

*Meditation*

MICHAEL A.G. HAYKIN

**Why the Bible Calls Mary Blessed**

“What place does the Virgin Mary hold in Reformed piety?” The answer of Herbert Roux to this question in a 1950 publication on Protestant perspectives on Mary was succinct and plain: “None whatever.” Seventy or so years earlier, C. H. Spurgeon, that remarkable Victorian preacher, had made a similar observation. “I have sometimes thought,” he said in an 1886 sermon on Luke 11:27–28, “that in our great eagerness to keep clear of anything like superstitious reverence of Mary we have scarcely given her her due.” Yet, if our Lord could remember His mother and her need when He was carrying out the great work of the cross (John 19:26–27) that was planned before the foundations of the universe were laid (1 Peter 1:18–21), surely it is not right that we, who adore the One she bore in her womb and nursed, should forget her.

In remembering Mary, we first need to note that only two biblical authors really mention her at length, Matthew and Luke. Paul has one direct reference to her in Galatians 4:4 (Jesus was “made of a woman”), which serves to affirm the reality of Jesus’ humanity. Mark mentions Mary twice in his gospel (3:31–35; 6:1–3), but on neither occasion do we really learn much about her. In John’s gospel, she appears at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, at the very outset of her son’s ministry (2:1–5), and then, near the very end, she is there at the cross (19:25–27). In the first of these two accounts in John, she makes the important statement to the servants at the wedding feast to do whatever Jesus tells them to do, which reveals a degree of conviction about His authority.

Matthew mentions Mary a number of times in the first two chapters of his gospel, but we do not come away from reading this portion of God’s Holy Word with any significant knowledge of her character. After our Lord, it is Joseph who is the focus of Matthew 1–2. She obviously has a key role to play in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, for she is the virgin who would “be with child, and . . . bring forth a son” (1:18–23). And like Paul’s remark in Galatians 4, Matthew’s comments about Mary serve to underline the humanity of Jesus (2:11), which was an important issue in the early church, since some denied this key tenet of the faith (see 1 John 4:1–3). But apart from these important truths, we learn little about Mary herself.

It is Luke, though, who gives us the fullest account of Mary. In the small scope of this meditation, we cannot do justice to all that Luke writes about Mary in chapters 1 and 2 especially. But what we do see there is Mary presented as a model of humble obedience to God. Unlike Zacharias, who greeted the angel Gabriel’s words about his wife’s pregnancy with disbelief (1:18–20), Mary’s heart, while filled with wonder (1:34), is nonetheless a heart of faith. And when God has spoken through the angel, she simply bows in humility and says, “Be it unto me according to thy word” (1:38).

Later in Luke, an unnamed woman, hearing the teaching of Jesus, calls out to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.” Jesus’ response is utterly vital: “Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it” (11:27–28). Here Jesus lays down a fundamental regarding being His disciple: to keep, to put into practice, the Word of God.

But right at the beginning of Luke, Mary had been shown to be such a disciple, for when she heard God’s Word, she meekly obeyed her Lord. In the final analysis, this is why she is to be called blessed to all generations—and this is why we cannot fail to remember her.

**Dr. Michael Haykin** is a professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a lecturer at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary.



## PRTS Faculty Itinerary

### Dr. Joel Beeke

**February 9–18:** Puritan Conference and preaching itinerary in Northern Ireland

**March 5–6:** Sacramento, California: Philadelphia Conference of Reformed Theology (PCRT)

**March 7:** Sunnyvale, California

**March 14–16:** Edwardsville, Illinois: conference

**March 19–20:** Hudsonville, Michigan: conference

**March 20:** Byron Center, Michigan: PCRT

**March 28:** Preaching in FRC, Fenwick, Ontario

**April 11–13:** Florida: Graders' Conference

**April 16–18:** Greenville, South Carolina: PCRT

### Dr. Gerald Bilkes

**February 7:** Pompton Plains, New Jersey

**March 14:** Brantford, Ontario

**April 2, 4:** Pompton Plains, New Jersey

### Dr. David Murray

**January 8–25:** British Columbia Preaching and Speaking

**February 28:** Pompton Plains FRC, New Jersey

**March 9–11:** Greenville Presbyterian Seminary Theological Conference

**March 20:** Byron Center, Michigan: PCRT

**April 1–2:** Atlanta: Free Church Officebearers' Conference

**April 23–25:** British Columbia, Fraser Valley Bible Conference

## PRTS Faculty Writing and/or Video Projects

### Dr. Joel Beeke

- *"A Habitual Sight of Him": The Christ-centered Piety of Thomas Goodwin* (with Mark Jones)
- *Learning from Calvin* (with Michael Haykin)
- *Calvin, the Revolutionary, Reformer, and Theologian* (co-edit with Garry Williams)
- *Sanctification*
- *Sing a New Song* (co-edit with Anthony Selvaggio)
- Editing Jodocus VanLodenstein's sermons
- *Encouragement for Ministers* (with Sinclair Ferguson and Derek Thomas)
- *The Promises of God* (with James La Belle)
- *Calvin for the 21st Century: Puritan Reformed Conference Addresses* (editor)

