

understand the Puritan Calvinism of the Confession. The principles of divine right (*jure divino*) Presbyterianism and the regulative principle in worship are outlined in contrast to congregationalism and the *ad hoc* worship approach of Anglicanism. Then each chapter of the Confession is read, expounded, discussed and applied. Once more, the riches of redemptive history are reflected and enlarged via the superb Reformed theology and Presbyterian polity of the Westminster Standards.



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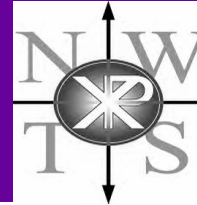
ANGELS OF THE ADVENT



Angels sang at the first creation (Job 38:7); they sang again at the inauguration of the new creation (Lk. 2:14); they will sing once more at the consummation (Mt. 25:31). Hallelujah! The Incarnation of our Savior has come (Mt. 1:21). Our story has been wonderfully—in fact, eternally—changed!

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NORTHWEST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
NEWSLETTER



Our Story

It is my privilege to teach homiletics here at Northwest Theological Seminary. I have also been teaching homiletics for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in their Ministerial Training Institute. This whole experience has been very enjoyable as I watch students for the ministry and men in the ministry light up with joy at the prospect of effectively preaching the Word of God.



In my teaching, I use the Biblical Theological model, teaching Christ from all of the Scriptures. This has been instructive for my students. To my surprise, however, I have found that some people object to this model. I couldn't understand why at first. After all, doesn't everyone believe in preaching Christ from the whole Bible? Don't even non-Reformed people say that? Then, surely, for us who are Reformed and covenantal this is expected.

My surprise may be because of my training. I studied for the ministry at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia in the early 1950's. At that time, the influence of Geerhardus Vos was very strong among the faculty, since a number of the professors had studied under him or had been his colleagues at Princeton Seminary. His books were used in many of the courses and if not his books, his important insights were there. We heard Biblical Theology in New Testament with Ned

Stonehouse, in Old Testament with Meredith Kline, in Systematic Theology with John Murray and in Apologetics with Cornelius Van Til.

When it came to homiletics, taught by Ed Clowney, the description of the course in the catalog was this: "Homiletics. Biblical-theological study of the character and contents of the ministry of the Word; method in sermon construction and preparation; practice in textual analysis and sermon formulation; preaching before class." There was no question about where the class was coming from and where it was going.

Prior to seminary, I had come out of liberalism, through dispensationalism, and into Reformed thought by studying the Bible. Therefore, this Biblical Theological emphasis struck a very responsive chord in me. I believed that the Bible was the inerrant Word of God and was the only authority for faith and practice. But now I understood that its message came through various genres of literature in progressive revelation that culminates in Jesus Christ. Therefore, I was prepared to preach Christ and Christ alone from the whole Bible. And that is what I have been trying to do for the past 45 years. Thank you, Westminster, for my excellent education!

And, after all, isn't seeing Christ in the whole

Bible what Jesus taught his disciples to do shortly before his ascension into heaven? We read in Luke 24:44ff., "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." And isn't all our preaching to be structured in the light of this? For he goes on to say, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

That is precisely what we are seeking to do here at NWTS. We want the students to preach Christ in every sermon. We want them to preach with the power of the Holy Spirit and the conviction of faith. We want them to call their listeners to repentance and forgiveness of sins. Please pray that we shall be able to accomplish our goal and that Jesus Christ will be exalted.

