

Bound Yet Free

A PUBLICATION OF



DIVINE HOPE
REFORMED BIBLE SEMINARY

APRIL 2017
NEWSLETTER

Significant Graduation at Danville

Nathan Brummel

Our annual graduation exercises at our Danville campus are scheduled for Wednesday, May 31 at Danville Correctional Center in Danville, IL. The graduation is significant because for the first time we have students who have completed our four-year program. Now the challenge is to find ways for these students to serve the Lord and labor in His kingdom. Students will be used as peer instructors, continue to deliver messages at chapels, and show spiritual leadership in the Hispanic worship services. The seminary choir will sing and the graduates will deliver speeches. Refreshments will be served.

Friends of the seminary are invited to attend the commencement exercises. The graduation will begin at 11:30 a.m. Central Standard Time on May 31.



Annual Reformed Theology Preaching Conference

Nathan Brummel

This year the subject of our annual preaching conference at Danville Prison is the *solas* of the Reformation. This conference is open for seminary students and other prisoners. To celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, we decided to have speeches or sermons on the core doctrines of Protestantism. Friends of the seminary are invited to attend this event. The conference is scheduled to begin on Tuesday, May 30. On this date, Rev. Thomas Wetselaar is scheduled to speak on *sola Scriptura*, Rev. Brett Mahlen to preach on *sola fide*, and seminary student Renaldo Hudson to give a message on *sola gratia*. The conference is scheduled to start at 8:00 a.m. Central Standard Time and to conclude at 2:00 p.m.

Friends of the seminary can attend this event on May 30 or they are invited to attend the conclusion of this conference on the next morning. Volunteers can only visit Danville Prison once a quarter.

The conference will conclude on the morning of the graduation. On Wednesday, May 31, Rev. James Oord is scheduled to speak on *solus Christus* and Rev. Nick Alons on *solus Deo Gloria*. The

Ron Ellens will need the following information for the prison background

check: Full name, Social Security #, Birthdate, Have you ever written, called or visited an inmate currently or formerly incarcerated within IDOC? (if Yes, explain)

Contact Ron Ellens

at ronellens@sbcglobal.net or
(708)-235-1111 or (815)-514-3083.

Ron needs to send in this information at least three weeks prior to the visit. Plan to arrive at Danville Prison by 7:50 a.m. Central Standard Time on the date of your visit. The address of the prison is:

Danville Correctional Center

3820 East Main Street, Danville, IL 61834.
The prison's phone # is 217-446-0441.

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speeches begin at 8:00 a.m. Central Standard Time. Those who attend the conference on this morning are welcome to stay for the graduation which begins at 11:30 a.m., the Lord willing.

Graduation at the Indiana State Prison

Nathan Brummel

Our annual graduation at the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City is scheduled for Monday, June 5 at 11:00 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Several students have completed one or two years of the program. Friends of the seminary are invited to attend the graduation.

The chaplain needs to receive the following information at least three weeks prior to the visit:

Full name, Current address, Birthdate, Driver's license #, Whether you have Relatives Incarcerated in the state of Indiana, Phone #

Send this information to Ron Ellens at ronellens@sbcglobal.net or contact by phone at (708)-235-1111 or (815)514-3083.

A Visit to Divine Hope Seminary at Danville Correctional Center

Brett Mahlen

March 21st and 22nd I visited Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary in Danville. It is amazing what God is doing through Divine Hope. Men who have been convicted of crimes are carrying around Bibles and theology textbooks. Their lives have been reformed by the gospel. It is a testimony to God's grace. The men are from diverse backgrounds but they seem to get along peacefully.

I sat in a few of Nathan Brummel's lectures. Brummel begins each class with a hymn from the blue CRC psalter-hymnal. The men sing as Brummel plays piano. The men are comfortable disagreeing with him, they have lively interactions, but the environment is very loving, even when there is disagreement.

I met men who are really struggling with Calvinism and others who defend it zealously. Each student is in a different place in his journey. Some have embraced Reformed Theology; some seem on the way to embracing it. A few told me how they thought Calvinism was totally absurd at first but they have come to see how great it is to see God as sovereign.

I did not know that Nathan Brummel had written a few books and his books are being used as textbooks in some of the classes. His book on missiology is the result of one of his theses. His missiology book is very thick. The book is not ready for mass publication, the students are still interacting with it and it needs some edits, Rev. Brummel says, but the book is on the way. He also wrote a whole book on Heidelberg Catechism question and answer one. The students seem to appreciate what Brummel has written. The students also read a very large book written by Professor Paul Ipema on the Heidelberg Catechism.

I was able to sit in on a portion of a class in Spanish taught by John Hamstra; the class is called Malachi Dads. The men in the class seemed grateful for instruction in Spanish.

The Wednesday evening worship service was amazing. It lasted 2 hours. It is a well-attended Hispanic worship service, bringing in over 30 men. They prayed, they sang 3 hymns in Spanish a cappella. Three men delivered three different messages. The third message was much longer than the other two. It was amazing to see a man exhort extemporaneously, teaching Reformed theology, to men in Spanish. I never thought I would see such a thing! He expounded the 2nd Commandment; among other things he was teaching them that it is idolatry to pray to saints and Mary. I was astonished to see this! The messages are very lively and interactive. Sometimes the men debated the speaker and the speaker took it all in stride and stood his ground. Not all the men in the worship service are of a Reformed persuasion, it is possible that many of them still hold to their nominal Roman Catholic views. Maybe the Lord is working on the hearts of the many who attend these worship services!

There were men who had been in Stateville who told me that they pray for Stateville. What an encouragement!

My assessment of what I saw at Divine Hope is that it is inspiring! They have had Divine Hope in Danville prison for 5 years and God is doing amazing things there. What could Divine Hope look like at Stateville in 5 years? I believe, with the Lord's help, Stateville could look similar in 5 years. I am very excitedly praying for this!

CONTACT INFORMATION

www.dhrbs.org



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