The profound, supernatural immediacy of God’s creative activity in the opening chapters of Genesis is the foundation for our understanding of Christ’s redemptive and re-creative work. Colossians 1:16–17 declares, “For by him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things consist.” Hebrews 1 reiterates this truth, stating that through the Son, God created the world; it is the Son who upholds “all things by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:2–3). Ephesians 3:9 similarly proclaims, “God…created all things through Jesus Christ.”

When we consider Christ as Creator and Redeemer, early Genesis gives every ground to recognize and expect that the work of redemption of fallen men will be marked by supernatural activity in history—activity in the midst of the natural order whose nature and/or timing can only be attributed to God. It is inexplicable by scientific method, though its effects may be discernible. Thus a global flood, the plagues of Egypt, the collapse of Jericho’s walls, and the miracles of prophets such as Elijah and Elisha are all expected indicators of divine sovereignty, presence, and activity. These, and many more, are markers that confirm God’s holy and gracious unfolding of redemptive history in Christ—each reaffirming the veracity of God’s special, gracious revelation by His Word.

Passages like Isaiah 35:5–6, where the eyes of the blind are opened and the ears of the deaf are unstopped, are a glorious prophecy of God’s saving re-creation, and they only make sense in light of His work in Genesis 1 and 2. The prophetic passages are fully congruent with the greater revelation of salvation in and through the incarnate Son: there is literal fulfillment of these prophesies of miraculous activity as the New Testament gospels repeatedly indicate. Why? Because it is Christ, the One by whom all things were created, who is both revealing and accomplishing redemption by His sovereign and omnipotent work. This work is confirmed by actions that are immanent in, yet transcend, the created and now fallen and cursed order. The Creator who revealed His work of creation in Genesis turns water to wine, feeds thousands with a few loaves and some fish, heals, restores, raises from the dead, stops wind and waves, and transforms sinners from spiritual death to life. So when John’s disciples ask whether He is the One, Jesus tells them, “The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Luke 7:22).

The greatest wonder is Christ’s condescension and humility in the incarnation—His willing participation in our flesh and frailty, dwelling as the Holy One in the midst of sinners. The wonder is that the One who created out of nothing by the power of His speech, who formed man from the dust and breathed into him the breath of life and placed rebel man under the curse, took our nature, putting Himself under that curse and penalty of sin as the holy Second Adam.

The supernatural wonder of the resurrection and ascension, and the coming consummation, seal and crown Christ’s work as Creator and Redeemer. The One who created all things gains victory over death and the grave, rising from the dead completely contrary to the fallen, cursed state of the natural order (1 Cor. 15:54–57). He is the beloved Son in whom the Father is “well-pleased”; the present natural reality of death in the created order has no grip on Him (Matt. 3:17). He is the “first-fruits,” the One who bore the curse began the literal, physical work of re-creation. God’s Word reveals a marvelous unity, ultimately revealed in Christ, the Word made flesh. Because of God’s work in Christ in Genesis 1 and 2, we have the sure expectation of the full completion of redemption and re-creation. All creation will be set free from its bondage to decay (Rom. 8). All the redeemed in Christ will be resurrected to life in heaven and the earth made new, forever free from sin and curse.

Rev. Jack Schoeman is pastor of Providence Free Reformed Church in St. George, Ontario, Canada.
Dear friends,

God’s grace is amazing. We’ve had another wonderful year at PRTS.

**GRADUATION**

On May 8 we celebrated the graduation of twelve more men. They hail from twelve different denominations, eight countries, and four continents. They are a great group of brothers; we will miss them immensely as faculty and staff, but we are excited to see how the Lord will use them in their own churches, seminaries, denominations, and countries.

Daniel Silveira, on behalf of the graduating students, movingly thanked faculty and staff at the pre-graduation dinner hosted for one hundred people. He took a page out of my book, deciding to ascribe a personal name to each professor, in good Bunyanesque fashion! The names he chose were Mr. Practicality (Dr. Murray), Mr. Faithful (Dr. VanDoodewaard), Mr. Bound-to-the-Word (Dr. Barrett), Mr. Always-there-for-us (Rev. Kelderman), Mr. In-love-with-the-Cross (Dr. Bilkes), Mr. Mighty for the Lord (me). My wife then spoke warmly to the graduates’ wives, and presented them with a book that addresses the various tasks of ministers’ wives.

