

# THE MESSENGER

MID-AMERICA REFORMED SEMINARY

## An Officer and a Pastor at West Point by Glenda Mathes



*Mid-America alumnus Chaplain (Major) Paul T. Berghaus in the chapel at West Point.*

The United States Military Academy at West Point, one of the country's best colleges and the world's premier leadership institution, trains Army cadets to become leaders of character. In addition to developing cadets' intellectual, physical, and military skills, West Point fosters their ethical, social, and spiritual growth. Only ten chaplains provide spiritual guidance for West Point's 4,400 cadets, and one of them is Mid-America alumnus Chaplain (Major) Paul T. Berghaus.

"I provide direct pastoral care and religious support for about 1,000 cadets of the 1st Regiment, and I advise the chain of command on matters of religion, ethics, and morals," he explains. "I also am on the chaplain staff of the Cadet Chapel, where I assist in leading worship every Lord's Day and preach once a month."

A 1995 graduate from the United States Military Academy and a 2005 graduate from Mid-America, Chaplain Berghaus served nearly a year in Iraq. After finishing his assignment at Ft. Hood, TX, he took a six-month chaplain course at Ft. Jackson, SC, before returning to the Dallas-Ft. Worth area to recruit Army chaplains. He was appointed as Regimental Chaplain for the 1st Regiment, United States Corps of Cadets in January and reported for duty in June. He and his wife, Mary, and their two-year-old son, Paul, moved into their quarters on post in July.

"We live within walking distance of the Cadet Chapel, the Cadet barracks, and my office," Chaplain Berghaus says. "Our neighborhood is filled with young families who have children the same age as little Paul, and we have a great view of the mountains which form the Hudson River valley."

Since his West Point ministry includes more preaching and teaching than he experienced as a battalion chaplain, Chaplain Berghaus appreciates his Mid-America education.

"Mid-America prepared me well," he says, "not only in the process of crafting a sermon or a lesson, but in presenting Jesus Christ as the great hero of Scripture, the bridegroom of His people, and the object of our faith and worship."

His chaplain training and military experience help him serve simultaneously as pastor and professional officer within the unique US Army environment. West Point's rigorous program makes cadets reflect on their purpose and realize their limitations. Those moments provide opportunities for Chaplain Berghaus to point cadets to Jesus Christ.

"God's Spirit is mightily at work in the lives of many, many young people," he says. "God has given our family a remarkable privilege to minister here at West Point."

## Serving Stateside

After serving in Iraq, Chaplain Andrew Spriensma (2007) now serves at Ft. Jackson, SC, the Army's largest basic training camp and a post-combat base. Instead of ministering to soldiers in combat, he ministers to nervous recruits before basic training and to hurting soldiers after multiple combat tours.

Chaplain Spriensma leads a Sunday worship service at the reception station, where disoriented and anxious privates spend their first week in the Army. He considers it a "privilege" to minister to them in corporate worship and by talking and praying with individuals. But most of his time is spent ministering to experienced soldiers.

"By the time they arrive at Ft. Jackson for some 'downtime' from the war, they have many hidden wounds," he says, noting the high incidence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as well as family and marriage struggles.

The "melting pot" nature of military chaplaincy can make faith decisions challenging. Chaplain Spriensma says, "I am thankful that Mid-America equipped me with a well-rounded theological education that helps me make those decisions every day."

Since most interaction with soldiers is outside the chapel, he is learning to witness at every opportunity: "I hope God continues to teach me how to capture every moment for His glory and His kingdom."

## Freedom and Contentment

by Keith Le Mahieu



*But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches. All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence.*  
(Psalm 73: 2-3, 12-13)

The Psalmist Asaph wondered what it would be like to live as he pleased. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to play outside the box, to experience life with no boundaries, to be free? How often have you pondered what financial freedom would feel like? No needs. No pressure to manage a budget. Complete independence.

Money can create the illusion of independence. If I have enough material things, we think, I will be free of others who have control over me. Jesus recognized that illusion. Christ's parable of the prodigal son illustrates the son's desire to be free and the irony that the type of freedom he sought only brought enslavement. Following close on the heels of the parable of the prodigal son Jesus tells the parable of the dishonest manager and concludes by saying, "You cannot serve God and money."



**The heart of man is prone to trust in himself. We need constant reminders that it is God who governs all His creatures and their actions and thus He is our only security and provider.**

The stark contrast between God and money indicates the two options are adversaries as a matter of one's heart commitment. Money can wield great power and vie for our affections. With money there is less to pray for. With money we can believe the myth that we are self-sufficient. Money can engender pride. Money can set us adrift from serving the One who creates and sustains all things.

