

PRTS Update

ACADEMIZING OUR FAITH

REV. ARTHUR MISKIN | PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY HAS BEEN DESCRIBED as “the noblest and most glorious calling to which a man can give himself,” and the opportunity of attending theological seminary in preparation for sacred ministry is one afforded to very few. My years at seminary were probably some of the most enriching of my entire life (note, not easiest!). Subsequently, my ministerial calling has included the charge to deliver theological instruction at a theological college in South Africa. As the years roll on, a teacher should reflect on his labor so far in terms of goals and objectives achieved. Being more involved in the practical aspects of theology, a concern of mine has always been the spirituality of the students, as, indeed, is also the case at PRTS. One of the dangers of theological preparation is that our studies simply become a means to an end; studying purely for the sake of academic advancement rather than toward that greater end which is being the bondservants of Christ. When this takes place one of the bad things that happens is the destructive outbreak of sin in the very sanctuary of theological education. This has been a grief that many teachers, even in sound and conservative seminaries, have had to encounter. It’s a sad day indeed when potential pastors emerge from seminary viewing people merely as projects and commodities rather than erring sheep in need of spiritual guidance.

Is the student alone to blame for this? Not at all. The theological professor, rightly, must examine himself especially (but not exclusively), being the one who is involved in the practical instruction of the students. Phillips Brooks, the 19th century American clergyman, defined preaching as the “communication of truth through personality.” Though perhaps not the most apt definition, it is, however, a concept that is pregnant with significance because it applies equally to the practice of teaching. As teachers we must not only ask ourselves whether we are plowing hours of time into preparation, but are we, during the process of educating, demonstrating lives that have radically been impacted by the transforming power of the gospel? True teaching emanates from the life of a man who has been captivated and abased by Christ’s amazing love to him and whose life emanates this very thing. “Our soul should be the mirror of Christ; we should reflect every feature; for every grace in Christ there should be a counterpart in us” [M’Cheyne]. If this is not in some measure true of us as teachers, then we stand in danger of producing a generation of intellectual pastors who may be able teachers of the flock but who will see few conversions in their ministries. But, if we emanate the love of the Lord Jesus Christ from the depths of lives radically altered by Him, then our teaching will be far more than a lesson; there will be a spiritual encounter between teacher and student, where the claims and challenges of Christ will be brought to bear on each student with soul searching as to his own condition, as well as honest evaluation of his calling, as a result.

We learn that when God’s Word is faithfully taught under the penetrating influence of the Holy Spirit, the mind of the student is not all that is transformed, *but also his heart*. It is precisely here that the teacher is to aim. The ultimate purpose of the Word of God is not theological information but heart and life transformation. This transformation should be the goal and the prayer of every seminary professor. Surely then a generation of men will enter the church with more than head knowledge but also a love for Christ, His Word and His gospel, with the transformation of the body of Christ as its glorious result.

PRTS REGIONAL COURSE

COMPLETED IN CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA



THIRTY-FIVE PEOPLE from the Chilliwack HRC and Chilliwack and Abbotsford FRC churches completed a third Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (PRTS) regional course this year in Chilliwack. The course was “Christ in the Old Testament” by Dr. David Murray. All thirty-five took the course on an audit basis, simply for personal growth and development.

Persons enrolled in the course downloaded Dr. Murray’s lectures, written explanations, and questions. Participants completed ten lessons in eleven class sessions, one every two weeks, from mid-September through mid-March. Once

every two weeks, participants met with the regional facilitator to review the material studied, examine questions, and discuss topics of related interest. At the conclusion of the course, participants connected live with Dr. Murray by Skype to discuss issues and topics of interest or to obtain further clarification on submitted questions. The class met every second week in one of the classrooms at the Chilliwack FRC church facility.

Dr. Murray condensed and simplified his seminary course on “Christ in the Old Testament” to meet a desirable level for the average church member. Chris Engelsma prepared study questions to accompany the course. James Beeke served as the regional facilitator in Chilliwack.

The group’s response was very positive. We enjoyed wonderful discussion times together and learned a great deal. Discovering Christ throughout the entire Old Testament was enlightening, exciting, and edifying. At times we felt like the Emmaus disciples when Jesus instructed them as we read, “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27), or as He taught His disciples: “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms (the entire Old Testament) concerning me” (Luke 24:44). We were blessed as we followed Christ’s loving command to “search the Scriptures (the Old Testament); for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

OTHERS INTERESTED?

