

PRESIDENT

SEARCH PROSPECTUS



MID-AMERICA
REFORMED SEMINARY





MID-AMERICA REFORMED SEMINARY

April 12, 2022

To Prospective Candidates for President of Mid-America Reformed Seminary

Dear Brother in Christ,

The Board of Mid-America Reformed Seminary is pleased to announce the search for the next President of Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

We are grateful for the many years of faithful service of our current President, Dr. Cornel Venema, who has been teaching at the seminary since 1988, serving as its President since 2001. As Dr. Venema approaches retirement we are in need of someone to build on that work as Mid-America Reformed Seminary enters a new phase of preparing students for the ministry of the gospel.

Mid-America Reformed Seminary is enjoying a time of growth in its student body, programs, and campus located in Dyer, Indiana. In answer to many prayers, we are grateful to God for giving us many gifts: a student body zealous for the extension of Christ's kingdom through gospel ministry, a dedicated faculty faithful to Scripture as summarized in the Reformed Confessions, as well as generous churches and donors that have steadfastly supported the seminary in the development of its vision over many years.

As we move forward into our next season of training servants of Christ's Church for the ministry of the Word and sacraments, we encourage you to review our presidential search materials. If you believe that God has equipped you to lead Mid-America Reformed Seminary in fulfilling its mission, please send your application to info@midamerica.edu.

May the King of the church bless you in all your service to Him and His Kingdom.

In Christ's service,

The Presidential Search Committee

Mid-America Reformed Seminary

MID-AMERICA REFORMED SEMINARY DISTINCTIVES

Our Mission Statement

Mid-America Reformed Seminary serves 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. We also provide solid theological training for others among God's people whose life calling may be enhanced by theological education.

As our students engage in ministry life while pursuing studies, they encounter a vigorous curriculum offering courses in biblical, theological, ecclesiastical, and ministerial studies. This solid grounding in biblical doctrine is foundational in the training of godly men as they prepare to serve in the ministry of the Word and sacraments with a servant's heart.

Our Core Distinctives

Scripturally Committed: We are wholeheartedly committed to the supreme authority and complete truthfulness of the Word of God – the Old and New Testaments – which are the standard for everything we do.

Creedally and Confessionally Informed: The historic Christian creeds coupled with the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards set the parameters for our course of instruction.

Gospel Centered: It is our core conviction that Christ builds his church by his Spirit and Word. The proclamation of the gospel of Christ and his saving work lies at the core of the church's mission in the world.

Pastorally Focused: We exist to serve the church. A healthy church depends on the faithful ministry of God's Word. Our mission is to provide the best training possible for students who are preparing for gospel ministry.



Religious Affiliation

Mid-America is closely associated with confessional Reformed and Presbyterian churches; however, it is not governed by the rules of any denomination. All members of Mid-America's Association and the Board of Trustees, which governs the Seminary and its activities, and the members of the faculty, are wholeheartedly committed to the Holy Scriptures as the infallible and inerrant Word of God; and in conformity with the Word, to the ecumenical creeds of Christendom (the Apostles', Athanasian, and Nicene Creeds); and to the following Reformation Confessions: the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort, and the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Accreditation

Mid-America Reformed Seminary is a member of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. ATS, through its commission on accrediting, is recognized by the United States Department of Education and by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation for the accreditation of graduate professional theological schools in the United States.

Accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, and the following degree programs are approved: MDiv, MTS.

Mid-America Reformed Seminary History

More than forty years ago, eight pastors from the Christian Reformed Church met weekly for fellowship at the Iron Horse restaurant in Sheldon, IA. They discussed the need to equip men for ministry with confessional awareness and gospel preaching. After several months, they decided to begin a new seminary.

The concept became reality during 1981. A facility near Orange City came up for sale in March. An organizational meeting was held on April 21 at the Chicago O'Hare Hilton. Seventy guests from as far as Florida and California approved the proposal for a new seminary, pledged support, and formed the Mid-America Reformed Seminary Association.



Dr. Cornelis P. Venema became a member of the faculty when he accepted a position as Associate Professor of Dogmatics in 1988. He was inaugurated as President in September of 2001 and also serves as Professor of Doctrinal Studies. He has witnessed the Seminary's service expand among NAPARC churches and beyond.

In 1995, the Seminary relocated to the Chicago area, with the goal of enhancing Mid-America's ability to serve a wider constituency of churches that cherish the Reformed confessions. The Seminary's current location in Dyer Indiana is uniquely near two major international airports, a world-class city, beautiful natural resources, and is centrally located near many reformed and presbyterian churches. While the

relocation expanded the institution's reach, it still continues to provide what it always has – solid seminary training that is biblically and confessionally sound, and always ministerially and vocationally focused.

