



PRTS UPDATE

PURITAN REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY 2965 Leonard St., NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525

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Meditation

— REV. WADE KOENEN



Paul's Prayer Request for Ambassadors

Paul was chained to a Roman soldier when he wrote his letter to the Ephesians. He concludes his rich letter with a personal request: “that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (Eph. 6:19). Paul’s prayer request is one which the church needs to pray continually for the men who teach others to bring the gospel and the men who are trained to bring the gospel.

What does Paul’s request mean specifically? First, he asks for utterance—literally, “that freedom or words would be given to me.” Implied in Paul’s request are the words and the clarity to speak with the anointing power of the Holy Spirit. Paul was very eloquent and profound in both his writings and his speaking. His letters contain some of the most gripping and moving prose in all of Scripture (cf. 1 Cor. 13, Romans 11:30–31). When Paul spoke to people in Asia Minor, they were so taken back by his oratorical skills that they called him Mercury, the messenger of the gods. Despite his great gifts, however, Paul knew he needed the Holy Spirit to take the Word and transform dead hearts, purify sinful hearts, comfort broken hearts, calm fearful hearts, assure timid hearts, and provide guidance for needy hearts. Likewise, we should be praying that every professor, student, and minister be given a rich measure of the Holy Spirit. Our first and most basic need in ministry is for the anointing and applying work of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, Paul asks for boldness to speak openly and with complete confidence. Why did the great apostle Paul,

the ambassador of Christ, ask for boldness? He knew what it was like to stand before men and be afraid. “I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling” (1 Cor. 2:3). He knew the temptation to compromise the gospel because of fear. The fear of man is a real enemy that all Christians face.

All Christians need boldness because biblical truths are rejected and mocked by many who desire to live as they please and not face consequences for their actions. We need boldness because the truth of Christ’s coming into this sin-filled world for sinners is seen as foolishness and fantasy by the proud intellectuals of our world. We need boldness when the free offer of the gospel is resisted by hyper-Calvinists and when the truth of the glorious hope of salvation and the splendor of heaven is resisted by faithless pessimism.

Pray that the professors, students, and ministers affiliated with PRTS may be filled with a bold confidence to resist the temptation to compromise preaching the whole counsel of God because of the fear of man.

Lastly, Paul explains why he asks for utterance and boldness: so that he may make known the mystery of the gospel. When we think of a mystery, we may think of a mystery novel, something dark and unexplained. But here in Ephesians 3 and 6, when Paul speaks of the mystery of the gospel, he is explaining something that was a secret but now is brought into full view for all to see. The Old Testament is no longer a mystery. The sacrifices, the Passover, the shedding of the

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The PRTS Distance Learning Program

The distance learning program continues to grow at PRTS. I took over the oversight of this program about three months ago, and already a number of students have joined us. The most popular distance course is Greek. You wouldn't think a language would be something to study at a distance but currently there are eight students enrolled in Greek. Thirty-two students are taking PRTS courses via distance education.

We are tailoring two of our spring semester courses especially for distance learners. Once enrolled, distance-learning students will complete the same assignments as on-campus students and meet the same deadlines. The only difference the distance students will encounter is a small delay after the class is complete before the lecture is available online. Many of the assignments will require all the students, both distance and on-campus, to interact with each other. All this is made possible by our online course management system. We look forward to this new opportunity! The two courses being offered this way are *Introduction to the Prophets* and *Eschatology*. The Prophets course is taught by Dr. Jerry Bilkes and requires a working knowledge of Hebrew. The Eschatology course is taught by Dr. David Murray.

If you are interested in pursuing either of these courses from a distance, please don't hesitate to contact me at chris.engelsma@puritanseminary.org or by calling (616) 977-0599 ext. 137. Also feel free to contact me if you're interested in our regular distance learning program. All of our courses are available for distance students at \$40 per course, plus our low tuition cost of \$150 per credit hour.

We aim to reach as many people as possible with Reformed theological training. Please pray that God will add His blessing to these new opportunities for offering courses to students all over the world, including those who cannot study at our campus.

