



# THE HEIDELBRIEF

News from Heidelberg Theological Seminary

Harvest Issue, 2020

## From the Classroom

Rev. Chuck Muether, Director of Advancement



Drs. Lee Johnson, J.P. Mosley, Jr., and Maynard Koerner have collaborated to produce Heidelberg seminary's first audio podcast, *From the Classroom*. Host Johnson says, "We are going to do a series of podcasts on worship."

What is unique about this podcast that might set it apart from other theological podcasts is that the focus will be on what originates from the classroom. Often scholars will detach themselves from the classroom and then pontificate on esoteric theological loci that is germane to their expertise but out of reach of laypeople's ears. Since the professors at Heidelberg are pastors, the topics will have a decidedly pastoral bent.



One objective with *From the Classroom* is to keep the subject matter real and accessible to the listening audience, so that listeners can sense how the rich material being communicated in the classroom truly connects to church life. Seminary President Koerner observes, "listeners are getting an authentic and meaningful picture of theological content being taught from the classroom from which they can connect doctrine and life." *From the Classroom* can be heard from the seminary's website and FB page.

## The Kingdom of Christ Needs Men to Proclaim

Dr. Maynard Koerner, President of Heidelberg Theological Seminary



I love it when we get to the fall season of the year. The weather is enjoyable. Nature provides beautiful colors. I still have enough farming blood in me to enjoy watching harvest take place. It is also when the next academic year kicks into full swing. Students are very much into their course work. As professors we are excited about teaching and training men for the gospel ministry.

It is also an important time of the year regarding the involvement by our constituents. A letter was recently sent to our constituents providing information as to developments and the work of the seminary. In this letter, we also ask for your prayer and financial support. This is very important at this time of the year so that we are able to get the year going in a positive direction.

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As we are all too aware, this has also been a difficult year for most if not all in a number of ways. As I mention the need for support, I am well aware that money is tight for many. We do understand.

This is also a reality for Heidelberg Seminary. Donations are slow in coming in. Yet, we do have a considerable budget which needs to be met each month. With great appreciation for our supporters, may I ask that you do consider the financial needs of the seminary. If you are at all able, please give as the Lord has blessed. We are hoping for an adequate harvest to maintain a standard of quality training.

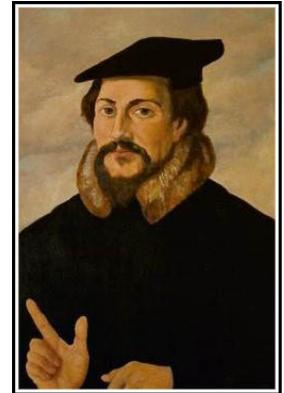


## Calvin on the Preaching Function of the Pastor

Dr. Mark Larson, Professor of Systematic Theology



The pastor according to John Calvin was to be a preacher. He, of course, understood that this is not the only task of a pastor. Calvin wrote as follows in the constitution that he prepared for the church in Geneva: “With regard to pastors . . . their office is to proclaim the Word of God for the purpose of instructing, admonishing, exhorting, and reproving . . . to administer the sacraments, and to exercise fraternal discipline together with the elders.”<sup>1</sup> With respect to these three responsibilities, Calvin had the most to say about teaching. The reason for this emphasis is due to the fact that the pastor “is elected principally for the sake of teaching.”<sup>2</sup>



Who was the “good pastor” in Calvin’s thinking? It was the man who was “diligent in teaching.”<sup>3</sup> He gave this exhortation: “Let the ministers of churches faithfully attend to the ministry of the Word, not adulterating the teaching of salvation, but delivering it pure and undefiled to God’s people.”<sup>4</sup>

The primacy that Calvin gave to preaching as a pastoral function is reflected in his polemical statements regarding the ministry of the Roman Catholic Church. His problem was that “the Pope and his attendant train are wanting not merely in fidelity in the discharge of the office, but also in the ministry itself.”<sup>5</sup> They “disdainfully throw away from themselves the office of teaching.”<sup>6</sup> The inferior clergy aligned with the papacy were no better. While the bishops,



