

Fall Lecture Series: Jesus Christ and the Care of Souls

The Appearing of Grace: Living Between the Times

A Christmas Meditation

"For the grace of God has appeared..."
(Titus 2:11)

At Christmastime Christian believers celebrate the first coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. But we also look forward to His final coming at the end of time. In Titus 2:11-14, we are taught that we are living between the times, between two appearances of Jesus Christ. His first coming was a visit in *grace*: Jesus Christ was born to die, a gift to us from the Father in order that we might belong to God forever. Paul's wording is striking: instead of saying that Jesus Christ has appeared, he writes that "the grace of God has appeared." Jesus Christ has secured grace and everlasting life for God's own.

But such believers live in the here and now with a zeal for obedience, not in order to be saved, but because they have been saved. And they live with hope, looking for another appearance of the Lord. Living between Christmas and the end of history is a challenge: we learn to deny ungodliness and worldly passions, we practice sobriety. We belong to God in all things in the "now age," having been purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ to live according to the things of the age to come.

At Christmas, God's grace appeared and we see it fleshed out in Jesus Christ. Christ is born! Let us glorify Him! And He will come again. With that hope, we live between the times.

Rev. Mark Vander Hart

Psychology can be a controversial subject, even among those who share Christian beliefs. How does modern psychology apply to the Christian? To help students and supporters find their way through the Christian psychology maze, Mid-America Reformed Seminary sponsored its Fall Lecture Series on November 3-4, 2009, on *Jesus Christ and the Care of Souls* with Dr. Eric L. Johnson.

Dr. Eric Johnson is author of *Foundations for Soul Care* and co-editor of *Psychology & Christianity*. Dr. Johnson is the Director of the Society for Christian Psychology and the Lawrence and Charlotte Hoover Professor of Pastoral Care at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. He is an associate editor of the *Journal of Psychology and Theology*.

"In terms of Dr. Johnson's general approach," says Seminary President Dr. Cornelis P. Venema, "he considers himself a 'Kuyperian' who wants to approach the academic discipline of psychology from within the framework of a biblical worldview, and to employ biblical principles as well as Christian psychology in the care of souls. In that sense, he differs significantly from 'integrationists' who simply wed secular psychology and scriptural teaching, and from 'nouthetic' counselors who tend to eschew the legitimacy of psychology altogether."

Dr. Johnson spoke at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3, on "The Incarnation of Christ and the Care of Souls." On Wednesday, November 4, he spoke at 8:30 a.m. on "The Cross of Christ and the Care of Souls" and at 10:30 a.m. on "The Resurrection of Christ and the Care of Souls." In each lecture, he described those specific aspects of Christ's perfect life and their implications for the care of souls.



Dr. Eric L. Johnson lectures on "Jesus Christ and the Care of Souls"

Dr. Johnson pointed out that even though Christianity has a great history of soul care through the centuries, modernism has developed a secular version of psychology that claims to be the only valid science of psychology.

"This has created a soul care crisis for the churches," Dr. Johnson said, noting that two paradigms have arisen in response. The primary one is what he calls "functional syncretism" or accommodation with wholesale borrowing from secular psychology, including its core vision of the self "functioning as the religious object of devotion." The other approach is total rejection of modern psychology and retreat into anti-science fundamentalism, sticking to only what the Bible says.

"The Reformed tradition offers the conceptual resources for a third way," he said. "It's not the only tradition that does it, but I would argue that we have the best resources. There are tremendous resources in modern psychology, but we must be fundamentally guided by God's purposes."

Dr. Johnson likes to use terms of modern psychology, taking them "captive for Christ," such as using psychotherapeutic to mean "healing for the soul."

"Pastors are shepherds of souls," he said, speaking to the audience composed primarily of seminarians and ministers. "They're the soul physicians; their calling is to bring healing to the souls."

He added, "The church has always been working in the mental health field."

Development Report



Willful Planning: Leaving Property

by Keith Le Mahieu

We continue our brief series on wills and living trusts by looking at how one leaves property in an estate plan. In the last issue we discussed property matters; deciding what will happen to those things over which God has granted you stewardship is at the very heart of estate planning. This decision often can become very complicated.

