



PRTS UPDATE

Vol. 5 No. 3

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

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Meditation

REV. BARTEL ELSHOUT



“...and so spake that a great multitude...believed” (Acts 14:1).

This passage uniquely highlights the vital connection between the preaching of God’s Word and the believing response to that Word. Significantly, Luke writes that Paul and Barnabas “so spake” that a multitude of Jews and Gentiles responded by believing their message. The fact that so many believed the gospel had a great deal to do with the manner in which the message of salvation was proclaimed to them.

When examining Paul’s message, a message so clearly articulated for us in his epistles, it should be obvious that Luke is not suggesting that Paul and Barnabas engaged in psychological manipulation of the crowd to produce favorable results. Regretfully, this is often true of modern evangelistic campaigns. Considering the total context of the apostolic ministry, we may conclude that the phrase “so spake” simply refers to the fact that they engaged in the faithful proclamation of the Word—nothing more and nothing less. No doubt the words of Paul and Barnabas were precisely what is recorded earlier in Acts regarding the ministry of the apostles, namely, that “they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42).

The ministry of the apostles, therefore, was divid-

ing the Word of God rightly; that is, they so exegeted the written Word of God that the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, was proclaimed to their audiences. Such preaching was honored and endorsed by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, with His applying ministry, thereby rendering fruit in the hearts of sinners. The Spirit of Christ is irresistibly attracted to the preaching of Christ, and when the Word is so preached, He cannot refrain from joining Himself to it.

Such must be the objective of all who are called to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! We must so preach the Word that the Spirit can freely and fully endorse our expository and applicatory preaching, resulting in a believing response of those who hear us. May we, therefore, labor prayerfully and diligently so to preach the gospel that the fruits of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21) may manifest themselves among our hearers. And may the Lord continue to bless PRTS to prepare men to so preach the Word that, by His Spirit, a multitude of sinners will believe it!

Rev. Bartel Elshout is pastor of the Heritage Reformed Congregation in Chilliwack, British Columbia.

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

We are very pleased to welcome on to our staff Mr. Chris Engelsma, Director of Distance Learning, and Mr. Chris Hanna, Director of Development and Marketing.

Mr. Chris Engelsma is the Director of Distance Learning. He will be assisting and guiding those students who for whatever reason cannot take classes face to face with professors on campus. Chris is a graduate of Cornerstone University and Calvin Seminary and previously taught history, grammar, and literature to the junior high at Providence Christian School in Kalamazoo. He is married with two children, for the moment; his wife expects to give birth to their third child in September.

As the Director of Development, **Mr. Chris Hanna** is responsible for the increased promotion of the seminary, its mission, and the financial support needed for the seminary's endeavors.

Originally from western Pennsylvania, Chris and his family have lived in Hudsonville, Michigan the last several years. He and his wife have seven children, of which two remain at home. They are members of Grace Bible Church in Grandville, Michigan. For the last fifteen years, he has held various management positions in the corporate business world that have provided both international and domestic experience.

In 2006, Chris was accepted into the M.Th. program at the Wales Evangelical School of Theology. Upon graduation, he applied for a position in the Ph.D. program and was accepted this past April. He is looking to explore with his Ph.D. studies what it means to be an image bearer in Christ.

Chris writes, "What excited me about Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary is the emphasis upon the experiential application of grace to every sphere of the Christian life. To see men and their families coming from around the globe to be trained at PRTS, and to take the training and experiences back to their home countries, is wonderful. The proclamation of sovereign grace is the only hope for anyone, no matter where they may live or what their immediate circumstances may be. *Soli Deo gloria!*"

From the Registrar

The Lord has blessed us with a busy summer. You, dear readers, have upheld the seminary in your prayers and your giving. We were carried through to the end of our fiscal year with a good start into the next. Thank you! May God continue to bless your partnership with us.

We anticipate serving over 70 students this semester with 32 full-time students and 40 part-time students. As of early August, some of our new students are still in the application/immigration process. Allow me to introduce them.

Yoshinori Aoki has enrolled in our Th.M. program. He and his family are from Japan. He intends to serve as teacher in a Reformed seminary in Japan.

Tiago Canuto Baia has enrolled in the Th.M. program. He is coming to us from the Presbyterian Church of Brazil. He feels called to ministry and teaching with a love for the experiential Reformed preaching.