### Dr. Gerald Bilkes

- Exposition of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther
- The Spirituality of Samuel Davies
- Profiting from the Parables

### Dr. David Murray

- *God's Shadow: A Handbook on Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*
- *God's Technology: DVD on the Christian response to the digital revolution*
- *God's Home: Bible Study Guide on the Tabernacle*
- *Christians Do Get Depressed!*
- *Westminster Teaching Outlines: The Shorter Catechism and Confession of Faith*

## Our Student Body

PRTS is experiencing multiple opportunities to serve the church of Jesus Christ. Sinners are being saved from all nations, people, and languages. God has many trophies of His grace as witnesses to the power of the gospel. We have brothers seeking to join us for study who have been involved in the darkness of Buddhism, the hopelessness of the drug culture, the falsehoods of Islam, and the hedonism of the entertainment culture.

Is it a greater miracle for God to rescue a sinner from the streets of India than to convert a covenant child from a Reformed congregation? Have we not all the same need of the miracle of regeneration? We stand in awe of the testimonies of the men God is saving and calling to sacred ministry.

If God enables, we will be adding twenty students to our student body from a variety of backgrounds and nations this coming year. Fifteen of our current students hope to complete their degrees and graduate in May. Our student body will include about 160 students in a variety of courses. About sixty brothers are seeking the advanced master of theology degree. Many of these men are already pastors. Dozens of men are training to become pastors. About forty others are taking distance courses and may eventually join us in our degree programs. Another thirty men come in to take the occasional course that interests them. All of these brothers are serving the Lord under His Word.

Dear friends, please thank the Lord with us for these opportunities to serve Him. We sincerely ask you to continue to pray that God would keep us faithful to His Word.

—Henk Kleyn

## Fall Dinner

November 13 marked the second annual PRTS appreciation dinner, and the first "official" student open house. Guests at this year's event included friends from a variety of Reformed and Presbyterian denominations.

Our guest speaker, Dr. James Grier, Adjunct Professor of Ethics and Apologetics at PRTS, delivered a stirring message from Hebrews 12:18–29. He pointed out that as Christians, we have come to a better mountain than Mt. Sinai, to a better mediator than Moses, to a better covenant than the old covenant, and to all these things through a better sacrifice, Jesus Christ. Therefore, because of God's grace, our lives and possessions are to be used to His glory and for the advancement of His kingdom.

After a brief presentation, our president, Dr. Joel Beeke, made a simple appeal asking people to consider partnering with the seminary. The Lord graciously stirred the hearts of many who showed their commitment to our growing institution by generously giving gifts totaling \$130,000.

After dinner, our registrar, Mr. Henk Kleyn, introduced this year's new students and their families. After hearing their moving stories and seeing their smiling faces, we need not wonder why the Lord has raised up PRTS.

The Lord is greatly blessing this institution's work. For this, like the psalmist, we praise God; His works are great, honorable, and glorious (Ps. 111:1–3). Please continue to pray for the alumni, faculty, staff, and students of our growing institution. May we all together confess with Richard Sibbes, "A true believing soul cannot but be a praising soul."

For more information about PRTS, please write us at [info@puritanseminary.org](mailto:info@puritanseminary.org).

—Chris Hanna

# ZACH HALL

Upon graduating from Arkansas Tech University, the choice to attend seminary seemed evident but not immediate for Zach Hall, first semester M. Div. student at PRTS. He had planned to propose to Becki, now his wife, that Christmas break following graduation, then spend the year-long engagement time working and saving up money for their life as a new family. Only a few days after proposing, Zach knew more clearly than ever before that he must, instead, attend seminary that spring.

Just five weeks after graduating from college and two weeks after becoming engaged, he drove his car full of all that he owned to Los Angeles, California, to attend The Master's Seminary. The first year there was a very intense breaking and molding time for him. Whether it was through the preaching of John MacArthur or through other men that the Lord placed in his life, he was encouraged and challenged in ways that he did not anticipate yet truly desired.