“make their appearance in a theatrical dress,” “a horned mitre, a ring richly set in jewels, or a silver cross, and other trifles,” they “banish from themselves the ministry of teaching.”<sup>7</sup> In terms of the ministry offered by the priests, the situation was not any better. “In promoting priests,” Calvin remarked, “we see how the ignorant, and those utterly devoid both of learning and prudence, are inducted without discrimination.” He added, “Even in hiring a mule-driver, more regard is paid to his past life than in choosing a priest.”<sup>8</sup>

Calvin’s teaching on the preaching function of the pastor has several implications. First, it should be obvious that the task of biblical exposition and application means that the pastoral call is highly demanding. Even a genius like Calvin spoke about the pastoral office as “a laborious and difficult charge” and a work which was “toilsome and full of difficulty.”<sup>9</sup> It follows then that we must continually uphold our pastors before the throne of grace in prayer.

Second, we must appreciate the fact that the teaching responsibility of the pastor means that he must give himself to the constant study of Scripture. Calvin insisted that study is a pastoral imperative: “All godly teachers . . . must study diligently, as not to ascend the pulpit till they have been fully prepared.”<sup>10</sup> If we want edifying sermons, we as congregants must realize that our pastors need to have significant time to prepare good sermons.

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Third, Calvin understood that pastors ought to be able to minister in a supportive framework. In his farewell address to the ministers of Geneva, Calvin reflected upon the special help that his friend Theodore Beza would need in the coming days. With Calvin’s imminent death, Beza had been chosen moderator of the Company of Pastors. Calvin accordingly exhorted his ministerial brethren to stand with Beza, backing him with their full support. “Advise how to relieve him,” he said, “for the charge is great, and so weighty that he might well sink under the load. But advise how to support him.”<sup>11</sup> May we remember that our pastors are no less human than we are and need kindness and encouragement from the people to whom they minister. Indeed, what could be more appropriate than for a congregation to love its pastor? Calvin stated, “For as the doctrine of the gospel is lovely, so it is befitting that the minister of it should be loved.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, “Ecclesiastical Ordinances,” in *The Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, trans. and ed. Philip E. Hughes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 36. <sup>2</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle to Titus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 295. <sup>3</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on First Epistle to Timothy*, 101. <sup>4</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), II.8.46. <sup>5</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 151. <sup>6</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 383. <sup>7</sup> Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Epistle to Timothy*, 80. <sup>8</sup> John Calvin, “The Necessity of Reforming the Church,” in *Tracts and Treatises*, vol. 1, ed. Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 204. <sup>9</sup> Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Epistle of Timothy*, 73-4. <sup>10</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 52. <sup>11</sup> John Calvin, *Letters of John Calvin*, vol. 4, trans. and ed. Jules Bonnet (New York: Lenox Hill, 1972), 375-6. <sup>12</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 293



## Harvesting God’s Goodness in the Philippines

Edmund M. Delos Reyes, Minister of God at Faithful Covenant Reformed Church and the Pearl of the Orient Covenant Reformed Church, Student of HTS

In God’s providence, Heidelberg Theological Seminary which has this good reputation of sound teachings and faithfulness to the Reformed traditions came to the Philippines to be a blessing to the church for training Filipino Ministers and leaders in preparation for ministries and furtherance of the reformation.

One time, God gave me an opportunity to visit Westminster Seminary in California. I was accompanied by Rev. Gil Baloy, RCUS Minister in San Diego just to see the seminary back in 2013. I was so excited to see how Reformed churches and schools live out their respective callings. That was my first time to attend a Reformed church worship and also to see a Reformed school even though I had been a minister for 13 years at that time. I desired to study and learn more of the Reformed faith but as I found out the cost of studying, it there was not practical for me, as a Filipino minister.

The other issue was the cost of one person to study in that place may have been possible equal to 10 to 20 ministers, if the training would be done in the Philippines.

Furthermore, we didn’t have the money to study and also the time that would be spent away from our congregations. Therefore, studying in a foreign land was not an immediate and effective way for training Filipino ministers, as far as I was concerned.