This is the third PRTS course now available in this format. Also available are *Eschatology* by Dr. Murray and *Introduction to Hermeneutics* by Dr. Gerald Bilkes.

Are you interested in taking one of these PRTS Regional Courses? If so, do the following:

1. Find a few others also interested in your area; possibly place this information in your church bulletin to advertise it.
2. Locate someone who could serve as local facilitator/leader for the course—perhaps a local pastor, elder, or other qualified person in your vicinity.
3. Contact Jim Beeke with any questions you may have and for helpful pointers and resources (jimbeeke@shaw.ca or 604-794-7109). He is willing to provide the Regional Facilitator with a copy of his notes and answers to the worksheet questions for any of the three courses.
4. Cost for auditing a PRTS course is \$40 (US) per person.
5. Enroll those interested and you’re ready to go—all the lectures, printed text, and questions are available on-line, and the Regional Facilitator will have access to all the answers!

NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION

PROCEEDS FOR PRTS



A NEW HOME is being built in Chilliwack, British Columbia. By using donated contractor services, some volunteer help, and discounts offered by various sub-trades and suppliers, a significant profit margin is anticipated. The goal is to clear a \$75,000–\$100,000 profit that can be forwarded to PRTS for its building addition fund.

ARE THERE ANY CREATIVE WAYS THAT YOU CAN FUND RAISE IN YOUR VICINITY FOR PRTS BUILDING, OPERATIONAL, OR SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS?

—BC PRTS Promotion Committee



First walls going up!

ATS ACCREDITATION UPDATE

PRTS HAS BEEN an Associate Member of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) since June 2010. Candidacy Status was granted in February 2012, which permitted PRTS to commence a two-year Self-Study process aimed at achieving full Accreditation Status.

PRTS completed and submitted its extensive Self-Study Report with 151 Appendices in March 2013. After review, ATS staff recommended to its Board that an on-site inspection visit be scheduled. A team of four inspectors has now been appointed and they will spend four days inspecting our seminary, the Lord willing, November 18–21, 2013. Based upon satisfactory results from this on-site inspection of PRTS (and likely follow-up enhancement work), recommendation will be made to the ATS Board for full accreditation.

We covet your prayers that the Lord may continue to bless this accreditation process through to completion, especially that it may be a means to strengthen PRTS educationally, administratively, and operationally, to enable our Seminary to serve even more effectively to God's honor and the extension of His world-wide kingdom.

ALUMNI UPDATE

BY THE GRACE OF GOD, I had the opportunity to study at the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary for two years. These were years where I learned a lot about the Reformed faith from the experiential perspective. I am immensely grateful for the scholarship I received while studying at PRTS.

After completing my studies, I returned to Brazil and today I am serving at the Bethel Presbyterian Church in the city of Feira de Santana, in Bahia state (a church affiliated with the Presbyterian Church of Brazil-IPB). I am the senior pastor of the church, working with five assistant pastors who help me in the work of planting Reformed churches in our city and region. Currently, we are planting seven new churches and two of them will become independent churches next year, God willing.

I am also a guest professor at the North Presbyterian Seminary (Recife, Brazil) and at the Northeast Theological Seminary (Teresina, PI). Both seminaries belong to the Presbyterian Church of Brazil-IPB. I am teaching expository preaching, biblical theology, and the theology of prayer.

Our church is also organizing the annual Reformed Faith Meeting, a conference for pastors and leaders. The church's goal is to have an inexpensive conference where many leaders can participate and come to buy good Reformed books. Generally we work for a year raising money to subsidize the meeting. This year (October 24–26) we are expecting to have 350 registered leaders. We have seen the growth of the Reformed faith in Brazil. Many leaders of other denominations have attended our meetings, which is a great blessing from the Lord. Please pray for us!

—ROBÉRIO AZEVEDO | 2008 PRTS ALUMNUS



Pastor Robério's family



Monthly Fellowship Meeting at the Bethel Presbyterian Church

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

DEAR FRIENDS,

The fall 2013 semester is going well at PRTS. There is a beehive of activity taking place, as we press on with full-time teaching, the building addition, and the ATS accreditation process. We are amazed by the Lord's gracious expansion of PRTS's ministry, to train pastors from every continent in the world (other than Antarctica)! I cannot tell you how humbling and exciting it is to train men, send them back to their own countries, and then witness the Holy Spirit blessing them in carrying out influential ministries that are stamped with a Reformed experiential emphasis. In this issue we are sharing just a few of their encouraging stories and hope to share more in future issues. Presently, we are putting together a booklet of dozens of PRTS graduates who are ministering effectively in their own cultures, spreading the Reformed faith around the globe. Combined, they are impacting hundreds of thousands of people. Pray for a rich harvest on their labors! Let us praise God together for His gracious, blessing hand upon our seminary, its students and graduates.

