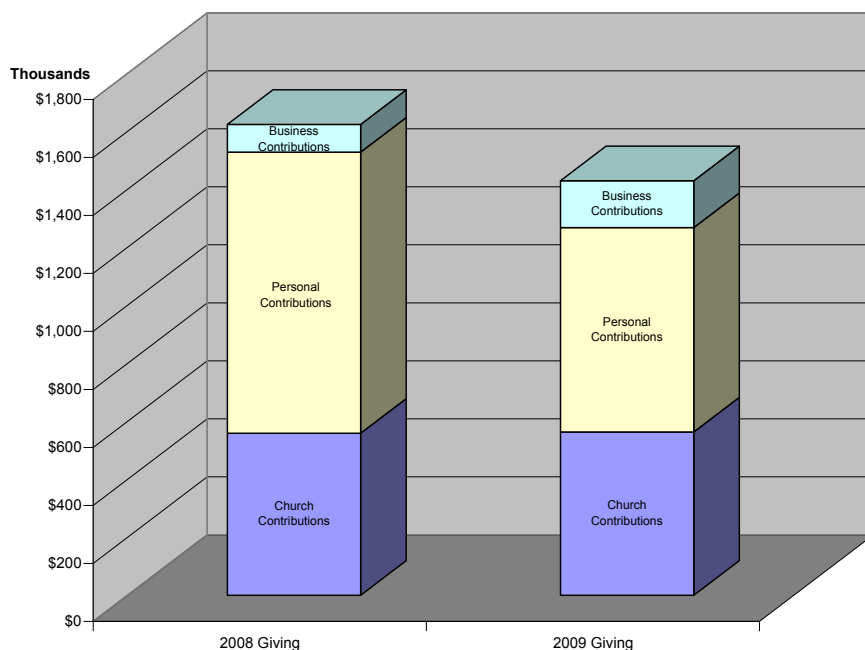
of member schools exceeded revenues, and operating reserves decreased sharply. Charitable giving to ATS schools declined approximately 18% from \$705 million to \$579 million over this period.

The graph on this page portrays Mid-America's experiences in 2008 and 2009. The blue portion represents giving by churches, which remained steady from 2008 to 2009. The green portion represents business giving. While business giving increased, it remains a fairly small portion of overall total charitable giving. The yellow portion represents personal giving – donations received from individuals. Individual giving declined by approximately \$265,000 or 27% from 2008 to 2009.

There is not sufficient space to tell you of all the exciting things God is doing in the lives of our graduates and the men He is raising up to serve as the next generation of leaders in the church. I wish you could share the privilege that we at the Seminary have of watching God mold and develop ministry gifts in men He is calling to shepherd His people. I wish you could see the godly men God is leading to begin their preparation for ministry next fall. We rejoice that God provides for the church by calling a new generation to love and care for the spiritual well-being of our children and grandchildren.

The preparation of these men is spiritual work, and it is hard work (see Ephesians 6:12). Is there anything more important than preparing faithful men to bring God's Word with its ability to transform a dark world? How valuable was Jonah to the city of Ninevah? How valuable were Paul and Peter to the church in the first century? How valuable were faithful pastors throughout the centuries who brought the Word to those who believed? There is a financial component to the spiritual work done by God's people, the church. It is why the Scriptures regularly compel us to *lead* lives of generosity so that we can *live* lives of true prosperity (2 Corinthians 9:11).

As you can clearly see, your generous financial support is much needed. Would you please send a generous gift today that we may continue God's work of preparing men to lead you, His people, as the church of Jesus Christ?



Seniors Ready to Serve

Seven seniors anticipate graduating in May and beginning the next phase of service in Christ's kingdom. Richard Bultje, Corey Dykstra, Jimmy Hall, Curtis Moleterno, J. P. Mosley, Jephthah Nobel, and Aaron Verhoef constitute Mid-America's Class of 2010.

While at Seminary, **Richard Bultje** (from Ancaster Canadian Reformed Church in Ancaster, ON) attends Oak Glen URC with his wife, Annette, and their children: Calvin (8), Isaiah (7), and Gloria (4). Richard appreciates his education at Mid-America: "I find that the studies and the summer assignments prepared me to serve." Richard hopes a Reformed federation or denomination will call him

to a missionary position in a North American context. He says, "My hope and prayer is that I can faithfully bring God's Word to people both inside and outside the church community in a way that is understandable and challenging."

Corey Dykstra (from Thunder Bay URC of Thunder Bay, ON) and his expectant wife, Jill, attend Glen Oak URC. He says, "Mid-America has shown me the humility necessary to such a great task as the work of pastoral ministry: a ministry from Christ, on behalf of Christ, unto Christ, and for the glory of Christ." He hopes to be called as a Minister of the Word in the URCNA, but is open to whatever service God leads. His goals: "First of all, to honor Christ and glorify God. Second, to faithfully discharge whatever calling the Lord has in store for me."

