

# THE PRINCETON SEMINARY BULLETIN

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Memorial Tributes  
to Faculty

# Emile Cailliet

1895-1981

EMILE CAILLIET, Stuart Professor of Christian Philosophy Emeritus, died on June 4, 1981, at the age of 86. He had served on this faculty for twelve years after previous teaching responsibilities at the University of Pennsylvania, as Professor Director of the Humanities Program at Scripps College in Claremont, California, and at Wesleyan University. He retired in 1959 and made his home with Mrs. Cailliet in the Cold Spring section of Cape May, New Jersey. In recent years he lived with his daughter, Helene Cailliet Adcock, in Southern California.

Born and educated in France, Ph.D. Montpellier in 1926, Th.D. University of Strasbourg in 1936, Dr. Cailliet volunteered for army service and had front line experience as a lad of 20. Wounded, he was hospitalized. It was in an American hospital that he married a Scotch-Irish lady whom he had met in Germany on a Christmas Eve before the war broke out. She gave him his first Bible; he had never even seen a Bible until he was twenty-three. His education had been naturalistic to the core.

In Princeton, Dr. Cailliet's courses were focused in a quest to understand the modern religious mind. He recognized in the breakdown of classical physics a climate for rethinking humanity's relation to God and the world. He was consciously and continuously preparing his students for the objections toward their Christian thoughts which would be raised in that world "outside." Always he regarded that world as a mission field. Because of Dr. Cailliet's studies in cultural anthropology, particularly in Madagascar where he was honored by the Governor General, he was continuously sensitive to contexts of conversion.

In his lectures, Dr. Cailliet would refer to scholars in scientific fields of endeavor, introducing authors in the physical sciences to students, many of whom had not so much as heard their names. However, this was a time at Princeton Seminary when a considerable number of young people who were called to ministry had been trained in the physical sciences. They came to campus apprehensive that they were totally unequipped to think in a liberal arts environment. Dr. Cailliet nurtured them, honoring the significance of their previous studies and careers. Through his conversations with them in class and study he brought them to Pascal and Pascal to them. Tea-time invitations to that study introduced many students to the gracious solicitude and sustaining friendship of Mrs. Cailliet, a remarkable lady. She often visited married students in their off-campus apartments.

Dr. Cailliet's gifts to the world of scholarship and to the church are reflected in many publications. His books issued by major publishing houses (Harper, Westminster, Zondervan, Macmillan, Bobbs-Merrill) show in their very titles the quest of mind and heart. The Otis Lectures at Davidson in 1946-47 were published in a volume *The Beginning of Wisdom*. He had previously written *The Life of the Mind* and *Pascal, Genius in the Life of Scripture*. There followed *The Dawn of Personality*, *The Recovery of Purpose*, and then in his retirement a volume published in 1968, *Journey into Light*. Prior to that he had written an appreciative

evaluation of a ministry to young people in this continent and it was published by Harper and Row under the title *Young Life*. It was no surprise to those who knew Dr. Cailliet that he would applaud a type of witness that reached outside the parish churches to use the home and the high school campus and athletic field and ice cream shop as the area of primary contact. His final book, published by Zondervan in 1971, bore the arresting title *Alone at High Noon—Reflections on the Solitary Life*. Many of us knew how deeply he missed the companionship of his departed wife.

One of the highest joys of Dr. Cailliet's life was his election as a Ruling Elder of the United Presbyterian Church. We remember the twinkle in his eye when he would utter certain convictions about the church and her task and follow these words with the words, "Of course, I am not ordained." He was ordained in the Cold Spring Presbyterian Church and took his duties as Elder with week-by-week faithfulness. Particularly, he sensed the privilege in serving the elements at the time of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He had written: "It is at the Lord's Table where the luminosity of the Presence comes into full glow."

Dr. Cailliet's funeral service was held in that church whose present pastor, the Reverend Fred Bischoff, was one of his students at Princeton. Mr. Bischoff was not the pastor when Dr. Cailliet was a parishioner, but in his tribute reflected the kindness of Dr. Cailliet to him in Princeton when death entered the Bischoff family.

Dr. Cailliet is buried in the cemetery next to that church in Cape May. His son, Andre, of Salinas, gave a personal tribute at the grave. Others of the family present were daughters Helene Adcock of Los Angeles, Doris Brunzie of Hanover Park, Illinois, and Suzanne Gardner of Farmington Hills, Michigan.