



THE HEIDELBRIEF

News from Heidelberg Theological Seminary

Alumni Issue, 2020

Where Are They Now?

Rev. Chuck Muether, Director of Advancement



Heidelberg Theological Seminary opened its doors in the fall of 2002 with one student in attendance. In the following semester, the enrollment doubled. Those two students, Scott Henry and the one writing this introduction, would graduate in 2006, becoming the inaugural alumni of a young and fledgling consistorial-overseen seminary. The next alum would not come until nine years later. To be sure, starting a seminary is an enormous undertaking and sustaining a seminary has proven to be more challenging, but the rewards are beyond measure as HTS has developed into a domestic and international school with an enrollment of over seventy students.



The members of the Zion Reformed Consistory (Menno, SD) and the founding HTS Board of Trustees with Professors Dr. Robert E. Grossmann and Dr. Warren Embree were committed to create a distinctive parsonage vocational school that excelled at training men to become ministers of God's Word. In this issue of The Heidelberg, I am pleased to present our alumni and where they are currently serving, but first let's get caught up with our founding professor, Dr. Grossmann.



From Farming to Engineering to Preaching to Broadcasting to Training to Writing to . . .

Rev. Robert E. Grossmann, PhD

[Editor's note: A retired elder from a church where Dr. Grossmann had served observed, "If there ever was a man who could fix the church's plumbing, repair his own car, hunt for his own dinner, fly his own plane to the next meeting, save many a shekel, and still preach and teach without missing a beat, it was Rev. Grossmann."]

The long and short of it is that I grew up from infancy to age 15 in Hosmer, SD, and hope to be buried there next to my paternal grandparents and infant son, Samuel. I attended the Hosmer schools through grade 9, wandered the plains hunting gophers and rabbits, worked on area farms beginning at age 7, driving a tractor for harvest because the grown men were all fighting World War 2, loved and had brotherly tussles with older brother Peter, shoveled snow in winter,

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learned the German language in which my father, Rev. Walter, preached and we spoke at home so Grandmother Mathilda could understand our conversations.

In 1952 the family moved to Shafter, CA, where Dad served as pastor of Ebenezer Reformed Church until his sudden death in September 1956 at the age of 49, just as I was beginning my second year of college at Bakersfield Junior College. After graduating from there, I continued studying Chemical Engineering at the University of California at Berkeley, where I graduated in January 1960 with a BA in Philosophy, as I added a semester of study to prepare for possible entrance into a seminary. Upon graduation I took a position as a "Physical Chemist" on a private cancer research group at Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco, where I then lived until heading to Philadelphia, PA, to attend Westminster Seminary beginning in late September 1960.

I was married to Pauline Carman on Dec. 21, 1962 and we lived in Philly until I was examined and ordained by the Eureka Classis at Ebenezer Church in Shafter where I was still a member until that point in time. Polly and I then moved from Philadelphia to Pierre, SD, where I had been a student intern the past two summers, and then spent five years as founding pastor, and began involvement in extensive radio broadcasting of sermons, devotions and Christian commentary on events and movements.

In December 1967 we moved to Artas, SD, where we lived while I served as pastor of Odessa Charge, which consisted of the Artas and Herried Reformed Churches and later added Zeeland, ND, (9 miles distant from Artas) to its charge. At Artas I continued my avocation of building and remodeling church buildings and parsonages that had begun in Pierre. In June, 1975 we moved to Lawson, MO, where we lived during the seven years I was founding pastor of Hope Reformed Church of Kansas City. In 1977 Hope Reformed Church purchased a gas station located at a strategic freeway exit in KC, and Jake Fisher and I with help from son Jonathan, and from work parties sent down by other RCUS congregations remodeled into a very suitable church building.

In 1982 we pulled up stakes again, moving to Mitchell, SD, to finish the Home Mission years of Grace Reformed Church that had also been founded in 1975. During our brief tenure in Mitchell, the congregation had a new church building erected with the church members doing the finish and much of the electrical work, into which I again put many hours. As the church was being dedicated I was encouraged by the Consistory to accept a call to teach Church History and Pastoral subjects at the recently created Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Orange City, IA, which job I started in January 1, 1986.