You may want to leave all of your estate to your spouse, but it is important that you also choose an alternative beneficiary. Most wills have a standard survivorship provision whereby your primary beneficiary must survive you for a minimum period of time (often 45 days) in order to claim their inheritance. If you name your spouse as a beneficiary and that spouse does not survive beyond the number of days specified in the will, the alternative beneficiary will automatically become the beneficiary.

You may want to leave your estate to your spouse, but it is important that you also choose an alternative beneficiary.

If you are married and have children, it is common to leave all property to the surviving spouse and name the children as alternate beneficiaries. If you have more than one child, you will have to decide how your children will share the property. If your children are 18 or older (no longer

minors), your will can clearly specify the amount they are to receive. You can also designate an individual to manage your children's shares until they reach a certain age (30, for example). If your children are minors, you may specify the amount each child will receive, but you must also designate someone to serve as trustee for your children's share until they reach an age you specify. You may also decide not to divide up your estate, but to hold your assets in a trust and grant the trustee the right to decide how the assets will be used for the benefit of your children until the youngest child reaches an age you designate—say, 25 years old.

If you decide to name one or more alternate beneficiaries, you are not constrained to naming your children. You could name only one child, or a friend, or a charity. You can also name second-level alternate beneficiaries to receive your property should both your spouse and the first-level beneficiaries die before you. If you name multiple first-level beneficiaries, you can designate that they receive the property of other first-level beneficiaries who do not survive you.

If only your spouse is named as primary beneficiary, it is possible to draft a completely new will that is implemented only if your spouse does not survive beyond the survivorship provision. If your spouse doesn't survive you, then Estate Plan B kicks in with a whole new set of beneficiaries.

Next time we will consider issues regarding an executor and management for minor children's property.

(NOTE: Estate matters are complicated so you should always seek competent legal help when creating or updating your will.)



On behalf of the Board, Rev. Wybren Oord (R) thanks Dr. Nelson D. Kloosterman for 25 years of service to Mid-America

Board Report

Mid-America's Board of Trustees had a light agenda when it met on October 7 & 8, 2009. It welcomed new and re-elected members Paul Anema, Everett Hoekstra, Jack Huizinga, Rev. Richard Kuiken, Rev. Kim Kuhfus, Rev. William Pols, and Rev. Ron Scheuers. Officers elected were Rev. Wybren Oord, President; Rev. Richard Kuiken, Vice President; Paul Anema, Secretary; Everett Hoekstra, Treasurer; and Charles Dykstra, Vice-All.

A letter from Rev. Arthur Besteman expressed his thankfulness to have been able to serve three terms on the Board. The Board expressed its appreciation for Rev. Besteman's many years of service to Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

The Board ratified the constituency's vote to add the word "primary" as to purpose in Article II of the Seminary's by-laws.

The Director of Institutional Assessment, Dr. Kloosterman, reported on the work for ATS accreditation. This was a tremendous task for the committee and the staff. We are thankful for their work and its completion. An ATS evaluation team has visited the campus, and we anticipate a favorable outcome in February, 2010.

The Board discussed and approved to hire for a nine-month trial period an Assistant Financial Officer and Student Recruiter named Grant Dykstra.

On Thursday evening, the Board hosted a 25-year anniversary dinner for Dr. Nelson Kloosterman. It was well attended by Board members as well as Dr. Kloosterman's family and friends to honor the work done by Dr. Kloosterman for the Seminary.

Paul Anema, Secretary

Promoting Community

An annual promotional effort of Mid-America is scheduling dinners in different areas in order that supporters can hear first-hand accounts of the Seminary's work.

"These dinners provide a wonderful opportunity for the Seminary community to personally meet and thank those who provide faithful prayer and financial support," explains Mr. Keith LeMahieu, Director of Development, "and they provide an opportunity for our friends to meet those students they are helping to prepare for the gospel ministry. I think these dinners are also beneficial in helping our students recognize there are many of God's people that they never see or meet whose support makes possible their preparation for the ministry."

The first of the scheduled evenings was the Illiana Promotional Dinner held in Lynwood, IL, on Thursday, October 22, 2009. Dr. Cornelis P. Venema, President of the Seminary, opened with scripture reading and prayer. The assembled group sang, "Sing to the Lord, Sing His Praise,"

before enjoying dinner together. Following the meal, three students spoke about their Mid-America experiences. Eric Stolte explained why he came all the way from New Zealand to attend seminary in



Dyer, IN. Yevgeni Kogay described how God called his family out of darkness and the events that led him to Mid-America in preparation for returning to his native Uzbekistan to bring the gospel. Curtis Moleterno talked about his summer assignment doing street evangelism at the Boardwalk Chapel, an OPC ministry between the beach and boardwalk on the island resort of Wildwood, NJ.