—J. Peter Vosteen



OPC INSTALLATION SERVICE FOR REV. DENNISON

Rev. James T. Dennison, Jr. was installed as a Teacher of the Word laboring at Northwest Theological Seminary by the Presbytery of the Northwest of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church on October 26, 2001. At the meeting of the Presbytery of the Northwest, he preached a sermon and sustained a theological examination on the floor before being warmly received into the OPC. At the Installation service, the moderator of the presbytery, Rev. Larry Conard of Faith OPC in Grants Pass,

Oregon, read the instructions and the installation questions from the OPC Book of Church Order. Rev. Randy Bergquist preached the sermon entitled "Two Kings, One Throne" from Luke 2:1-20. Fellow colleague on the faculty at NWTS, Rev. J. Peter Vosteen of Lynnwood OPC issued the charge to Rev. Dennison, and Rev. Robert Van Kooten gave a profound charge to the presbytery. The service was marked by the participation of several former students of Rev. Dennison who now serve as pastors and elders in the Washington area. Among them were: Rev. Randy Bergquist of Emmanuel OPC in Kent; Rev. Mark Collingridge of Covenant OPC in Pasco; Rev. Andy Elam, Associate Pastor of Emmanuel OPC in Kent; Mr. Scott Hunter, Ruling Elder of Emmanuel OPC in Kent; Rev. David Inks of Westminster OPC in Monroe; Rev. Marc Renkema of Trinity OPC in Bothell; and Rev. Robert Van Kooten of Sovereign Grace OPC in Oak Harbor.



FALL 2001 CLASSES

Patristics
Our study of the church fathers began with a survey of the methods of famous church historians (F.C. Baur, A. von Harnack, W. Bauer, W. Pauck, J. Pelikan). We then began to read the primary sources: Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Melito of Sardis, Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius. We have also examined the parallel history of the Roman Empire from 31 B.C. to 325 A.D. with careful attention to

the interface between imperial and Christian history. Heretics such as the Docetists, Marcion, Montanus, the Gnostics, and Arius have been studied too. The fidelity of the early church to the redemptive historical paradigm of the New Testament has been kept in view throughout.

Homiletics
In the first semester of this course, the student is taught: 1.) the nature of preaching as a message from God in a redemptive historical setting that centers in Jesus Christ; 2.) the person of the preacher as called of God with the characteristics of a steward, a shepherd and a servant; 3.) the preparation and delivery of a sermon. The course is concluded with the student working through various texts and their structure. This is followed by preparing and delivering two sermons which are critiqued by the instructor.

Greek
The primary focus of first semester Greek has been to attain a foundational knowledge of Greek morphology, vocabulary and grammar in order to read and study the New Testament in its original language. We have also been pursuing this objective with the view of dealing knowledgeably with Greek lexical and grammatical tools for future study in the text. We will proceed with a more in-depth study of verbal aspect and syntax in the next semester.

Vos Readings
Geerhardus Vos describes his approach to biblical theology in his 1894 address at Princeton Theological Seminary. In this foundational manifesto, Vos outlines the organic connectedness in the history of redemption, describing the unfolding plan of salvation as a flower blooming from bud to

blossom. At every point, the "new order" of God's eternal dwelling place (i.e., heaven) is displayed in his saving revelation to his people—Old Testament and New Testament alike.

Vos's second seminal essay is his discussion of the eschatological aspect of Paul's doctrine of the Holy Spirit (published in 1912 on the centennial of Princeton Theological Seminary). The risen Christ communes with his redeemed people by means of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit brings the dimite of heaven to the heart and life of the believer. These two essays are formative for the Christian understanding of the Scriptures—and they are formative to every department in the curriculum of NWTS.

Old Testament Introduction
The Old Testament prepares for the New as the promise of Christ prepares for the advent of our Savior. We have been tracing the gracious promise of the coming of our Savior from book to book through the old covenant. Beginning with the geography of the Near East, the historical context of the Ancient Near East was next surveyed from 2600 B.C. (Ur Dynasties) to 31 B.C. (Roman conquest of Palestine). Connecting Biblical material with the historical outline via archaeological and chronological data, we derive a broad grid for the Old Testament history of redemption. Our final step is to go book-by-book from Genesis to Malachi providing details on structure, context and the redemptive-historical or Christocentric message.

Westminster Confession of Faith
The historical background of the Westminster Assembly from Henry VIII (1537) to the Restoration of Charles II (1660) is surveyed in an attempt to