He was married in December, 2008. His wife joined him in Los Angeles, where she taught first grade at the elementary school on the same campus as the seminary. During that semester, God began to reveal the possibility of making yet another move across the country. As he devoured the Puritan writings and heeded wisdom from some trusted men that have provided sound counsel to him in the past, Zach and his wife began seeking God for His direction.

After watching the PRTS video enough to almost memorize the names and faces of those interviewed, diligently seeking God's face for His will, and briefly visiting the seminary in May, Zach had all of the confirmation that he needed to move his family to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

He packed his car up, once again, and drove thirty hours to his new home. Henk Kleyn was the greatest help to the Hall family throughout the moving process. He

helped them get an apartment in the Plymouth Manor, where they frequently receive tasty baked goods from the ladies that live there, including Oma Kleyn (Henk's mom). They were overwhelmed with the way the apartment was furnished and cleaned by complete strangers that were fulfilling their function as the body of Christ. It was evident then that they were in a spiritually healthy and thriving place. In the first weeks after moving in, they were invited to 7 or 8 different meals with people that wanted to welcome them. They knew very quickly that this would be the perfect spot for them to learn from these believers and grow in Him.

Zach desires to obtain his M. Div. degree and possibly a Th.M. He is open to what God might have for him in his future ministry. It could mean going back to the South (the southern states of America), remaining in this area for some time, or even going overseas. Whatever the case, he understands it to be a privilege and God's providence to have the opportunity to be trained under men that truly want to shepherd him and that live lives that say "Follow me insofar as I follow Christ."



## PRTS Admissions and Registrar Assistant Needed

This position includes assisting the admissions director and registrar with admissions, enrollment, scheduling, and student files.

### Possible Responsibilities:

- Maintain student transcripts; track required courses for each student
- Plan and implement all seminary course schedules
- Schedule and conduct recruiting visits
- Track the applicants' admissions progress
- Conduct initial student counseling for course selections
- Maintain current and prospective student data files
- Plan and manage student support events and accommodations
- Maintain contact with all professors for scheduling, maintaining syllabi, providing and collating course evaluations, and proctoring exams.
- Facilitate text book orders
- Assist the admissions director, faculty, librarian, and staff as team member.

Report to: Admissions Director

### Required skills include:

- facility with data entry software, Microsoft office, spread sheets, and communication technology.
- excellent communication skills
- ability to work with and for a variety of people

### Qualifications include:

- evident commitment to God's Word and His Christ
- confidential
- an associate or higher degree in post-secondary education
- teachable

### Position expectations:

Part-time (50%) 2010/2011, possibly full time thereafter  
Salary and Benefits are commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Employment to begin with 2010 academic year, August 30, 2010

Contact Henk Kleyn, admissions director [henk.kleyn@puritanseminary.org](mailto:henk.kleyn@puritanseminary.org) or mail resumé with cover letter to Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, 2965 Leonard Street, NE. Grand Rapids, MI 49525. Telephone 616-977-0599 ext. 120 or fax 616-285-3246

Register online for the 2010 PRTS conference

## Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary FINANCIAL REPORT

For period 8/1/09 – 12/31/09



	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance
<b>Income</b>			
HRC Church Collections	\$ 48,838	82,157	(33,319)
Other Donations	607,045	361,826	245,218
Tuition	89,080	75,000	14,080
Scholarships	105,642	91,667	13,975
Other	9,445	16,792	(7,347)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 860,049</b>	<b>\$ 627,442</b>	<b>\$ 232,607</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Instruction	\$ 270,413	312,840	(42,427.00)
Scholarships	91,458	91,667	(209.00)
Administrative	255,110	244,813	10,297.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 616,980</b>	<b>\$ 649,320</b>	<b>\$ (32,339.00)</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 243,069</b>	<b>\$ (21,878)</b>	

Thank you for the continued support of PRTS throughout 2009. May we together declare the glory of God for His kindness shown to us. Please note, however, our finances permit us to operate solely on a month-to-month basis. We ask you to prayerfully consider becoming a monthly partner or giving a gift at this time. Thank you.

— Chris Hanna

### YES, I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE!

- I would like to financially support PRTS by giving \$ \_\_\_\_\_, designated for:
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  - Puritan Resource Center
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- I am enclosing \$20 for a 2010 subscription to *Puritan Reformed Journal*.
- Send me a copy of *Contagious Christian Living*, a new book by Joel Beeke, published by Reformation Heritage Books and Bryntirion Press.

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