Jonathan Beeke will be taking several courses this fall in preparation for beginning his Ph.D. at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia next year.

Kevin Carr is a minister in the PCA. He has enrolled in the Th.M. program, seeking to be more grounded in historical Reformed theology.

Steven Carr, Kevin's son, is a member of the local RPCNA and plans to begin full-time with the M.Div. this spring.

Darryl Dedert is a missionary teacher in Cambodia. He is taking courses to assist him in his teaching.

Joel DeLeon is an OPC M.Div. student who has a calling and desire to serve as an OPC missionary to his people in the Philippines.

Young Yu Hong comes to us into the M.Div. program as an exchange student from Hapdong Seminary in South Korea.

George Kalengo is joining his Malawi colleague, Brian Kamwendo, in the Th.M. program in hopes of teaching at their denominational seminary, the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Malawi.

Brian Murray is a pastor in an ARP church in Ontario. He is enrolled in our Th.M. program focusing on historical theology.

Chan Kumar Poudel comes to us from Nepal, a corner of the world that is just opening up to the gospel. His church has sent him to us for the M.Div. training for preaching and teaching the people there.

Kushal Rai is a graduate from a Presbyterian seminary in India. His church and seminary have sent him to take our Th.M. to prepare for teaching historical Reformed theology in their seminary.

John Skidmore is an elder in the OPC and an engineer by profession. He is pursuing a Th.M. to assist him with his teaching in his church.

Robert VanDoodewaard hopes to begin his M.Div. this fall. He is joining us from St. Thomas, Ontario.

The seminary is being used of the Lord for many thousands of people all around the globe. We as a staff and faculty are humbled at the privilege we have and deeply appreciate all of your support. May Christ's wonderful name be exalted through our efforts.

— Henk Kleyn, Registrar & Admissions Director

Interview with current PRTS student, Sam Sabelo Mhlanga from Zimbabwe

How did you hear about PRTS, and what all went into moving here?

In 2005, I went to a Conference in Birmingham, Britain, to represent my Church in Zimbabwe as its Vice President. A day before the end of the conference, I asked Roy Lively if he could recommend a seminary to further my education. He asked Rev. Malcolm Watts who recommended Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. Roy and I phoned Dr. Beeke who responded positively and I started the application process.

I wondered how I would make it to the U.S. The challenge before me was the student visa from the U.S. Embassy. They denied me four times from 2005 to 2007. They cited the political and economic crisis in my country as the major reason for denying my request. One day, when I was working for the Lord, a phone call came from the American Embassy Education Department, calling me to come for orientation for American Education. When I told them that I was denied a study visa, they said it was a mistake because my papers were in order and I qualified according to the American education standard. I was then interviewed and I passed the interview. I call it a "miracle" because I had long ago settled in my mind that I would never be able to study at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in America!

What has surprised you most about Grand Rapids or about America at large?

What surprised me most when I landed in Grand Rapids was the plentitude of everything, such as food and clothing, as well as the hospitality of the church members from churches here. They had prepared everything for us. Their care, love, and support left us speechless, except to worship our God in humble adoration. America is a land of plenty, opportunities, and liberty.



The Mhlanga family, from left to right: Prosper, Rev. Mhlanga, Shalom, Immanuel, Blessing, Judith Mhlanga

What program are you studying and what are your plans for after graduation?

I am pursuing a four-year Master of Divinity program so that I will be able to train other pastors. My goal is to pursue a Ph.D. after some time in order to be fully equipped and prepared as, back in Zimbabwe, our denominational churches are building a university.

Tell us about your role in the church in Zimbabwe.

I have been a pastor for fifteen years and served as a lecturer in our Bible College for two and a half years.

I also served as the church's Vice President for six years and Church Administrator for five years. I hold a three-year diploma in Theology, a Bachelor of Divinity and Education from Africa University, and a Masters in Education from Zimbabwe University.

What is the state of Christianity in Zimbabwe today?

Zimbabwe is 75% Christian and 1% Moslem. The Church has both religious and political mandates to shape and guide the nation to human dignity, to enhance moral values, and to live for God. Fifty percent of education in Zimbabwe is offered by mission schools which are church-related and owned.

Currently, Zimbabwe is faced with a major political and economic crisis which has plunged the country into an economic slump.

