

Orthodox Presbyterian Summer Institute

May 24–26, 2011

Participants and Location

Seven seminarians applied and were accepted. Six were able to attend. There were four other late inquiries. Of these we had one from Covenant seminary, one from Mid-America; two from Westminster in Philadelphia; one from Reformed in Orlando, and one from Westminster Seminary California.

On Monday, May 24 the instructors arrived to make preparations for the arrival of the students the following day. Our new location in the White Mountains made travel arrangements a lot simpler, due to the proximity of Manchester Boston Regional and Logan airports.

This year we changed our location to Shiloh Retreat in Jefferson, New Hampshire, overlooking the White Mountains. The main lodge was more suitable to lectures and discussions at a better cost. This venue would easily accommodate a dozen or more students. Retreat director Greg Gordon is a delightful and accommodating host who shares our mission as a committed Presbyterian (PCA).

Instruction

Each of the four instructors gave a two hour talk interspersed with discussion and then two separate two-hour periods to discuss pre-assigned readings. This year we had guest instructor Stephen Tracey and visiting pastor David Holmlund assist us in acquainting the students with OPC ministry.

- John Muether: “A True Presbyterian Church at Last”
- Greg Reynolds: “The Shape of OPC Ministry”
- Darryl Hart: “The Spirituality of the Church”
- Stephen Tracey: “The View of an OPC Immigrant”

A fair amount of free time, as well as leisurely meals, allowed plenty of opportunity for informal discussion among participants and instructors.

Assessment

Now in its second year, the positive feedback from students indicates that the Institute has achieved its stated purpose. The variety of seminaries represented continued to enhance the atmosphere of the Institute and the interaction among students.

One problem encountered this year was scheduling. The early date for the OPC GA and other obligations necessitated scheduling the Institute in late May, which presented conflicts with seminary schedules. One student commented on his evaluation: “The readings for the Institute were great, but for many of us it was just too much to complete

with being so close to seminary finals. If the Institute was a week later it would have been enough time for readings.”

Another student described the benefits of his attendance in this way: “The lectures and discussion helped to orient me to issues on which I now know to focus in my continued seminary studies. It was also wonderful to connect and fellowship with other seminarians who are aiming toward ministry in the OPC.”

A student from Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia observed: “I really like that the topics diverged somewhat from material covered at WTS east. I feel that seminary education does not prepare us as well as it could for ministry in the OPC, and I really appreciated that the institute focused on some things which are particular to ministry in the OPC.... I also appreciated the small size of the institute because of the discussion we could have—I found the discussion to be incredibly helpful and something which I do not get in 30–40 student seminary lectures.... Thanks for a great experience overall! I found this very helpful for continuing to confirm my sense of call to ministry in the OPC.”