Dr. Derek Thomas gave a stirring commencement address to four hundred people—some coming from as far as Brazil and the Netherlands—on “The Guarantee of a Successful Ministry,” based on Matthew 16:18–19. He proclaimed Christ as the church’s (1) builder, (2) defender, and (3) multiplier. Rev. Mark Kelderman, our dean of spiritual formation, gave the students a helpful encouragement and charge based on Matthew 28:19–20. I spoke some personal words to them, providing them with the following names and ascribing a text to each of them: Mr. Motivated, Mr. Perseverance, Mr. Passionate, Mr. Theologian, Mr. Tenacity, Mr. Word-centered, Mr. Servant Leader, Mr. Nathanael, Mr. God-fearer, Mr. Self-effacing, Mr. Submissive, and Mr. Cheerful. Enjoy the pictures of this special evening.
ATS UPDATE AND PH.D. FEASIBILITY STUDY

We are grateful that ATS (The Association of Theological Schools) not only awarded us full accreditation of all our degree programs last year, but have subsequently contacted us to ask if they could use our reports as a model to show other theological seminaries how to prepare for accreditation. I am so grateful for the faculty/staff team here who have all worked hard together—and continue to do so—to provide a top-notch education at PRTS in every possible way. God has truly surrounded me with people who are more gifted than I am in many ways and they all have a big heart for the work. This positive experience with ATS gives us considerable encouragement to pursue the possible establishment of a Ph.D. program, so that we could train students who could go back to their own countries to take up influential positions of leadership, such as seminary presidents or academic deans and professors. Consequently, one of our main tasks this summer is to present our Board of Trustees with a feasibility study for a Ph.D. program in early August. Please pray with us that the hand of God may be upon this work for good.

PROMOTIONS AND SUCCESSION PLANS

The Board of Trustees unanimously accepted the faculty’s recommendation to promote Dr. Bill VanDoodewaard to full professorship. The Board also appointed two vice-presidents: Dr. Michael Barrett, as Vice-president of Academic Affairs, and Mr. Henk Kleyn, as Vice-President of Operations. In terms of the presidency, the Board and I have agreed that I would serve as president until at least the age of 70, if my health continues to hold up well and if both the Board and I continue to feel comfortable having me in this role. If something should impact my health such that I could no longer serve, Dr. Jerry Bilkes will be appointed to serve as interim president until a new presidential search could take place.

FACULTY BOOKS

Three major works have recently been produced by the faculty: (1) The Quest for the Historical Adam (Reformation Heritage Books) by Bill VanDoodewaard—a groundbreaking work that shows how churches throughout history that abandoned the historicity of Adam soon departed from sound doctrine in other critical areas as well; (2) The Happy Christian: Ten Ways to be a Joyful Believer in a Gloomy World (Thomas Nelson) by David Murray—a practical book that greatly assists believers to be truly joyful in Christ for the gospel’s sake; and (3) The Reformation Heritage KJV Study Bible (Reformation Heritage Books), edited by three PRTS professors and a TA (Barrett, Beeke, Bilkes, and Smalley)—the first KJV Study Bible in which the notes are thoroughly Reformed in their theology and the first study Bible in any translation to provide takeaways and questions for personal and family worship for every chapter of the Bible.

UPCOMING ANNUAL CONFERENCE

If you have not yet registered for this year’s conference on the beauty and glory of God’s Word, please do so as soon as possible. Early-bird pricing ends July 31. In addition to faculty, speakers include two very gifted preachers, Geoff Thomas from Wales and Ronald Kalifungwa from Zambia. I count both of them among my best friends. You will not want to miss this conference!

FINANCIAL NEWS

Financially, God has sustained us remarkably throughout this year. Not only did He send sufficient funds so that our $3.6 million addition was completely paid for (the last $60,000 came in on the very day of dedication—just like the first building), but He also enabled us to stay in the black on the Operation Fund. At present we are just above the minimum two-month balance the Board wants us to maintain. The bad news is that we are entering the summer months when giving traditionally recedes. But then, the good news is that several donors have graciously agreed to match any gift that comes in for the Operation Fund or Scholarship Fund in June and July up to $300,000! We are very grateful for that, and pray that you will help us to meet that goal of raising $300,000 in these two months, remembering that whatever you send to us in June and July will be doubled.

MONTHLY PARTNERS NEEDED

If you are not already doing so, we are particularly hoping that you might consider regular, monthly giving to the seminary. That is a great help as this is predictable income. For example, our auditors tell us that a $100 monthly gift to the seminary is better than a $1200 gift that is sent spontaneously for a given year since the former is a reliable gift. This past year the auditors did a thorough audit again, and though they gave us the highest possible mark on our financial situation (since we have no debts), they again stressed with us that we should encourage our donors to become monthly givers. To encourage that, we are offering a triple matching gift for whatever you might sign up for as a monthly gift for the first two months of your giving (that is, June and July).

KEEP PRAYING

Many, many thanks for all the prayer and financial support you have given to PRTS. You are appreciated as our ministry partner far more than you know. And do remember, that prayer is always our greatest need. Pray that God will keep us faithful to the rich biblical, Reformed, confessional, experiential heritage entrusted to us. May the good hand of God rest upon you and your family throughout the summer months.

—Joel R. Beeke
Where are you presently serving?
I am serving in the Heritage Reformed Congregation of New Jersey, in the borough of Kinnelon.

What encouragements have you received in your ministry?
I have been encouraged to see young men and women desire to be useful and serve the Lord with the strength of their youth while valuing the worship of God and the revelation of His Word. Our church has many committed families who have instilled in the hearts of their children the fear of the Lord. I am always very thankful for how many men we have qualified to be elders and deacons.