Jimmy Hall (from Peace RCUS in Garner, IA) and his wife, Stefanie, have two children: Eliana (5) and Adalia Rose (1). Following Jimmy's graduation from Mid-America, he is hoping to be called as a Minister of the Word within the RCUS. He has appreciated his education at Mid-America: "Mid-America has helped me understand the Word of God in its proper place in the history of salvation, the church, and in the lives of the people of God." He adds, "I hope to be able to teach and preach effectively by the eternal power of the Holy Spirit for God's people."

Curtis Moleterno (from New Covenant Community OPC in New Lenox, IL) didn't have to move his family in order to attend Mid-America Reformed Seminary. He and his wife, Maria, have continued living in their home and attending New Covenant Community with their children: Andrew (13), Eleanor (12), and Izak (10). Curtis has appreciated his seminary education and hopes for a call as Minister of the Word to an evangelistic-minded congregation within the OPC. "Mid-America has prepared me to be theologically sound and pastorally wise," he says. "I hope to faithfully lead a congregation to spiritual maturity and in evangelistic outreach."

J. P. Mosley (from Nashville, TN) and his wife, Francesca, attend Christ Our Hope PCA with children: Joseph (5), Stephen (3), and Judah (2 mo). He hopes for a year's internship prior to pastoral ministry in the PCA, although he is open to a call within other Presbyterian denominations. "Mid-America opened my eyes to the daily study, the daily setting of oneself under Christ, and the daily need for being in the Word and prayer in kingdom service," he says. "I hope to serve Christ's bride in any means God has gifted me with, through preaching, teaching, caring ministry, and even mentoring."

Jephthah Nobel (from Bethel URC in Jenison, MI) and his wife, Arlene, have two married children and three grandchildren. Their children at home are: Valentine (21), Deborah (19), Grace (16), Isaiah (15), Bethany (13), Laura (11), Sharon (9), and Israel (7). He seeks a call within the URC, OPC, or PCA. He says, "My only hope is that I can faithfully discharge the duties the Lord means for me to undertake. I pray that the Holy Spirit will enable me to preach God's Word with passion and vigor in a manner that is effective in reaching the hearts of God's people."

While at Mid-America, **Aaron Verhoef** (from Covenant URC in Pella, IA) attends Community URC in Schererville, IN. Before actively pursuing a call into full-time pastoral ministry, Aaron hopes to obtain additional experience through some type of mentorship program. "At this point I hope for nothing more than to effectively and passionately do the will of God wherever He might place me," he says. "By giving me the right tools in the classroom, Mid-America has adequately prepared me to grow in the knowledge and wisdom of Jesus Christ and to faithfully share that same Jesus with all men and women."



The seniors first came through these doors 3 years ago and soon will be leaving through them as men prepared to preach the Word.

Class of 2010 (L-R): Richard Bultje, Aaron Verhoef, Curtis Moleterno, Jeph Nobel, J.P. Mosley, Jimmy Hall, Corey Dykstra



Friends of the Seminary are cordially invited to its 25th Annual Commencement
May 21, 2010
7:30 p.m.
Calvary Community Church
16341 South Park Ave
South Holland, IL

Another Accreditation Milestone

On March 1, 2010, Mid-America Reformed Seminary was notified by The Association of Theological Schools (ATS), located in Pittsburgh, PA, that its Commission on Accrediting had awarded the Seminary initial accreditation for a period of five years.

This institutional milestone was reached at the end of a process and relationship that have been ongoing for a number of years.

Mid-America's relationship with ATS began in 1998, when the seminary petitioned the Commission on Accrediting for associate membership, which was granted in June 1998. This associate membership was renewed in June 2003. In June 2007, the Seminary's candidacy for accreditation was granted for a period of two years, through June 2009.

During the years of seeking, preparing for, and obtaining accreditation, Mid-America

has devoted significant attention to matters identified as challenges arising from the self-study process.

The two degree programs offered by Mid-America—the Master of Divinity and the Master of Theological Studies degrees—are now formally and fully accredited by ATS. This means that representatives of other seminaries and of ATS itself conducted a peer review of the Seminary's curriculum, degree standards, and institutional resources. The Commission on Accrediting agreed with the investigative team that Mid-America's program is characterized by high quality and educational competence.

Among the strengths identified were the following:

- highly motivated, loyal, competent, and industrious faculty, administration, and staff
- zealous commitment to teaching, learning, and research by faculty
- strong network of involved alumni and supporting churches

- leadership of the president and the faculty in the seminary and its various publics.

Still, a number of ongoing challenges need to be faced, including continued development of a quality program of institutional assessment and of comprehensive strategic planning. Additionally, attention needs to be given, in the context of the Board's stalwart leadership and unequivocal commitment to the Seminary, to developing the Board's skills of governance, assessment, and long term planning.

Please join us in thanking God for this achievement on the part of the Seminary, and pray that the school will continue to develop responsibly and effectively as it seeks to fulfill its mission of providing a sound theological preparation for lifetime service among God's people in the world.

by Nelson D. Kloosterman

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