Heidelberg seminary to hold first graduation

FROM STAFF REPORTS

VERMILLION - Heidelberg Theological Seminary, which opened four years ago, will graduate its first class of students Friday, with exercises at 7 p.m. at Providence Reformed Church, 830 Madison St.

Scott Henry, who moved to Vermillion from Palmdale, Calif., and Chuck Muether, who has commuted from his home in Pella, Iowa, will receive their diplomas at the graduation exercises.

The graduation speaker for Heidelberg Seminary is the Rev. Vernon Pollema, pastor of Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter, Calif., and president of

the annual meetings of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States for the past 18 years.

Heidelberg Seminary opened in September 2002. Its first facility was donated by Providence Reformed Church. The seminary since has purchased and moved to a building at 905 Highway 50 in Vermillion.

Henry already has been licensed to preach by the South Central Classis of the Reformed Church and has been called to Zion Reformed Church at Menno. Muether will pursue licensure in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and is seeking a pastoral call.



In late 1992 I resigned from Mid-America and accepted a call to the Peace RCUS in rural Garner, Iowa, where I served as pastor until 2000. In June 2000, we moved to Vermillion, SD, to take up work as the founding pastor of Providence Reformed Church in that city, where I served for 13 years before officially "retiring" from the ministry at the age of 76 on Jan. 1, 2014. During the time at Vermillion I preached a radio sermon on WNAX in Yankton every Sunday, and I served as one of two founding professors at Heidelberg Theological Seminary in 2003. During these years many of my recorded seminary classes have been turned into correspondence classes for students studying them in their own countries, without having to travel to the United States.

At present I continue in active retirement, preaching, writing and serving on committees of Classis and Synod, notably as a member of the RCUS Synodical subcommittee for the Congo and of the Synodical pastor's retirement fund Investment Committee.



HTS' First Student

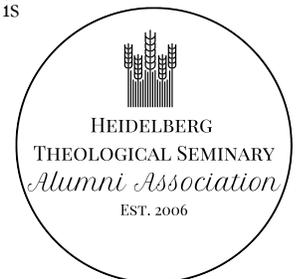
Rev. Scott Henry

Attending Heidelberg Theological Seminary was one of the great blessings of my life, which equipped me with the tools to serve as a pastor in Christ's Church. I am indebted to Dr. Bob Grossmann and Dr. Warren Embree for their time, instruction, expertise, and patience during my four years of seminary training at HTS. It was an invaluable experience in which the Lord blessed me.



My pastoral work began while I was still in seminary as I was called to serve as Stated Supply at Zion Reformed Church, Menno, SD in 2003. Upon graduation from HTS, and having sustained my licensure and ordination exams, I was ordained by the South Central Classis to serve as pastor of Zion Reformed Church, Menno, SD. I remained at Zion Reformed Church until 2011 at which time I accepted a call to Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, CA. After a few years in Lancaster, I was called by St. John's RCUS, Lincoln, NE, to serve as associate pastor and missionary to Heritage Reformed Chapel in the Omaha area. Serving as a missionary pastor was a great experience, but I quickly learned that the Lord has not gifted me to serve His Church as a missionary pastor. It was a difficult calling in many respects, but I learned much about the mission field and about my own weaknesses and shortcomings. My next calling was to Vermillion, SD, where I served for three years as pastor at Providence Reformed Church.

In March of 2017, after the death of my good friend, Pastor Darrell Kingswood, I received a call from Hope Reformed Church, Sutton, NE, to serve as their next pastor, where I continue to serve to this day. Hope Reformed Church has been a great fit for me and my wife Maria. I love serving in a small midwestern town, which is similar in size to the town where I grew up in Michigan. I have a good relationship with the members of Hope Reformed Church and can say that I relate to them extremely well. I know not what the Lord has planned for my remaining time in the Gospel ministry, but as the Proverbs teach us to plan our way in this world with an eye to God's providence, I am determined, Lord willing, to serve my remaining years in ministry at Hope Reformed Church. I love serving as a pastor at Hope Reformed Church. Yes, it has its problems, difficulties, and constant pressure and demands, but the Lord has equipped the men He has called to serve as a pastor with a spirit of dependence upon the sweet Holy Spirit of God. The Lord alone gives strength to otherwise weak men to faithfully serve Him by serving His people. Even as the Apostle Paul declared, "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.'" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).



