

FACULTY UPDATE

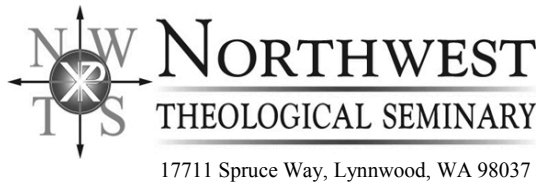
Academic Dean, Jim Dennison, teaches the “Life of David” class on 2 Samuel on Thursday nights. The class has been well-attended, and has been enriching the local Reformed community. You may listen to the series and download handouts at www.nwts.edu. He has been pulpit supply at Oak Harbor OPC, Bothell OPC, Kent OPC and Burlington URC. He continues working on the 4-volume *Reformed Confessions in English Translation*, published by Reformation Heritage Books. The 2nd volume is scheduled for release this spring.

Rev. J. Peter Vosteen continues his full-time pastoral work at Lynnwood OPC, as well as filling local pulpits in the CRC, URC, OPC, and other independent Reformed congregations. He is also an instructor in Homiletics for the Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC (MTIOPC).

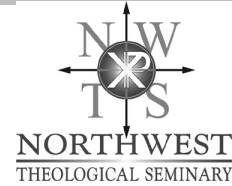
Prof. Scott Sanborn is teaching on a regular basis at Westminster Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Everett, WA, in addition to working on writing projects and book reviews for the seminary’s journal, *Kerux*.

Dr. Bill Dennison continues teaching at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, GA. He is also an instructor in Apologetics for the MTIOPC. In addition, he has recently completed two recent monographs on Rudolph Bultmann and on Interdisciplinary Studies.

*****Please visit www.nwts.edu for schedule and class updates; downloadable lectures and more!*****



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NORTHWEST THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY NEWSLETTER

His story is...

Our Story

BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH

Ever since the fall, there has been only one way for sinners, who deserve nothing but wrath and curse, to relate to God. All of God’s blessings, whether temporal bread or eternal salvation, can come to us in only one way: by grace through faith. The whole history of redemption consistently declares that great reality. As Hebrews 11:2 reminds us, “the people of old received their commendation” not by their works or deeds of merit, but by faith alone.

This call to live by grace through faith unifies all of God’s dealings with man—from our expulsion from the earthly Eden to our entrance into the heavenly Paradise. We see a glimmer of this in God’s revelation to Adam after the fall. Surrounded by the sentence of death (Gen. 2:17, 3:19), Adam looked in faith to the “Seed of the Woman” to come (3:15). He showed his faith by naming his wife “Eve, because she was the mother of all the *living*” (3:20). There would be *life*, not death, for the sons of Adam through the Seed of the Woman.

This call sounds forth even more clearly in the Patriarch Abraham. Having received the promise about the Seed to come, he “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). Abraham, a dead sinner (Rom. 4:19), was counted righteous through faith in this Seed who would bring life from his dead body. Yes, that faith would be tested through obedience (Gen. 22), but even this was simply the fruit of his faith and the proof of its genuineness (Heb. 11:17-19; James 2:21-23). There can be no merits for one who lives by grace alone, through faith alone!

This call to live by grace through faith continued in the time of Moses, even though God’s law was trumpeted loudly from Mt. Sinai. Yet that call came to a generation that was (by and large) unbelieving and corrupt. Hebrews reminds us, “...good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because it did not meet with faith in the hearers” (Heb. 4:2). Though

(Continued on page 3)

We would like to humbly thank all of our generous donors for the many gifts we have received throughout this past year. It is only because of the grace of God shown to us through your support that we are able to continue our important work of training men for the Gospel ministry. May the Lord bless you richly in your service to his kingdom.

NEW STUDENT PROFILE

We are pleased to have Stephen MacKenzie join us as an M.Div. student under the special student category in the catalogue. Stephen is an engaging student who is very stimulating to have in class. We are encouraged by his discipline, organization, and work ethic—skills fine-tuned through his study of classical guitar and his work in computer programming. Over the last 30 years, Stephen has studied classical guitar with Ian Drummond (who studied with Nadia Boulanger), Michael Burgess, and Michael Partington.

Stephen has also worked for Microsoft for 15 years. He attended community college for a year before Microsoft hired him as a support engineer, and later as a software design engineer. In the past 5 years, he has worked as a manager with his Visual C++ group, overseeing people with Ph.D.s and creating projects for them to implement. Thus, he comes to us with a broad range of skills.

