



PRTS UPDATE

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

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Meditation

CHRIS HANNA

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING



“God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah” (Ps. 67:1).

The Westminster Catechism starts out by asking the question, “What is the chief end of man?” For many of us the answer to the question takes shape with little or no difficulty; we seldom ponder the richness of what it means to “glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” Here in Psalm 67 we are reminded of the significance of the answer.

The structure of Psalm 67 helps us to find the central message of the psalmist’s prayer: “Let the people praise thee...let all the people praise thee.” The catechism answer is but an echo of this glorious verse. But we may ask: How do any of us arrive at the place where we are able to praise? To answer that question, we need only look at the opening verse. We need the mercy of God, His blessing, and the light of His face. Many scholars have pointed out the similarities between verse 1 and Numbers 6:24–26. There, in the book of Numbers, Moses is commanded to instruct Aaron how to bless the people of Israel. Here, in Psalm 67, we read that the psalmist himself participates in the prayer: “God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us.”

Whoever we are, we are in need of mercy. It has often been said that Psalm 67 is a missional psalm, and that it is. However, both the church as well as our world need to humble themselves before the Lord, who in Jesus Christ is a merciful God, who blesses and shines forth His blessing. Is this not what the Lord has declared in 2 Chronicles 7:14? “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble

themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” May we know what it means to humble ourselves before the Lord so that His “way may be known upon the earth”; and may He continue to bless PRTS in the training of men for ministry to this great end: to the calling of the church to humility and to the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of Christ.

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| November 3-7 | 613a Teaching the Catechism
(Mr. James Beeke) |
| November 10-14 | CH862 Puritan Theology in
New England (Rev. C. Pronk) |
| November 27-28 | Thanksgiving Break – no classes |
| December 5 | End of first semester |
| December 9-12 | Exams |
| January 19-23 | CH 858 Scottish Presbyterianism
(Dr. D. Lachman) |
| January 26-30 | CH853 Theology of John
(Rev. G. Procce) |

Interview with PRTS student Koos Truter from South Africa



Koos & Elza Truter

1. How did you hear about PRTS, and what did moving to the USA for studies at PRTS entail?

Some years ago, Dr. Brian DeVries, an alumni of PRTS, connected with one of the pastors from Rietvallei Reformed Church, an Afrikaans-speaking congregation in Pretoria, where we are members. An

English church service was started in response to the growing need for multi-cultural Reformed churches. Through Dr. DeVries and Dr. Arthur Miskin, who took over Dr. DeVries's work and is also a PRTS alumnus, I heard about PRTS.

Initially I considered a number of seminaries, but it became clear to me that the emphasis of PRTS on the need for experiential preaching and hearing and living the Reformed faith best aligned with the ministry needs in South Africa. While we face many challenges, real hope and meaningful transformation of our communities can only be brought about by individuals who have been renewed by the gospel and who actively strive to live to the glory of God in all spheres of life.

Last year, in response to our prayers, the Lord provided the means for us to pursue my calling to the ministry when we were able to sell our home despite a severely depressed housing market. When this transaction was finalized, we had six weeks to start packing up and make arrangements for our move here as well as for our children that remained behind in South Africa. On top of this we also fit in the wedding of our eldest son and his fiancé!

2. What similarities and differences do you and your family find between the USA and South Africa?

While there are many obvious similarities and differences between South Africa and the USA, one of the more subtle differences is the underlying individualistic nature of American culture as opposed to the pervasive sense of community in our own country. Neither of these are necessarily good or bad in themselves, but it certainly impacts one's common understanding and expectation of others in quite different ways. Whereas we may consider a reserved "Hi!" without any handshake or further discussion a somewhat impolite form of greeting in South Africa, Americans may perceive our openness and inquisitiveness as quite intrusive. Another difference is the way in which we respectively perceive the cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity in our countries. At the risk of generalizing, Americans seem to perceive this diversity mainly in terms of sub-cultures within a larger, stable American way of life. This is quite different from South Africa, where we often seem to live out the reality of our cultural differences. What else can you expect in a country with eleven official languages? Whereas this gives a certain dynamism and vibrancy to our society, it also presents us with the very real challenge of recognizing and appreciating our common heritage and destiny.

The most encouraging experience was to find the same Reformed tradition of faith here in Grand Rapids that we have grown up with in South Africa. One cannot but acknowledge the faithfulness of our Lord in preserving His church.