In the last issue of *The Messenger* I said that as believers we have freedom and contentment in Christ, but our world contends with us, making that freedom and contentment elusive. North Americans have been blessed with a material wealth unknown at any other time in human history. I would never argue that the modern conveniences brought by this material wealth do not improve our lives, but as we amass more treasure our lives become increasingly complicated as we manage and maintain this wealth. Increased wealth does not make us increasingly independent. Rather, it makes us increasingly vulnerable. The heart of man is prone to trust in himself. We need constant reminders that it is God who governs all His creatures and their actions, and thus He is our only security and provider.

Living by faith takes work and a reliance on the Holy Spirit. Asaph, when he went to the sanctuary, discovered the end of the wicked. He saw that God has "set them in slippery places" and He makes them "fall to ruin" (Psalm 73:18). Christ is the security and provider for His elect, and thus when God commands us to be generous we can do so knowing that God provides for our every need, and we can experience the joy that comes from giving to God's eternal work which will culminate in His ushering in the new heavens and the new earth. I have never met a truly generous person who did not find joy and freedom in the opportunity to give to the building of Christ's kingdom.

## Financial Update

As we reported previously, Mid-America began the calendar year with a \$70,000 deficit in our reserve fund. It has been our hope that we could replenish the reserve fund and generate a bit of a surplus. Regrettably, our deficit has continued to increase. On behalf of the Seminary community we appeal anew that you would consider giving generously to our work of preparing men to serve you on behalf of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Mid-America Golf Outing 2010

After five years of perfect weather, this year golfers arrived at White Hawk Country Club to a steady rain. Despite rain on the first five or six holes, teams played well and enjoyed themselves. The first place team of Gerry Swets, Dan Swets, Dan Zandstra and Mike Spender came in 9 under par. They each received a \$75 Visa gift card. Paul Beezhold, Tim Beezhold, Lou Karr and John Vermeer took second place at 3 under par. They received a \$50 gift certificate to Ace Hardware.

John Vermeer also earned a \$50 gift certificate to Dick's Sporting Goods for winning the closest to the pin competition. Lou Karr won a \$50 gift certificate to Best Buy for the straightest drive. Dan Bruinsma hit the longest drive and received a \$50 gift certificate to Lowes. Nelson Kloosterman won a \$50 gift certificate to Best Buy for the longest putt.

We thank all participants and sponsors for making this event possible. Mark your calendar for next year's outing on September 10, 2011.



## Mid-America Welcomes Largest Class of Juniors

With gratitude to God, Mid-America Reformed Seminary is happy to introduce its largest class of beginning students. Faculty and staff welcomed 15 juniors when classes began on September 1. This class includes students from a wide range of backgrounds and locations, with differing educational goals, who all desire to immerse themselves in God's Word in preparation for serving in His world.

The large size isn't the only unique aspect of this class. In another first for Mid-America, two of the new students are husband and wife. Caleb Smith is enrolled in the Master of Divinity degree program while his wife, Erika, is enrolled in the Master of Theological Studies program.

Please join us in welcoming the following students (unless otherwise noted, the students are seeking their Master of Divinity degrees):

Trevor DeBey is a member of the CRC from Cawker City, KS.

David Franks is a member of the OPC and is from Indianapolis, IN. His wife's name is Amanda.

Carl Gobelman is from a non-denominational

church and from Chicago. He and his wife, Linda, have three children: Matthew (21), Lauren (17), and Jeremy (15).

Brian Huitsing belongs to the CRC and is from Griffith, IN.

Ananda Jayawardene is a member of the CRC who comes from Makandura, Sri Lanka.

Pablo Landázuri belongs to an independent Reformed congregation and comes from Quito, Ecuador. He and his wife, Verenisse, have three children: Martin (9), Emilio (7), and Benjamin (2).

James Oord is from Lethbridge, AB and belongs to the URC.

Paul S. is from Grand Rapids, MI, and belongs to the OPC. He is currently enrolled in the MTS program.

Tim Scheuers is a member of the URC and is from Chino, CA.

Jeffrey Scott is from Coeur d'Alene, ID and is a member of the PCA. He and his wife, Dawn, have four children: Silas (8), Liliana (7), Maran (5), and Eden (2).



*Front Row (L to R): Erika Smith, Caleb Smith, Brian Huitsing, David Franks, Carl Gobelman, Ananda Jayawardene, Jeff Scott, Trevor DeBey  
Back Row: Tim Scheuers, Pablo Landazuri, Joel Worries, Brian Zegers, James Swan, Jim Oord, Paul S.*

Caleb and Erika Smith are a husband and wife team of students. Caleb is pursuing his M.Div. degree while Erika is seeking her MTS degree. Caleb is originally from New Braunfels, TX, and Erika is from Thousand Oaks, CA. They are members of the OPC.

James Swan is a part-time student from Wayne, NJ. He and his wife, Denise, are members of the URC.