Thanks too for partnering with us so faithfully. Without friends like you, we could not sustain this ministry. Financially, we are doing quite well, but as you can imagine, more money is needed when trying to raise funds for a \$3 million building project, while still meeting the needs of a nearly \$2 million Operation Fund. As for the Building Project, our goal is to raise another \$750,000 to cover all construction costs plus furnishings, information technologies, etc., for the new building. The Operation Fund balance is currently low; we are hoping for a surge of year-end giving so that we can bring it back up to a two month balance. We need about \$500,000 by year end to accomplish this goal.

IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER PROVISION FOR 2013

IF YOU ARE 70½ OR OLDER, you may want to consider using your mandatory IRA distribution to make a tax-free donation to PRTS before December 31, 2013.

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 was signed into law on January 2, 2013. The Act includes an IRA Charitable Rollover extension which provides a renewed opportunity for those who are 70½ or older to give tax-free from their IRA through calendar year 2013.

What does this mean to you as a supporter of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary?

It allows for direct charitable gifts from IRAs for the entire year of 2013. Individuals may make gifts to Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary from traditional and Roth IRA accounts without any federal tax liability, as long as the gifts are “qualified charitable distributions.” No charitable deduction may be taken by the owner, but distributions will qualify for all or part of an IRA owner’s Required Minimum Distribution.

Requirements for “qualified charitable distributions”:

- Gifts are tax-free up to \$100,000 per year
- Gifts will qualify for all or part of your Required Minimum Distribution
- This provision will apply for the year of 2013 (gifts made by December 31, 2013)
- IRA holder must be age 70½ or older at the time of gift
- Gifts must be outright gifts to Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary
- Distributions to donor-advised funds or support organizations are not permissible
- Distributions may only be made from traditional IRAs or Roth IRAs

For more information on the IRA Charitable Rollover extension, please contact Chris Hanna at 616-432-3407 or our Barnabas Foundation representative, Amy Bakker Baty, at 888-448-3040.

Here are two ways you can continue to partner with us in this kingdom-building ministry.

- First, would you be able to commit to giving a monthly donation to the Operation Fund? Partnering with us by giving even \$20 a month is a great help to us. Each year our auditors give us the highest rating on our financial situation, since we have no debts, but they also stress with us that we need to develop more monthly donors, as this is reliable income. As we build for the future, we need friends like you who can contribute small amounts on a monthly basis.
- Second, would you please help us by giving serious and prayerful thought to potential donors you may know, especially those that the Lord has blessed with financial means and a heart for this type of ministry? After thinking of some, would you kindly approach them to see if they would be open to a personal meeting or conversation with one of us, or if they are willing to donate with a one-time gift toward the Building Fund or the Operation Fund? You may inform any potential donor that at this time any donation to the Operation Fund will be doubled, as other donors have offered to match all donations dollar for dollar for this fund. Also, are you aware of any churches that would be interested in a PRTS presentation or informational evening? If so, please inform us, with church/pastor contact information.

Please notify us of any results from your efforts. Thank you so much for your help in this way. If you have any questions about this, feel most free to contact one of us.

Above all, please continue to pray for us. Blessings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,

— JOEL R. BEEKE | PRESIDENT

MY STORY AFTER PRTS

GREETINGS FROM MALAWI, Central Africa. I am writing this letter to encourage you by means of what the Lord has been doing here in Malawi since I left PRTS in June 2009. Allow me to thank you so much for your faithfulness in equipping men from around the world for Reformed, confessional, and experiential gospel ministry—including from small African countries like mine. I can still scarcely believe the wonderful opportunity I had to study on a full scholarship at PRTS. My life has been transformed since attending.

Before I attended PRTS, I did not have a comprehensive knowledge of what Reformed theology was all about, even though I came from a Reformed background. Today, I am able to propagate the doctrines of grace in various churches beyond lecturing at the seminary (see attached photo). Moreover, through the generosity of PRTS, I am even able as an alumnus of the seminary to remain linked to the seminary, its professors, and my fellow alumni. I receive support in terms of books, encouragement, prayers, and updates.