The Seminary was able to begin 2000 debt-free. At the “Going Throughout the Earth” celebration on October 29, 2000, several hundred Seminary friends witnessed the burning of the mortgage and praised God for His faithfulness. The Seminary remains debt free today and is actively exploring development opportunities for the remaining 22 acres it owns.

The need to pursue accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) became evident, and in 2010, Mid-America was granted such accreditation. Recently, Mid-America received the longest period of accreditation (10 years) from ATS.

In recent years, the Board and Faculty have given considerable attention to how we can best prepare our students to be faithful as missionary-pastors. Since Christ gathers, defends, and preserves His church by means of His Spirit and Word (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 12), ministers are called not only to defend and preserve the churches they serve in the unity of the true faith. They are also called to a ministry of gathering and enfolding the lost. For this reason, the Board recently established the Center for Missions & Evangelism under the direction of Dr. Eric Watkins (OPC).



REFLECTIONS ON THE POSITION BY THE CURRENT PRESIDENT

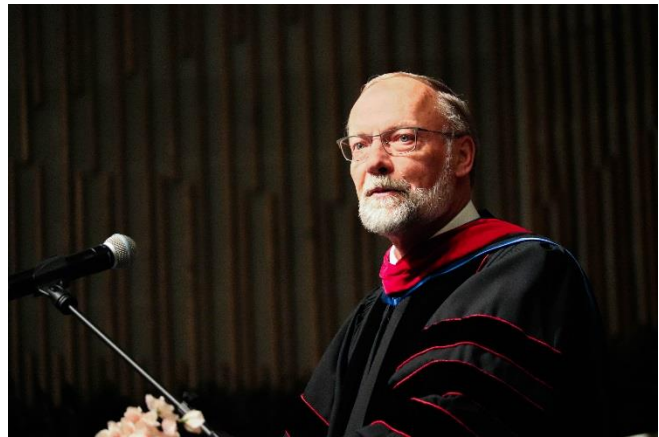
From the time of its founding in 1981, Mid-America Reformed Seminary has sought to serve Christ and his church by assisting in the formation and preparation of servant-pastors for the Kingdom of God. Our primary purpose is to train students for the gospel ministry of Jesus Christ, but we also provide theological training for others among God's people whose life calling may be enhanced by theological education.

In the early history of Mid-America Reformed Seminary, the founders were committed to a governmental structure that featured a strong Board of Trustees that was entrusted with the authority to ensure that the institution remained faithful to its stated purpose and confessional commitments. Faculty members were assigned distinct administrative functions and were expected to work under the authority and oversight of the Board. A collegial relationship and collaboration among the faculty was prized. The Seminary did not have a president with the authority and mandate to serve as the institution's chief executive officer. Rather, faculty members served two-year terms as "Dean of Faculty" and this position rotated among all of its full-time members.

After the seminary moved from Northwest Iowa to Dyer, Indiana, in 1995, the Board of Trustees decided that the institution needed a full-time president who would serve not only as a member of the Faculty but also as the chief administrative officer. The model for the presidency was not crafted after that of a chief executive officer in a business enterprise, but that of a pastor-theologian who would be responsible for the seminary's administration while remaining a faculty member with regular teaching responsibilities. The seminary's president was expected to be wholeheartedly committed to the school's stated purpose and to serve alongside his faculty colleagues. As a full-time member of the Faculty, I was appointed to be the first president of the institution and inaugurated into the position in September of 2001. Though the appointment of a president represented a significant change in the seminary's administrative structure, it did not represent a fundamental change in the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the seminary's faculty and staff. The Board continued to act as the body responsible for establishing policy and procedures for ensuring the seminary's faithfulness to its purpose and aims. But it did assign to the president the responsibility of ensuring that the school's operations were in conformity to long-standing Board policies and decisions.

I rehearse this history to provide a context for several observations that I wish to make regarding the profile of the president that Mid-America needs at this important moment in its history.

In the first place, Mid-America needs a president who is thoroughly acquainted with its unique identity, as well as its biblical and confessional commitments. In order for Mid-America to enjoy the continued support and loyalty of its supporting constituency, the new president needs to be enthusiastically and wholeheartedly committed to the core values of the institution: a high view of the authority and infallibility of the Bible, the conviction that the historic creeds and confessions of the Reformed churches constitute a subordinate standard for the seminary's classroom instruction and teaching, and a resolve to serve the



churches by providing the students with a classic theological curriculum that furnishes them for the office of the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. The Board of Trustees and the seminary's constituency desire a President who enjoys their confidence in these respects and is an articulate and trustworthy proponent of the institution's core commitments.

In the second place, Mid-America needs a president who enjoys the respect of his faculty colleagues, and who is competent to teach within the framework of the seminary's long-standing commitment to an integration of classroom instruction and pastoral formation through the Ministerial Training Program. The President must be a competent administrator, who works collaboratively with the faculty and staff. But even more importantly, he must be a pastor-theologian who can competently contribute to the seminary's aim to furnish its students with a rigorous theological curriculum and an equally thorough preparation for the ministerial dimensions of pastoral ministry in the churches.