Stephen grew up in a Roman Catholic family, going to mass regularly. Though he attended Catholic schools till 8th grade, he was disillusioned by the sweeping changes of Vatican II. In the 70's and 80's, he questioned Christianity and was caught up in the broader cultural movements. His interests turned to baseball and then to classical guitar, followed by computers.

During the 90's, he felt a need to reconsider the church, and attended a Catholic parish active in social justice. But after observing the priest's anti-American stance after 9/11, he started looking into



Protestant churches. Married to Svetlana, a television journalist from the Republic of Moldova, he went to Protestant services in Russian. But Stephen was unable to understand, so they visited a Plymouth Brethren church, where they loved the people and their simple

faith. Though never convinced of Dispensationalism, Stephen grew there, but eventually left the group, partly due to its separatism. While attending Crossroads Bible Church in 2005, Stephen felt a call to the ministry and even visited NWTs briefly. At Crossroads, he learned about Justification by grace alone through faith alone and Reformed theology. Listening to NWTs lectures online, he read Vos's *Biblical Theology* (which he had tried to tackle earlier) with greater understanding.

Last semester, Stephen enjoyed the Life of David class so much that he decided to visit Lynnwood OPC and audit classes at NWTs. Finding that covenant theology did not teach a prosperity Kingdom Now theology, he became more interested in its biblical theology. It resonated with the Amillennialism of his childhood, now undergirded with Reformed soteriology. Stephen is grateful to be in a place where he can learn from the tradition of the Church Fathers and Reformed theology. And he appreciates the rich precision that Vos has brought to that tradition.

As for future ministry, he is open to the Lord's guidance. We are thankful to have Stephen with us. We wish him and Svetlana the Lord's blessing through his NWTs studies. Please pray with us to that end.

they came near to the Promised Land, "they were not able to enter because of unbelief" (3:19). Thus, that generation will serve forever as a witness to what awaits those who live—not with a heart of faith—but with a hardened heart of unbelief (3:12). God's law exposed the inability of sinners to meet its demands (Rom. 3:20, 5:20). But the legal elements had an evangelical purpose. They were a schoolmaster to drive us to Christ and to faith in him (Gal. 3:19-24).

Though God repeated that call to live by grace through faith throughout all of Israel's history, how rarely did she answer that call! Even after entering the Promised Land, Israel abandoned God until his patience ran out, and he cast them into exile. 2 Kings 17:14 says, "But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe [i.e., have faith] in the Lord their God." Rather than cleaving to God in love, they adulterously abandoned him and gave themselves over to depravity. Psalm 106:24 repeats this tragic story: "Then they despised the pleasant land, having *no faith* in his promise." Because of her unbelief and apostasy, Israel was expelled from the Land of Promise—the type and picture of heaven.

But John Calvin reminds us, the land of Canaan and the temporal kingdom of Israel "was a figure of the

kingdom that is prepared for us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The ancient fathers looked therein to behold Jesus Christ, as it were, in a glass" (*Sermons on Deuteronomy*, 418). The temporal type, as well as the eternal reality, was to be received and retained only by grace through faith: "[Israel's] possession of [the Promised Land] was not for any merit of theirs...but because he had made them heirs of it, through his own free goodness. Now if this is true of the earthly inheritance which the children of Israel had, what is to be said of the kingdom of heaven?" (8).

We, who by grace through faith are sharers in the kingdom of heaven, have the whole history of redemption as a witness to hold steadfastly in faith to Jesus Christ alone. Every era of history—the Patriarchs (Rom. 4), Moses (1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 4:2), David (Rom. 4:6)—shouts forth that sinners can have no blessing, whether eternal or temporal, except by grace through faith in Christ, the Promised Seed! Surrounded by this great cloud of witnesses, let us heed the call of Scripture, and in Christ become true "imitators of those who *through faith and patience* inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:9). For we have life in him as they did by grace, through faith alone!

—Benji Swinburnson

ALUMNI UPDATE

NWTs's first graduate, Rev. Adam D. King, serves as Pastor of Trinity Reformed Church (RPCNA) in Wichita, Kansas (trinityrpcna.org). He plans to apply for Th.M. studies at Whitefield Theological Seminary.

NWTs's second graduate, Rev. Benji Swinburnson, serves as Associate Pastor of Lynnwood OPC. He is enrolled in the Th.M. program at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, FL. His recent studies have focused on: 1.) critiquing N.T. Wright's aberrant doctrine of justification; and 2.) Calvin's teaching on the eternal generation of the Son. In addition, he has filled local Reformed pulpits in the Pacific Northwest area.