Due in large part to my training at PRTS, I have become a lecturer at our synodical seminary (Josophat Mwale Theological Institute) in Malawi. Since 2009, I have also been serving as the Synodical Senior Clerk of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (C.C.A.P.), which has a membership of nearly two million people.

My prayer is that PRTS would be able to increase the number of students enrolled and have even more influence in spreading the Reformed faith throughout the world. I also pray that the Lord would bless PRTS's expansion program to accommodate more classrooms and offices and library space, as well as to expand its influence through offering a reputable PhD program to train seminary leaders around the world.

Once again, thanks so much, PRTS.

REV. BRIAN KAMWENDO

Senior Clerk: C.C.A.P. Nkhoma Synod,
Box 45 Nkhoma.
Malawi, Central Africa

Dean of Student Affairs,
Lecturer: Systematic Theology and Church History.
Josophat Mwale Theological Institute,
Box 38 Nkhoma.
Malawi, Central Africa



Brian (right) with some "Reformed Confessions Class" students of the seminary in Malawi, Africa after receiving a gift of books from PRTS

EXPANSION UPDATE

SINCE OUR LAST UPDATE on the building expansion project, a lot has been accomplished. The new parking lot has been partially paved and is currently in use, saving PRTS and RHB personnel, students, and customers the hassle of having to park somewhere else in the community and walk to the campus.

In addition to the parking lot, the area for the new basement has been dug, the foundation footings have been set, and the basement floor and walls have been poured. Next will be plumbing, masonry work, the two-floor structure, and the roof. With the Lord's help, this will all be completed by the end of next January.

Once the shell of the expansion is up and under roof, the interior contractors can begin their work. The final completion date for everything is April 21, 2014.

Please continue to pray for Henk Kleyn, who is overseeing this entire project for PRTS, as well as for architect Jeff Hunt, Dan Vos Construction Company, and the host of subcontractors who are working together to complete this project on time and as close to budget as possible.

If you would like to help alleviate the remaining \$500,000 financial burden associated with this project, you may do so by sending your donation to the seminary, marked **Building Expansion Project**, or you may donate

FACULTY ITINERARIES & PUBLICATIONS

DR. MICHAEL BARRETT | ITINERARY:

November 10: Grand Rapids: HRC Family Living Class
November 18–21: ATS Visit to PRTS
November 24: Grand Rapids: HRC Family Living Class
January 12: Chatham, Ontario: Free Reformed Church

WRITING PROJECT:

King James Version Study Bible

DR. JOEL BEEKE | ITINERARY:

November 1–2: Wake Forest, North Carolina: The Worship of God Conference (NCFIC)
November 4–11: Manaus, Brazil: Reformed Conference for Pastors and Elders
December 15: Mitchell, Ontario: Free Reformed Church
January 4–15: Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa: Grace Ministers' Conference
January 16: South Africa: Mukhanyo Theological College

RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

“Holding Firmly to the Heidelberg: The Validity and Relevance of Catechism Preaching” and “Preaching the Catechism Today,” in Jon D. Payne and Sebastian Heck, eds., *A Faith Worth Teaching: The Heidelberg Catechism's Enduring Legacy* (RHB).

Acts: The 17:18 Series, with Rob Wynalda (RHB).

“Reformed Orthodoxy in North America,” in *A Companion to Reformed Orthodoxy* (Brill)

The Beauty and Glory of God the Father, editor; and “The Apostle John and the Puritans on the Father's Adopting, Transforming Love” (RHB).

Family Worship (in Chinese).

Why Christ Came: 31 Meditations on the Incarnation, with William Boekestein (RHB).

“What Did the Reformers Believe about the Age of the Earth?” in Ken Ham, gen. ed., *The New Answers Book 4: Over 30 Questions on Creation/Evolution and the Bible* (Master Books).

The Holy Spirit and Reformed Spirituality, edited with Derek Thomas (RHB)
Tough Questions About the Bible (Christian Focus).

Developing Healthy Spiritual Growth: Knowledge, Practice, and Experience (Evangelical Press).

Editor with Scott Brown of William Gouge, *Building a Godly Home: Volume 2, A Holy Vision for a Happy Marriage* (GR: RHB).