Rev. Alan Strange, Professor of Church History, spoke from 1 Timothy 6:20-21



Rev. Alan Strange spoke at the October 22 Mid-America dinner in Lynwood, IL

on "Keeping Your Head While Serving the Church." He noted that every pastor is called to "guard the deposit entrusted" to him by maintaining balance.

"This is what we at Mid-America seek to inculcate in all of our students," he said, "maintaining their theological and spiritual balance...so they may best serve the churches to which they are called."

Although it may seem as if balance is not "the need of the hour," he noted that biblical balance "stems from a passion for and commitment to the glory of God and the grace of Christ."

He said, "We do not want men who ride Reformed hobby horses, but men whose all is for Christ and His kingdom, men who are passionate, thoughtful, balanced, and burning with zeal for Him and His cause: the gathering and perfecting of the church to the end of the age."

Following a report by Mr. Keith LeMahieu, the group sang "Now Thank We All Our God." Rev. Mark Vander Hart, Associate Professor of Old Testament Studies, closed in prayer.

A second and similar promotional dinner was planned for Thursday, November 12,

2009, in Wyoming, MI. Rev. Mark Vander Hart was to speak on "Maintaining the Schools," which the Heidelberg Catechism includes as part of God's requirements for keeping the Sabbath holy. The Catechism understands that the office of preaching is entrusted to persons who are qualified to teach as well as having been divinely and lawfully called. Mid-America is a "vocational" school in the sense that it trains men for a lifetime of calling to ministry.

FALL CLASS

The Ten Commandments through the Eyes of John Calvin: A Study in Biblical Ethics for Today with Dr. Nelson Kloosterman
Mid-America celebrates Calvin's legacy by hosting this study of the Ten Commandments as explained in Calvin's *Institutes* and his specific sermons on the Ten Commandments. From 7:30-9:00 on Tuesday evenings during November, participants enjoy reading and reflecting on today's relevance of this small part of the Reformer's contribution to Christian living.

Mid-America welcomes

Grant
Dykstra

Assistant
Financial Officer
& Student
Recruiter



Grant Dykstra began employment at Mid-America Reformed Seminary on October 20 as Assistant Financial Officer and Student Recruiter. His responsibilities in these positions include supporting and assisting the Office Manager in business administration and supporting and assisting the Director of Development in student recruiting.

Grant graduated from Dordt College in May of 2009 with a degree in Business Administration. Since he lives in nearby Highland, IN, his commute to work is relatively short. His interests include traveling, athletics, and reading.

"I see myself taking on a number of different tasks, but all with the purpose of helping Mid-America carry out its mission to prepare pastors as faithful servants of the Word and sacraments," he says. "I see a lot of potential for Mid-America to grow and train up more men for the ministry. I am excited to be a part of the Seminary and to have the opportunity to serve in a number of different capacities."

Celebrating 25 Years of Service

A dinner to celebrate Dr. Nelson D. Kloosterman's 25 years at Mid-America was held on October 8, 2009, at the Center for Performing Arts in Munster.

Joining Board, faculty, and staff members for the celebration were friends of Dr. Kloosterman, his wife Sue and their five children (some with their spouses), as well as his mother.

Dr. Kloosterman noted, "Throughout the 25 years of my teaching and work at Mid-America, I have remained committed to its vision for training pastors-preachers of the highest caliber and quality. The Lord's grace has supplied strength amid weakness, and endurance amid exhausting times."

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Dr. Kloosterman's family members, including his mother, gathered on October 8 to celebrate his 25 years of service to Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

Attendees viewed a slide presentation depicting Dr. Kloosterman's 25 years at the Seminary. Rev. Wybren Oord, President of the Board, expressed the Board's appreciation and presented Dr. Kloosterman with a gift. Faculty and others expressed appreciation in letters, remarks, and testimonials, followed by singing "Great is Thy Faithfulness."

"My privilege of celebrating 25 years of service was never a solo endeavor," said Dr. Kloosterman. "I have many people to thank, including my colleagues and coworkers, my children and especially my wife, but above all, the Lord who has enabled all of us together to celebrate this milestone."



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