Just like the time God saved our country from being a Muslim nation in His providence, now God through Heidelberg Theological Seminary has blessed us, as Filipino Ministers to be trained in sound theology, practical ministry and faithful administering the church in the way of the Scripture.

Training on the ground of solid Reformed faith will make the future of our churches give glory to our God. The future of the Church of Christ is glorious and that would only happen if the Word of God would take over and eradicate any words and traditions of men.



I thank God, for the Reformed Church, I thank God for the Heidelberg Theological Seminary in the Philippines, I thank God for the RCUS denomination who never held back their hands in helping us to promote strong Reformed churches in the Philippines. I thank God for His never-ending love to His people and for the great harvest that awaits. Amen!

# Classroom Peek— Harvesting OT Studies—The Pentateuch

Dr. J.P. Mosley, Jr., Professor of Systematic Theology and Biblical Studies

In this fall semester at Heidelberg Theological Seminary, some of our students have had the opportunity to study the first five books of the Bible also known as the Pentateuch, Torah, the Law, or the five books of Moses. These books are covered in the first half of the semester. The second half of the semester is dedicated to studying the Old Testament historical books such as, Joshua, Judges, First and Second Samuel, etc.



As we have walked through the books of Moses, we have gleaned many wonderful gospel-centered truths. One truth stands out. Moses wrote what he saw and heard from God. In Exodus, we find Moses encountering God at the burning bush, learning the personal, covenantal name of God, YHWH, and finally, being commissioned to rescue God's people, Israel, from the severe enslavement and bondage they faced while sojourning in Egypt. We see this as a fulfillment to the prophetic word of Joseph in Genesis 50:24-25. We see clearly in the five books of Moses that God keeps His Word. God is a promise keeper.

Continuing to walk through Exodus, one sees God proclaim war upon the nations that had enslaved His people. The ten plagues are God's way of destroying the economy of Egypt, proving the foolishness of idolatry, and revealing to those in Egypt and Israel that He is the one true God. The battle continues even out to the Red Sea where God safeguards His people through the sea on dry ground, and just when they are safely on the other side standing on the shore looking back, God allows the Egyptian Army to follow them, only to trap them in the muddy water and eventually drowning them in the Red Sea. In a matter of weeks, God has destroyed the Egyptian economy and military. Egypt will not bounce back from this war against God until around the time of Solomon, almost 500 years later.



Following this battle with Egypt, God takes His people to His mountain. He gives to them several wonderful gracious gifts which sets us up for the next three books of Moses. We already have Genesis and Exodus. It is in Exodus where God established the institution of church. The church was seen from family to family previously. The church now has a constitution, ceremony, and polity.

We find discussions on this constitution, ceremony, and polity continued in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. We also see God give to His people the gift of the Law. While some see this as bringing God's people back under a covenantal relationship like the one God had with Adam, this understanding is simply impossible when the text is correctly exegeted. God has redeemed His people. When did God redeem Adam? The beginning of the Law is redemption. Even Jesus points this out when quoting from Deuteronomy. The Law was love God and love of neighbor. Yes, it is impossible to be saved by the Law, which is the point of Exodus. Prior to the giving of the Law, God has already redeemed His people. Some of them are already saved, and some never believed in the first place. The Law was given to drive them to the coming Seed of the Woman, Jesus Christ, and to provide for them a helping hand as to what pleases God. We learn the Law has three functions then: first, to point out and restrain sin; second, to drive us toward Christ; and third, to help us understand how we ought to live as consequences of our faith in God. It is these consequences which Moses begins to explain and illustrate through the rest of his books.

In Leviticus, we find the ceremonies, church order, and the lifestyle God's people ought to live. Because of the Gospel, Moses points we should pursue holiness in our lives. In Numbers, Moses accounts for the battles, forty years wandering, and so much more. Then in Deuteronomy, Moses gives to the Old Testament church his last sermon. Once again, point the people to the prophet who would be so much better than he was- namely Jesus Christ.

So far, this class has been enjoyable, edifying, and enriching for not only our lives, but also for the potential Gospel ministers sitting in the room. If the description of this class has been intriguing to you, please contact the faculty of Heidelberg Theological Seminary to find out ways you can begin to study the Bible along with us.

