



**Reading and praying the Lord's Prayer with Origen:
An Interview with Ronald Heine**

In October this year, the Institute and EES together with the Eberhard Karls Universität, Tübingen and the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich will be hosting an international symposium on the Lord's Prayer in Tübingen. One of the speakers at the symposium will be Ronald E. Heine, Professor Emeritus of Bible and Theology at Northwest Christian University. We are very pleased to welcome Ron and his wife Gill back to Tübingen and to the Institute; the Heines will be spending a few weeks in September here at the Institute.

This interview was conducted by email in April 2018.

Beth Langstaff: You spent more than a decade here in Tübingen, with your wife Gill and daughter Katrina, while you served as Director of the Institute. What do you particularly remember about those years? What was enjoyable and/or challenging about your time here in Germany?

Ron Heine: We loved our time in Tübingen. We liked the city, the people, the University, and the work with the Institute. There were two aspects of my work with the Institute during those years that were particularly enjoyable for me. One was the encouragement to do research and publish. The Institute library and the University libraries were ideal for this. The other was the opportunity to get acquainted with the theology faculty at the University and with theologians from around the world who spent their sabbaticals in Tübingen working on research projects. Scholars from the latter group regularly participated in the colloquium that was sponsored by the Institute and University, and some also participated in the English vesper service sponsored by the Institute every Sunday evening. We made many friends while we lived in Tübingen. Some of these continue to keep in touch with us. There were two people who were especially helpful to my work in Tübingen. One was Frau Ursula Schneider who was the office manager of the Institute. She went far beyond her duties as an office manager in helping both Gill and myself get oriented to life in a culture that was foreign to us. The other was Professor Otto Betz with whom I worked ten years in leading the colloquium,



and learned a lot in the process.

Beth Langstaff: *You left Germany to return to the United States in early 2000--can you tell us what you have been doing in the years since? Can you tell us about one of your recent books (such as Classical Christian Doctrine)?*

Ron Heine: We moved from Tübingen to Edmonds, Washington which is in the Seattle area. I taught for seven years at Puget Sound Christian College and Gill worked as registrar. Our daughter Katrina attended the first seven years of grade school while we lived there. In 2007 we moved to Eugene, Oregon where I became professor of Bible and Theology at Northwest Christian University, and Gill became Associate Registrar. I retired in 2015. One of the courses I taught at NCU was a course called Christian Doctrine. It was a beginning level course that many students had to take. I struggled trying to find an appropriate text book for this course. They were either too detailed or too simplistic. So, I decided to write a text book for the course based on what I was doing in class. This book became *Classical Christian Doctrine: Introducing the Essentials of the Ancient Faith* and was published by Baker Academic in 2013. I wrote it to be a primer for people who have no background in the subject. I have just finished a very long project translating Origen's *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, most of which has never previously been translated into English. This was the first commentary ever written on the Gospel of Matthew. It will appear this fall in two volumes, published by Oxford University Press.

Beth Langstaff: *You are reading a paper at the Symposium on Origen's interpretation of the Lord's Prayer. Can you remind us who Origen is, and why his treatise On Prayer deserves our attention?*

Ron Heine: Origen was a 3rd century Greek-speaking Christian scholar/teacher. He was born in the late 2nd century and died in the mid 3rd. He was the greatest intellectual in the early church, his only equal being Augustine in the 4th century. Origen's literary output was unbelievable. He produced work in about every area of Biblical-theological study. He was not the first to write about the Lord's Prayer. Tertullian and Cyprian, Latin-speaking contemporaries of Origen, had each produced a work on it. Origen's treatment of the Lord's Prayer is important for various reasons. One is because he was such a careful reader of the text and the Greek language was his mother tongue. There were very few details in the Biblical text that escaped his notice. This attention to detail was directly connected to his spiritual reading of the text. Origen was a deeply devout person and he always searched for the spiritual meaning in the Biblical texts he read. And he finds these in the Lord's Prayer.

Our warm thanks to Ron Heine for taking time for this interview!