Joel Worries is a member of the RCA from Crete, IL. He and his wife, Kayla, have a newborn daughter, Ainsley.

Brian Zegers is a member of the URC from Bowmanville, ON. He and his wife Karen (nee Zekveld) have three children: Keziah (4), Kiana (2), and Maelle (4 months).

## Scholarship Recipients

Mid-America is pleased to announce the recipients of this year's academic scholarship awards:

Carrie Venema Memorial: Steve Williamson ('11)

Iowa Falls Foreign Student: Erik Stolte ('11)

Ribbens-Vogelzang Scholarship: Caleb Smith ('13)

Rodenhouse Scholarship: Nathan Tomlinson ('12)

Horton Scholarship: Brian Blummer ('11)

Schiebout Tuition Scholarship: Tim Scheuers ('13)

Tuininga Scholarship: Jim Oord ('13)

Vander Veen Scholarship: Brian Zegers ('13)

Vedders Memorial Scholarship: Jeff Scott ('13)

Zandstra Scholarship: David Franks ('13)

## Couple Attends Seminary Together

As a junior studying accounting and finance at the University of Texas at San Antonio, Caleb Smith began attending Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The pastor of the church is Mid-America alumnus Rev. Nathan Hornfeld (2001).

When a fellow church member invited Caleb to a Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) Bible study at Trinity University, he met a young woman named Erika. The next summer they started dating, eleven months later they were engaged, and they were married on June 14, 2008.

When Caleb made the decision to pursue a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree at Mid-America Reformed Seminary (with the goal of being ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacraments in the OPC), he and Erika decided that she would also attend Mid-America, as a student in the Master of Theological Studies (MTS) program.

"Caleb and I believe that the MTS degree offers many opportunities," says Erika. "First, we get to share in learning God's Word together in a special way. Second, I will be able to use this knowledge as a pastor's wife, whether in teaching children or a ladies Bible study. Third, if we have children (the Lord willing), this will aid in training our family as well. Finally, I could possibly use my degree to teach God's Word through Bible classes in private schools."

While they attend seminary and when they graduate, Caleb and Erika are working together to serve the cause of Christ's kingdom as a team.



## Annual Retreat

RETREAT! A funny word, for it can mean running from a battle, the abatement of a deadly epidemic, or a place of refuge and safety where a people comes together for prayer, meditation, study, and instruction. Mid-America Reformed Seminary has always begun a new academic year with a retreat. Our place of refuge for meditation and instruction, again this year (31 August 2010), was the Cedar Lake Ministries Center. Our guest speaker was Rev. Jacques Roets, pastor of Redeemer United Reformed Church, Dyer, IN.

Rev. Roets addressed the student body and spouses, and faculty and their wives on the theme: Gospel Grace for Gospel Ministry. His first lecture, "The Gospel and Ministry," focused on 2 Cor. 5:11-6:2. Rev. Roets noted that, first and foremost, ministers need the gospel themselves. In fact, ministers find their identity in the gospel. However, eleven ministry idolatries compromise this identity. An example of ministry idolatry is the idol of attendance. While well-attended worship services are a noble goal, when they become an idol, then the focus is no longer God and His glory but the minister and his ego—either to salve his conceit if attendance is up or to deflate and defeat him if attendance is down. Ministers therefore



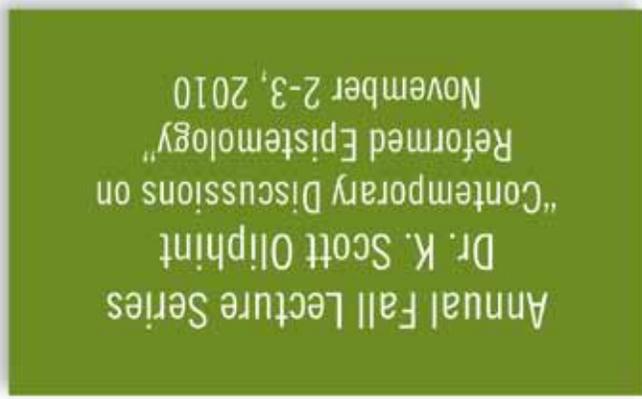
must first preach the gospel to themselves, and, with that, repent—deeply repent—of their own sins and idolatries. Ministers also need to meditate often on Christ and open themselves to a ministerial confidant. In his second lecture, Rev. Roets examined "God of Grace and Ministry," where he meditated upon the benediction of 2 Cor. 13:14, demonstrating how the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit should shape all our ministerial labors.

Rev. Roets' talks were edifying and well received. The focus and accents of his observations provided an encouragement to the Seminary community. A retreat!



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CULTIVATE THE HEART.  
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The Annual Fall Lecture Series is a free event. Plan on attending!



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