And in the third place, Mid-America needs a president who can lead the institution at a particularly important moment in its history. In recent years, Mid-America has experienced an increase in student enrollment, launched a Center for Missions and Evangelism (CME), and embarked upon a program of expanding the seminary's facilities to meet a number of anticipated needs. The expansion of the seminary's facilities includes a significant expansion of the seminary's library, the addition of a new class-room auditorium, the provision of additional office and conference space, and the building of on-site student housing. In order for these initiatives to be successful, the new president will be required to work collaboratively with the office of advancement in soliciting the monies required to achieve these goals. In particular, the new president will need to be an enthusiastic proponent of the CME, assisting the Director in representing it to the seminary's constituents and securing their partnership in realizing its goals.

Although the profile of what Mid-America needs in a new president at this moment in its history may seem daunting, I would like to emphasize how these needs represent a unique opportunity for enlarging and enriching the seminary's service to the churches. I cannot remember a time in my thirty-plus years of service at Mid-America that was as encouraging for the seminary's future as the present moment. The next president of Mid-America will not embark upon his service to the school in a period of decline, but in a time of expansion and growth. What the school desires to find in a new president is a servant-leader who comes to the institution, not to be an agent of radical change and re-ordering of priorities, but to be a visionary proponent of the seminary's longstanding commitment to a combination of classical theological formation in the basics of biblical and Reformed theology and ministerial formation for fruitful service in the ministry of the gospel in the church.



Dr. Cornelis P. Venema

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN IDEAL CANDIDATE

1. Heartily committed to the Reformed Confessions as an expression of his own belief.
2. A minister of a NAPARC denomination who shows commitment to and love for the life and ministry of the church.
3. Knowledgeable of and firmly committed to the mission and ethos of Mid-America Reformed Seminary.
4. Possesses an excellent academic pedigree in order to serve on and help lead the faculty, preferably with an earned doctoral degree and teaching experience in higher education.
5. Humble with a servant-like manner and balanced demeanor, exhibiting an ability to work effectively with people of diverse opinions and resolve conflict without polarization.
6. Able to cultivate cordial and effective relationships with Mid-America's core constituency.
7. Able to define and promote a healthy vision for the institution and to facilitate both short- and long-term planning to accomplish that vision.
8. Demonstrates proven leadership ability: able to define an effective institutional structure, identify people to fit various roles within it, provide clear communication and resources to enable people to carry out their roles, provide oversight, evaluation, and accountability, and make wise changes when needed.



PRESIDENTIAL JOB DESCRIPTION

Description

The President is the chief executive officer of the Seminary.

Responsibilities

The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Seminary, responsible to the Board of Trustees for advancing the school's purpose by developing and implementing institutional policies and administrative structures in collaboration with the Board of Trustees, Faculty, students and administrative staff.

Qualifications

- 1) Should ordinarily be able to serve as a member of the Faculty, filling a position of demonstrated need, having the ability to teach seminary courses.
- 2) Should ordinarily have an academic degree commensurate with other Faculty members.
- 3) Should ordinarily have successful pastoral experience in a confessionally Reformed congregation or congregations.
- 4) Must be a member of a Reformed church holding to the Three Forms of Unity and/or the Westminster standards. Must give unequivocal commitment to the Reformed standards.
- 5) Must understand and give wholehearted commitment to vision and purpose of Mid-America Reformed Seminary. Must be a recognized member and thinker of the extended Reformed community.
- 6) Must be a gifted and winsome communicator who is able to convincingly convey the vision and purpose of the Seminary to the Seminary's constituent community.
- 7) Must be an able administrator who works well with Seminary faculty and staff.
- 8) Has the ability to understand basic business finances, budgets, control of spending, and how to achieve financial goals.
- 9) Must be a good public speaker.
- 10) Must have the demeanor of a servant-leader.

Administrative

- 1) Shall oversee and coordinate the general operations of the Seminary including the supervision of Faculty and staff.
- 2) Shall oversee the management of administrative staff functions including: hiring, evaluations, job descriptions, compensation review, office policies, and record-keeping.
- 3) Shall oversee the management of building and grounds.

- 4) Shall ensure an annual budget is prepared in cooperation with the Finance Committee and Board Treasurer.
- 5) Shall ensure adherence to administrative directives of the Board, Seminary Handbooks (Board/Faculty Handbook, Employee Handbook, Student Handbook, etc), and Seminary By-laws by Seminary personnel.
- 6) Shall ensure that high Christian standards are maintained at the Seminary.
- 7) Requires some travel in fulfilling responsibilities in the area of Seminary advancement and promotion.