— Chris Engelsma
Director of Distance Learning

From the Admissions Office

What is the PRTS admissions process? I thought you would like to know. Students send inquiries after hearing our professors speak at conferences, reading their books, finding us on the Internet, or being referred by alumni, friends, or pastors. Most of the initial contacts are through e-mail. I get about 800 e-mails per month, a large percentage of which are from men inquiring about admissions. It's a real pleasure for me to work with these people and become acquainted over e-mail and phone.

Prospective students then submit an application form, which includes the required subscription to our doctrinal standards, an account of conversion and call to the ministry, references, proof of English competency, and an essay outlining the rationale for applying to PRTS. Once the applications packet is assembled with all the supporting documents I forward it to the Board of Trustees for their consideration at their monthly teleconference meetings. If the Board accepts the applicant and he needs financial assistance, he applies for a scholarship to the scholarship committee. This committee judges the application based on certain criteria and makes a recommendation to the Board.

International students need a student visa. We guide the process and supply the necessary documents for F-1 student visas. The student needs to gather a number of personal documents and appear for an interview at the US embassy in his home country. This requires fees and often significant travel.

With all this completed, we assist the students with travel arrangements and then begin making arrangements for a home for them here. If at all possible, we arrange to pick them up personally at the airport here. This is always a highlight for us, finally meeting someone in person who we have spoken with and prayed for over several months—even years!

The 2009 spring semester will begin on January 26 with several new students. Kyle Borg is joining us as an M.Div. student from Wisconsin. He and his wife, Rachel, have a precious baby girl. If all works well with immigration, Van Lal Siama will be joining us from Myanmar, and Pastor Okpoti from Ghana. Dr. Paul Hoole and his family, from Sri Lanka, hope to join us in August to begin his Master of Theology. Vidush Bhandari and his wife and baby also hope to come in August for a Th.M. They are from India. At the time of writing, we are working with a number of other applicants in various stages of the process. We are presently serving close to ninety students.

We covet your prayers for discernment and wisdom as we prepare to guide men from around the world coming to our seminary. May God keep us faithful to our mission to biblically train men for sacred ministry.

— Henk Kleyn

WESTMINSTER STANDARDS—ELECTRONIC FACSIMILE

Are you interested in or know someone who is interested in the Westminster Standards? The Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary would like to make an electronic facsimile on CD-Rom available to you for a gift of \$100 or more. With only 80 CD's available, you may want to secure your copy soon. To donate to PRTS and receive your copy of the Westminster Standards on CD, please call 616-977-0599 or e-mail us at info@puritanseminary.org.



Kushal Rai, a seminary student at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, recently answered the following questions.

COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Would you share a little about your home?

India is a country of diversity and unity. With a population second only to China, India has 18 major languages and over a thousand dialects. It is considered to be an emerging economy with metropolitan cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and others which are similar to cities in the West, such as New York and London.

Over the last ten years, there has been a rise in Christian persecution, especially in the states ruled by Hindu extremists. The escalation of persecution is, in my opinion, the number one fear among Indian Christians, and a general fear felt by many in India.

BEFORE AND AFTER CHRIST

What was life like before and after Christ changed you?

By God's grace, I was born into a Christian family. My father has been a minister for 35 years and runs a Bible School in Darjeeling (near the Himalayas bordering Nepal). Although raised as a Christian, I was not serious about my faith until after college.

It was ten years ago that God moved me to recommit my life to Christ. Even though my faith meant something, I was not interested in ministry work. I struggled for one and one half years before believing the Lord was calling me into the ministry.

How did you end up in seminary?

In 2004, I joined the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, the only Reformed seminary in India. It was by God's grace that Rev. Steve Poelman [an American missionary in India who is completing his Th.M. degree at PRTS] and I met. The church history professor had left the seminary early, leaving the students without an instructor. Rev. Poelman stepped in and finished the course.

It was during this time that I realized Rev. Poelman has a genuine desire to serve India. He became my mentor; for two years I participated in a Tuesday Bible study and Saturday house fellowship. It was during these times together that Rev. Poelman introduced me to the Puritans.