The church has mediated to curtail political turmoil and encouraged the leaders to form amicably a government of national unity. We pray that God will heal our land (2 Chronicles 7:14). The country has no food, fuel, medication, etc. When I phoned my mother, Josephine, once from here in the States, she said she did not eat anything for three days; she had had only water. My heart sank and I shed tears for her. I wondered how I could help her to have at least a little food each day. Prayer is the only option for now. Your prayers will be highly appreciated as well.

ORDINATIONS OF PRTS ALUMNI

On July 18, 2008, PRTS alumnus Bill Boeckstein was ordained to the ministry of Word and sacraments as the new pastor of Covenant Reformed Church, Carbondale, Pennsylvania. Dr. Joel Beeke preached the ordination sermon from 2 Timothy 4:1-2. Rev. Richard Miller, pastor of Dutton United Reformed Church, conducted the ordination and gave the personal charge, and Rev. Paul Murphy, minister in New York City, gave the charge to the congregation.

On July 26, 2008, PRTS alumnus Bert Pohl was ordained to the ministry of Word and sacraments as the new pastor of Smiths Falls Reformed Church, Ontario, Canada. Rev. John J. Murray preached the ordination sermon from John 2:1, conducted the ordination and gave both the personal as well as congregational charge.

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal Year Ending July 31, 2008

COURSES OFFERED FOR FALL 2008

- 111 Hebrew I
- 123 OT Exegesis: Poetic Books
- 142 Biblical Theology I: Old Testament
- 151 Hermeneutics
- 211 Greek III
- 421 Introduction to Apologetics
- 511 Homiletics I: Sermon Preparation
- 514 Homiletics IV: Preaching from the Heidelberg Catechism
- 521 Practice Preaching
- 613 Catechetics
- 615a Leadership & Administration
- 615b Worship & Liturgy
- 635 Cultural Anthropology & Communication
- 802 Pentateuchal Legislation
- 825 Johannine Writings
- 862 Puritan Theology in New England

	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Overage or (Shortfall)
Income			
Donations — General Operating	\$ 646,670.54	\$ 693,101.00	\$ (46,430.46)
Tuition	136,286.95	65,000.00	71,286.95
Scholarship Fund	285,753.70	200,000.00	85,753.70
Other Income	<u>30,310.74</u>	<u>31,860.00</u>	<u>(1,549.26)</u>
Total Income	\$ 1,099,021.93	\$989,961.00	\$109,060.93
Expenses			
Program Expenses	\$738,417.00	602,861.00	135,556.00
Fundraising Expenses	49,910.22	47,500.00	2,410.22
Administrative Expenses	<u>403,963.30</u>	<u>339,600.00</u>	<u>64,363.30</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 1,192,290.52	\$989,961.00	\$202,329.52
Net Income (Loss)	\$ (93,268.59)	-	\$ (93,268.59)

Presently, our balance in the Operating Fund is sufficient only to carry us through August. Donations are needed at this time.

— Ann Dykema

Please remember in prayer Dr. Beeke as he speaks at conferences in Mexico (Sept. 30 – Oct. 3), Brazil (Oct. 6–10), Flint, Michigan (Oct. 25–26), Little Rock, Arkansas (Oct. 31 – Nov. 2), and Moscow, Russia (Nov. 5–7); Dr. Murray as he speaks in Ontario (Sept. 1), Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Sept. 28), Jordan Ontario (Oct. 22), and Washington, D.C. (Nov. 6–8). Dr. Bilkes, Dr. Murray, and Dr. Beeke all hope to speak at a Preaching Conference at PRTS (Oct. 14–17).



Our Mission

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

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE!

- I would like to financially support PRTS by giving \$ _____, designated for:
- Pressing Operational Needs
 - Scholarship Fund
 - PRTS Foundation
 - Puritan Resource Center
- I would like to enroll in the monthly giving program and give \$ _____ per month.

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 copy of *Living to the Glory of God: An Introduction to Calvinism*, a new book by Dr. Beeke published by Ligonier's Reformation Trust.
- Send me a copy of the PRTS promotional DVD PRTS 2006–2009 catalog
- Name _____
- Address _____
- City/State/Zip _____
- Phone _____
- e-mail _____

Donations in the US need to be sent to:
Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary
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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.

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