3. What program are you enrolled in and how do you hope to use your education?

I am currently enrolled in the M.Div. program. After completion of my studies, we intend to return to South Africa where I hope to present myself for ordained ministry to the Reformed Churches in South Africa. I also hope to become engaged in the work of the Center for Reformational Urban Ministry in Africa (CRUMA) in Pretoria, a cooperative initiative between a number of local and international Reformed churches and theological colleges. The goal of CRUMA is to develop and promote scripturally-grounded urban ministry models for spreading and applying the gospel among Africa's urban populations. I believe that the development of effective and sustainable mercy ministry models, both as part of the church's diaconal office as well as the Christian witness of the love of Christ, forms an important aspect of this work.

4. What is the greatest need you see facing the church in South Africa?

I believe that the need for high quality and scripturally faithful in-service training of church leaders is a high priority for the church in order to effectively reach the rapidly urbanizing people of our country. Hand in hand with this is the need to develop an Africa-contextualized Reformed worldview as a biblical alternative for the prevalent syncretistic or humanistic worldviews that dominate our society. Finally, I believe that the church, in its ministry of the gospel, will also have to engage and at a practical level address the challenges of poverty, poor education, and the impact of the HIV-AIDS in our communities. In the light of James 1:27, we have a particularly clear and urgent call to take care of the three million plus orphans who are being left behind in the wake of the HIV-AIDS pandemic in our land.

From the Registrar

Our fall semester is well underway; both students and instructors are working through their courses. We have 75 students enrolled this semester. It is a blessing to hear students talking about their courses with deep appreciation and gratitude to the Lord. Please pray for the Lord's grace for everyone so that they would be able to successfully persevere to the end of the semester.

We are currently working with several new students in the admissions process. These brothers come from all over the world, from Canada to South Korea to Myanmar. Occasionally, we are disappointed to hear that the embassy denies visas to accepted applicants. At other times we have to disappoint applicants because they cannot demonstrate that they meet the admission standards. It remains remarkable, however, how the Lord opens doors of opportunity. We therefore covet your prayerful and financial support to maintain and grow our seminary as God leads. Please pray for God's Spirit to work among our students and faculty, that nothing we do at the seminary would dishonor Him.

— Henk Kleyn

- 1997 **Rev. Bartel Elshout** is currently serving as pastor of Heritage Reformed Church in Chilliwack, British Columbia, and is a visiting lecturer at PRTS.
- 1999 **Rev. Mark Kelderman** is serving as pastor of Heritage Netherlands Reformed Congregation of Burgessville, Ontario, and is a visiting professor at PRTS. **Rev. David Lipsy** is the pastor of a Heritage Reformed church plant in Yellville, Arkansas, and also is a visiting professor at PRTS.
- 2000 **Rev. Richard DeRuiter** is serving as pulpit supply for various churches while he waits on the Lord for direction for full-time ministry. **Rev. Michael Fintelman** is currently serving as pastor of Heritage Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa. **Rev. Jack Schoeman** is currently the pastor of Bethel Free Reformed Church in Monarch, Alberta.
- 2001 **Dr. Daniel Timmer** is currently serving as Academic Dean and Professor of Biblical Studies at Farel Reformed Theological Seminary in Montreal, Quebec, and is a visiting professor at PRTS. **Rev. Eric Moerdyk** is the pastor of Emmanuel Free Reformed Church of Abbotsford, British Columbia. **Rev. Foppe VanderZwaag** is a pastor at Heritage Netherlands Reformed Congregation of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- 2002 **Rev. John Byl** is currently serving as pastor of Immanuel Fellowship Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan. **Rev. Jan Neels** is the pastor of Heritage Reformed Church in Jordan, Ontario.
- 2003 **Rev. Lawrence Bilkes** is pastor of Ebenezer Free Reformed Church in Dundas, Ontario. **Rev. David Kranendonk** is currently the pastor of Free Reformed Church of Bornholm, Ontario.
- 2004 **Dr. Brian DeVries** is Vice-Principal at Mukhanyo Theological College in South Africa and involved in preaching and teaching there. **Rev. Cees Molenaar** is currently serving as President of Covenant College in Zambia, Africa.
- 2005 **Rev. Michael Ives** is home missionary of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in East Greenwich, Rhode Island. **Rev. Wade Koenen** is pastor of the Heritage Reformed Church in Fort McLeod, Alberta. **Rev. Greg Lubbers** is currently serving as the pastor of Covenant United Reformed Church in Byron Center, Michigan, and a part-time teacher at Zion Christian High School. **Rev. Joel Overduin** is serving as the pastor of Bethel Free Reformed Church in Mitchell, Ontario. **Rev. Bert Pohl** has recently taken a pastoral call to Smith Falls Reformed Church in Smith Falls, Ontario, a work of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing).
- 2006 **Mr. Jason Keuning** is currently teaching part-time and was appointed to do part-time urban mission work in the Toronto, Ontario area, under the auspices of the Free Reformed Churches of North America. **Rev. Terreth Klaver** is the pastor of Southern Presbyterian Church of Launceston in Tasmania, Australia. **Dr. Arthur Miskin** is currently serving as a seminary teacher at Mukhanyo Theological School in Pretoria, South Africa, as well as being involved in mercy missions to HIV patients there. **Mr. Johannes Molenaar** is currently completing further studies for candidacy in the Orthodox Presbyterian churches. **Rev. Mark Raines** is serving as a pastor of the Reformed Baptist Church of Holland, Michigan. **Dr. Bill VanDoodewaard** is currently in Kokomo, Indiana, serving as Adjunct Professor of History for Huntington University and pastoral intern at Sycamore Reformed Presbyterian Church.
- 2007 **Rev. Bill Boekestein** was recently ordained as pastor for the Covenant Reformed Church in Carbondale, Pennsylvania. **Rev. Don Overbeek** is currently serving as pastor of the Heritage Reformed Church in Bradford, Ontario.
- 2008 **Rev. Roberio Azevedo** has returned to Brazil where he is serving as pastor and hopes to teach at the seminary level. **Rev. Hyo Nam Kim** is pursuing Ph.D. studies. **Mr. Andrew Parker** is pursuing teaching opportunities at the college or seminary level.