Rev. Poelman visited my home four times in three years. In 2007, he mailed my father, encouraging me to think about studying for a Th.M. degree at Puritan Reformed

Theological Seminary in the USA. I responded positively to the offer, wanting to learn more of the Puritans, their piety and experiential preaching.

LIFE IN THE USA

How have you adjusted to life in the USA?

My time in the United States has been great. PRTS provides a perfect blend of intellectual insight and piety of life. This is something that is quite evident in the lives of the faculty, staff, and students. Mr. and Mrs. Kamps, my American host family, are loving and gracious people. Often times, I think I am dreaming and I never want it to end.

MINISTRY OBJECTIVES

Would you please share the number one concern facing your country?

The greatest need facing India is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Over the years, we have seen the social gospel come and go. Now, the health, wealth, and prosperity gospel is heavily influential in India.

A theological writer, Vishal Mangalwadi, argues it is only the gospel of Christ that will transform India. He goes on to point out that Calvinism is the crown of our Christian heritage and is greatly needed in my country.

India remains in large part a non-Christian country, even though it has numerous Christian institutions and has been the recipient of funds from the West. For many in India, taking the money of those in the west is an easy way to get rich.

I hope to finish my education and be ordained by the end of 2010. Lord willing, I will teach at the seminary and organize seminars, along with Rev. Poelman. Please pray for India and me.

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blood—all of which pointed to Christ—are now fulfilled. The secret is out; the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb that was slain to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). This is the mystery of the gospel. It is a mystery that is no longer hidden but now revealed to all.

The gospel reveals the mystery of who God is, who we are, and how we can become reconciled with God. It reveals that God through Christ is willing and able to save sinners. It invites you as a sinner to come to Jesus just as you are (John 6:36). The gospel assures repenting and returning sinners that they are safe and secure in the person and work of Jesus. This gospel is balm for the hurting, milk for the thirsty, meat for the hungry, and refreshment for the fainting. It is our only light in this world of darkness, our only consolation in a world filled with despair. We need the gospel because it is our only hope for eternity.

Pray that the Lord would continue to raise up men through PRTS who would speak with the Spirit's anointing and with boldness. The world needs this gospel!

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary FINANCIAL REPORT

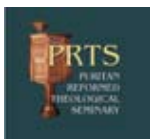
For period 8/1/08 - 12/31/08

Please remember in prayer Dr. Beeke as he speaks at conferences in Wheaton, Illinois (Jan. 26–27); Columbia, South Carolina (March 7–9) Greenville, South Carolina (March 10–12); Orlando, Florida (March 19–21); the Philippines (May 1–7); Cambodia (May 8–11); and Virginia Beach, Virginia (May 23–24). Remember also Dr. Murray as he speaks in Dallas, Texas (Jan. 24–26); Jordan, Ontario (Feb. 8); Vineland, Ontario (March 22); and Calgary, Alberta (Apr. 25–27).

	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Overage or (Shortfall)
Income			
HRC Church Collections	\$ 51,326.00	81,322.00	(29,996.00)
Other Donations	412,704.00	332,704.00	80,000.00
Tuition	53,069.00	54,167.00	(1,098.00)
Scholarships	35,221.00	83,333.00	(48,112.00)
Other	<u>10,449.00</u>	<u>19,292.00</u>	<u>(8,843.00)</u>
Total Income	\$ 562,769.00	\$ 570,818.00	\$ (8,050.00)
Expenses			
Instruction	\$ 214,380.00	219,672.00	(5,292.00)
Scholarships	85,900.00	86,250.00	(350.00)
Administrative	<u>212,609.00</u>	<u>263,771.00</u>	<u>(51,162.00)</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 512,889.00	\$ 569,693.00	\$ (56,804.00)
Net Income	\$ 49,880.00	\$ 1,125.00	\$ 48,754.00

The seminary continues to operate on a month-to-month basis. Once again we ask for your prayerful support to open the hearts of donors to support the seminary.

— Ann Dykema



Our Mission

Preparing students to serve Christ and His church through biblical, experiential, and practical ministry.

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE!

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