Financial Oversight Development

- 1) Shall work with the Vice President of Advancement to ensure the work of financial development is accomplished.
- 2) Shall oversee spending to ensure compliance with the established budget. Shall ensure the Board Finance Committee is notified of any budget compliance problems.

Promotion

- 1) Shall oversee the work of the Seminary advancement and marketing staff.
- 2) Shall make himself available to represent the Seminary on special occasions.

Faculty

- 1) Shall ordinarily be a voting member of the Faculty, with the opportunity for teaching, research, and writing. He shall be the principal channel of communication between the Faculty and the Board.
- 2) Oversee the faculty development process as outlined in the Board and Faculty Handbook.
 - a) Shall ensure members of the faculty are engaged in continuing education depending upon their faculty level/ranking, and the teaching requirements of the Seminary.
 - b) Shall oversee Board requirements for faculty sabbaticals, scholarships and study leaves with approval of the Board.
 - c) Shall oversee Seminary policy regarding faculty reporting requirements, timely evaluations, and contract renewal.
 - d) Shall ordinarily meet annually with each member of the Faculty to review extra-curricular activities, with a view to making recommendations that would guard against the Faculty's over-commitment to extra-curricular activities.

Curriculum Development

Shall ensure a periodic review of the curriculum is conducted.

Long-Range Planning

- 1) Shall provide strategic analysis in the development of the Seminary's long-range plan. Shall, in consultation with the Seminary's Long-Range Planning Committee, ensure that the Seminary's long-range plan is implemented.
- 2) Shall stay abreast of developments and changes within, as well as future needs of, the Seminary's ecclesiastical community.

Committee Assignment

The President shall be an ex-officio member of the following committees

- 1) Executive Committee
- 2) Education Committee
- 3) Finance Committee
- 4) Faculty Development Committee
- 5) Long-Range Planning Committee

Accountability

The President shall be accountable to the Seminary Board of Trustees with interim oversight by the Executive Committee. He shall submit a written report of his work to the Board whenever it meets. He shall also submit regular written reports of his work to the Executive Committee.

The President, in the event of his desire to leave the office, shall inform the Board of his intention at least six months prior to the effective date of his resignation.

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain from personal experience what it means to be a Christian.
2. Explain from personal experience your practices of nurturing your faith life.
3. Why are you a member of your particular denomination?

VIEW OF SEMINARY EDUCATION

1. What is the purpose of seminary education?
2. What should be the relationship between seminary education and the church?
3. How do you define/describe the “call to be a Minister of the Word?”
4. Describe how you would seek to promote prophetic zeal and personal godliness among seminary students.
5. Why would you wish to teach at Mid-America Reformed Seminary?
6. How do you understand the integration of classroom learning with the Ministerial Apprenticeship Program (MAP) and how would you, as President, promote and support this?

THEOLOGICAL POSITION

1. What is theology?
2. How are theology and the Reformed confessions related?
3. What is it to be “reformed” in terms of theological method?
4. How are theology and the church related?
5. How are the confessions and the Scriptures related?
6. What is Reformed preaching and proper Reformed worship?
7. What is the church?
8. What is your view of ecclesiastical office?
9. What are your theological/biblical positions on the following:
 - a. The role of women in the service of Christ, particularly the question of the ordination of women to church office

- b. Homosexuality, gender issues
- c. Children at the Lord's Table
- d. Divorce and remarriage
- e. The "charismatic" movement, including the "cessation/non-cessationist" view of the gifts of the Spirit
- f. Ecumenicity
- g. The interpretation of Genesis 1-11
- h. The doctrine of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace
- i. The Mosaic economy "in some sense" a republication of the covenant of works
- j. The law-Gospel distinction (the role of the law in the Christian life)
- k. Christian schooling
- l. Lodge membership and the Christian
- m. Theonomy and reconstructionism
- n. The practice of confessional (catechism) preaching
- o. The "millennium" of Revelation 20:1-6
- p. Place of preaching in the church's life
- q. Theistic evolution
- r. The inspiration and the infallibility/inerrancy of the Bible
- s. The "Federal Vision" movement
- t. The "new perspective on Paul"
- u. The "two kingdom/natural law" perspective
- v. Preaching to a hostile culture
- w. The cultural climate of "wokeness" and racial harmony specifically as espoused in critical race theory.

THE ROLE OF THE SEMINARY PRESIDENT

1. What attracted you to apply for the President position at Mid-America?
2. What do you consider your qualifications for the President position?
3. In your opinion, what is the role of the Seminary President? What is the role of the Board of Trustees?
4. Should the President make a recommendation to the board every agenda item that would require any type of board action?
5. Are you familiar with the financial accounting of an institution such as Mid-America?
6. How much of the President's time should be spent articulating a vision or strategy, versus directing the seminary's operations, versus fundraising?
7. Are there any functional roles that you think are missing here at Mid-America?