My name is Michael Ives, and I am a Home Missionary serving in the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Rhode Island. I am also a graduate of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (2005) in its M.Div. program. I have been blessed with a godly wife, Aubrey, and three precious children, Gabriel (7), Geneva (5), and Anastasia (2).

The congregation that I serve is small, but strong and supportive. The people are well schooled in the principles of the Reformed faith and appreciative of the rich, experimental tradition of our Puritan forefathers. It is a privilege to serve them. My senior colleague, Dr. William Young, has laid a solid doctrinal foundation for the congregation and is a goldmine of knowledge in the Puritans. Having been a life-long scholar and bachelor, he has amassed quite a library, consisting of many original edition works from the 17th century. In the spirit of our New England ancestors, we're studying William Ames's *Marrow of Theology* together from the Latin.

The congregation has also been very supportive of increased evangelistic efforts in the community. We have begun a regular prison ministry, and many inmates have been exposed to the doctrines of grace in this way. Some have contacted me subsequent to their release and have attended our meetings. We have also held two annual community lectures with several unbelievers in attendance. We still await genuine conversions, however. These are days of small things; but it is nothing for our God to save by many or by few.

It is my hope and prayer to see once again truly Christian communities reemerging here in New England and the eventual re-Christianization of our land. As a small but practical step in this direction, I've adopted a district in the city for regular, long-term, evangelistic visitation. I have become quite won over by Thomas Chalmers's advocacy of the "territorial" or "locality principle." As He did with men such as Baxter, Chalmers, and M'Cheyne, God can yet again bless such humble yet regular means concentrated on a neighborhood. As a side effort, I am presently studying and writing on the history, theory, and practice of the parish approach in evangelism (westportexperiment.wordpress.com).

My studies at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary were invaluable as a preparation to my ministry. A sound foundation was laid, for which I cannot thank my God enough. The instruction was comprehensive, deep, and always devotional. I feel as though I have studied at a revived New College or Princeton. My only regret is that the program had to come to an end! May the Lord bless and continue its work for many years to come.

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary FINANCIAL REPORT

For period 8/1/08 - 9/30/08

Please remember in prayer Dr. Beeke as he speaks at conferences in Little Rock, Arkansas (Oct. 31 – Nov. 2), and Moscow, Russia (Nov. 5–7); Dr. Murray as he speaks in Washington, D.C. (Nov. 6–8), and preaches in Jordan, Ontario (Nov. 28–30).

The new PRTS website launched in early October...be sure to visit!
www.puritanseminary.org

	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Overage or (Shortfall)
Income			
Donations — General Operating	\$ 130,729.00	\$ 140,325.00	\$ (9,596.00)
Tuition	53,015.00	19,500.00	33,515.00
Scholarship Fund	110.00	30,000.00	(29,890.00)
Other Income	<u>10,866.00</u>	<u>15,669.00</u>	<u>(4,803.00)</u>
Total Income	\$ 194,720.00	\$205,494.00	\$(10,774.00)
Expenses			
Program Expenses	\$ 107,865.00	110,132.00	(2,267.00)
Instructor Expenses	35,258.00	30,135.00	5,123.00
Scholarship Expenses	46,552.00	31,050.00	15,502.00
Administrative Expenses	<u>38,504.00</u>	<u>33,773.00</u>	<u>4,731.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 228,179.00	\$205,090.00	\$23,089.00
Net Income (Loss)	\$ (33,459.00)	-	\$ (33,863.00)

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.

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