HTS' Alumni President

Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg

I'm very thankful for the four years of study at Heidelberg Theological Seminary. What I learned there prepared me for the ministry and shaped me into the man that I am today.

After graduating from HTS in June of 2015, I was called to First Reformed Church in Herreid, SD. I have been in Herreid ever since. My beautiful wife Angie works at the law office in town, and she has a part time job doing music lessons with 8-10 children in the community. We are very happy that the Lord has brought us to this little town in upper South Dakota.

In the short 5 years of ministry in Herreid, I have experienced many joys and sorrows of being a pastor. This includes funerals, counseling, loss and gain of members, baptisms, and weddings.



Serving the OPC

Rev. Dylan Rowland

As I reflect upon my time spent studying with Heidelberg Theological Seminary, I am reminded of how incredibly blessed I was to have attended. In the providence of our most gracious God, since graduating from Heidelberg Seminary, I was installed as the minister of Word and Sacrament at Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Mansfield, Ohio. Since graduating from the Master of Divinity program, I have also continued to work towards the completion of a doctorate degree from Heidelberg Seminary. I have since completed my course work and am currently working to write and complete a dissertation. Because of a doctorate class offered at Heidelberg Seminary, my doctorate dissertation will focus on the pastoral benefits of reading and studying Charles Hodge and the so-called “early Princetonians.”

The research has been both humbling and rewarding, helping me to deepen my understanding of the Christian ministry. I am deeply thankful to the Lord for how encouraging the research has been. My family and I have been serving the congregation of Covenant Presbyterian Church for approximately three years and are thoroughly enjoying the work of ministry. In that three-year period, the Lord has also been gracious to our family, as we have multiplied from being a family of four to a family of six in just nine months. My wife and I welcomed twin boys into our family just over a year ago, and this has been a great blessing from the Lord. Once more, I am eternally grateful for the time I have spent at Heidelberg Seminary and I am looking forward to the time that remains.



Continuing the Grossmann Legacy

Rev. James Grossmann

I studied electrical engineering at Dordt College in Sioux Center, IA before doing much of my study for the ministry at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, starting in 2002. Following that course of study, in the summer of 2006, I began ministering God's Word at Salem Reformed Church in Ashley, ND as a student under care of the Northern Plains Classis. At the same time, I served as Stated Supply for Hosmer Reformed Church of Hosmer, SD, 40 miles south of Ashley.

In November of 2008, I was ordained to the ministry at the Salem Reformed Church. In 2010, I became the Stated Clerk of the Northern Plains Classis. In September of 2010, my oldest Son, Daniel was born. In September of 2013, my second son, Josiah was born. After serving Salem for seven and a half years, in February of 2014, we moved 30 miles southwest and I took up the ministry at Eureka Reformed Church, Eureka, SD. In January of 2016, I began study at Heidelberg Theological Seminary as a part of their D.Min. program. My older daughter, Joanna was born in December of 2016. While working on the D.Min, I also had the opportunity to work toward obtaining my Master of Divinity through HTS. In June of 2018, I was awarded the Master of Divinity. My youngest daughter, Abigail, was born in November of 2019. I continue to minister at Eureka Reformed Church. I have finished my classroom studies for the D.Min, and hope to finish my D.Min project and obtain the degree.



Once a Novelist Always a Novelist

Rev. Mark Bertrand

Our most recent graduate, J. Mark Bertrand, completed his M.Div. at Heidelberg in Spring 2020—though, of course, the commencement ceremony was not held until September. As a result, Mark’s “where are they now?” is not too different than where he was then! Mark is a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church in America, and has been the pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church in Sioux Falls since his ordination in 2017. What you may not know is that Mark is also a novelist. Now that he is no longer in the classroom, he has begun work on a new novel. [Editor’s note: our alum-novelist writes and thrives in the third-person. He’s a character and very much worth reading.]