DR. GERALD BILKES | WRITING PROJECTS:

Memoirs of the Way Home: Ezra and Nehemiah as a Call to Conversion
King James Version Study Bible

REV. MARK KELDERMAN | ITINERARY:

November 3: Hull, Iowa: Heritage Reformed Church
November 10: Grant Reformed Church
November 17: Grand Rapids: HRC (afternoon and evening)
December 8: Grand Rapids: HRC (afternoon)
December 22: Grand Rapids: HRC (afternoon)
December 29: West Olive, Michigan: Faith United Reformed Church
January 12: Bradenton, Florida

DR. DAVID MURRAY | ITINERARY:

October 25–27: Sheboygan, OPC: Reformation Conference
November 7: Orlando: Ligonier Reformation Bible College Chapel
November 15–16: Indianapolis: Reformation Conference on Sanctification (RPCNA)

WRITING PROJECT:

Jesus on Every Page: 10 Simple Ways to Find and Enjoy Christ in the Old Testament (Thomas Nelson)

DR. WILLIAM VANDOODEWAARD | WRITING PROJECTS:

The Quest for the Historical Adam (RHB)
1 & 2 Peter, Welwyn Commentary Series (Evangelical Press)
“The Marrow Controversy” in *Diversity and Controversy in the Reformed World of the Eighteenth Century* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht)

online at puritanseminary.org/investing-in-prts/prts-building-expansion-fund.

We are also in need of raising an additional \$250,000 to cover furnishings, information technologies, etc. If you are interested in helping to lighten this burden, please mark your check “for furnishings.”

For more information, please contact me at 616-432-3407. Thank you for your prayerful generosity to PRTS. To donate by mail, send checks to: PRTS, 2965 Leonard Street NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525.

—CHRIS HANNA | DIRECTOR OF
DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING



FINANCIAL REPORT

For period 8/1/13–9/31/13

DEAR FRIEND,

Once again, thank you for partnering with PRTS. Your prayers and generous support are treasured blessings to faculty, staff, and students alike. If you haven't already done so, I would like to ask you to prayerfully consider a monthly partnership with us. For more information on why we are looking for 700 plus friends to commit to a monthly giving plan and what that means for the seminary, please contact me today at 616-432-3407.

With warmest regards,
Chris Hanna

	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget	Variance	Percent of Annual Budget
Income				
HRC/FRC				
Church Support	\$ 95,521	354,361	(258,840)	27%
Other Donations	145,224	932,000	(686,776)	16%
Tuition	135,474	300,000	(164,526)	45%
Scholarships	62,950	235,000	(172,050)	27%
Other Income	27,793	105,000	(77,207)	26%
Total Income	\$ 466,963	\$ 1,926,361	\$ (1,459,398)	24%
Expenses				
Instruction	\$ 120,625	663,110	(542,485)	18%
Scholarships	101,771	235,000	(133,229)	43%
Administrative	190,048	1,028,251	(838,203)	18%
Total Expenses	\$ 412,444	\$ 1,926,361	\$ (1,513,917)	21%
Net Income	\$ 54,519		\$ 54,519	

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE!

- I would like to financially support PRTS by giving \$ _____, designated for:
- Building Expansion Fund Pressing Operational Needs Scholarship Fund
- PRTS Foundation Puritan Resource Center
- I would like to enroll in the monthly giving program and give \$ _____ per month.
- I am enclosing \$20 for a 2014 subscription to *Puritan Reformed Journal*.
- Send me a free copy of *Memoirs of the Way Home: Ezra and Nehemiah as a Call to Conversion* by Gerald M. Bilkes and *Why Christ Came: 31 Meditations on the Incarnation* by Joel Beeke and William Boekestein.

PAYMENT METHOD

- Check/cash enclosed Charge my credit/debit card:
- Card type (circle one): Visa Mastercard Discover American Express
- Card # _____
- Exp. Date ____ / ____ Security Code _____
- Send me a free copy of *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (for donations of \$100 or more).
Send me a copy of the PRTS promotional DVD PRTS 2012–2014 catalog
- Name _____
- Address _____
- City/State/Zip _____
- Phone _____ e-mail _____

Donations in the US need to be sent to:

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary
2965 Leonard Street, NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Canadian Donors please write your checks to:

Burgessville Heritage Netherlands Reformed Congregation
Attention: PRTS
685 Main Street, P.O. Box 105, Burgessville, Ontario N0J 1C0

Please include this form with your check.

For Credit Card donations to PRTS, please log on to
www.CanadaHelps.org

International Bank transfer information:

- Beneficiary Bank: Mercantile Bank of Michigan • Beneficiary's Bank Swift: MEMIUS33
- Beneficiary's Bank Fedwire ABA: 072413829 • Mercantile Bank: 100061175
- Beneficiary Customer: Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

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