What kinds of things that you learned in seminary have you found most helpful now that you are in the ministry?
Exegesis classes, sermon preparation, church history, and counseling classes.

What does your preaching schedule look like?
I usually preach twice on Sundays, morning and afternoon. We have one Wednesday prayer service each month at which we have a twenty-minute message.

What resources have you found most helpful in your preparations?
I usually use many commentaries in preparing sermons. Recently I have been preaching through the Gospel According to John and Genesis. I usually use Richard Philips, Calvin, Leon Morris, D.A. Carson, Waltke, and Matthew Henry to prepare for John. For Genesis, I find Calvin, Victor Hamilton, Bruce Waltke, and Matthew Henry to be helpful.

Can you recommend any good books or articles you’ve read recently that would benefit any and all Christians?
I have been reading through George Swinnock’s The Christian Man’s Calling, which is full of insight into a deep devotional life.
As part of the application process for entrance into one of our degree programs (MDiv, MA, or ThM), applicants must write a 250–500 word essay outlining why they are applying to PRTS in particular. Applicants are encouraged to list at least three reasons why they believe PRTS is a good place for their seminary training. At a recent Admissions Committee meeting, Philip Won Suh was admitted into the MA program with an emphasis in New Testament studies. Philip's following essay is illustrative of his desire to grow in grace and knowledge while studying at seminary:

What I once thought impossible is now the very possibility I am most excited about. In my unregenerate days, I could never imagine going to seminary. I even once asked a peer contemplating going, “Why would you even consider it?” Despite having attended church my whole life, suffice it to say I lived in darkness. A few years ago, God saved me at a youth retreat. Although I had served in youth ministry for many years, He revealed it was I who needed the most help and bestowed His saving grace upon me. He has been changing the desires of my heart and is turning me from lesser ones. After prayerful consideration, it has been placed in my heart to study His Word at seminary. For that purpose, I cannot think of a better institution than PRTS.

Doctrine is my foremost consideration. I admire how PRTS advances the Puritan tradition of vigorously pursuing, living out, and defending the faith evident in Scripture. Scripture shapes PRTS; I know pursuing God through my time here will shape me in the same way. In recent years, my mind has been illuminated to the serious errors of my own life and in the local Korean church, all of which stem from doctrinal error. For almost my entire life, I knew no other way. My desire is to understand the one true gospel in a deeper way and equip myself to teach others. I believe PRTS is the best place to receive such training.

Next to doctrinal considerations is the quality of men who teach it. I appreciate the top-down doctrinal unity and scholarly excellence among the PRTS faculty. While certain schools tout an exposure to diverse viewpoints, PRTS does not dilute doctrinal purity. What I know about PRTS was gleaned from pastor friends, discussion boards, sermons, and the free online courses. I found the teaching to be enriching, practical, and Bible-saturated. I am truly excited to establish a deeper biblical foundation through the help of the PRTS faculty.

The third factor that makes PRTS my top choice is the academics. This includes several considerations including academic rigor, curriculum, pastoral emphasis, and basis in the Reformed perspective. In addition, the option of distance learning provides the critical flexibility my family needs. In short, I believe PRTS will better prepare graduates to learn and also teach in a way that produces life change.

One of my favorite passages is Jeremiah 9:23–24 because it clarifies a man’s highest endeavor among all others—to know the Lord. In this upcoming season, I plan on scaling back my time at work to devote more to the study of God’s Word. My desired outcomes are to serve God, my family, and the church in greater ways. A deep conviction of mine is that our youth need more from their leadership. As I step up to this call, my prayer is for greater obedience because I know He is already leading me to the right places.

Perhaps your desire is similar to Philip’s. If you want to learn more about applying for seminary education at PRTS, please don’t hesitate to contact me at jonathon.beeke@prts.edu or give me a call at 616-432-3408. Our goal, as Philip rightly indicates, is to “better prepare graduates to learn and also teach in a way that produces life change.”
Student Interview with Josh Lamb

My long journey to arrive at PRTS contained such turns that God’s hand alone could have brought it about.

I grew up among the majestic Rocky Mountains near Pikes Peak in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Family camping trips near lakes and mountains were regular summer activities for us. My dad would take us on occasional trips to ascend the 14’rs (mountains over 14,000) feet. Living in Grand Rapids now, I do miss the sun very much during the winter.

While growing up in a Christian home gave me a solid moral foundation as a child, I really never experienced a personal faith in Jesus. Despite my parents’ influence during family devotions, the message of the gospel had a minimal effect on how I lived my life. It is likely that if you were to go back and interview me during teenage years that I would have told you I was “basically a good person.” About a year after high school, I received a phone call that altered the course of my life.

An Army recruiter on the other end of the telephone offered to come to my house. I countered that I would hear him out at his office in town. I signed on the dotted line and three weeks later headed to training in South Carolina. The next six years involved training to jump from military aircraft, two deployments to Iraq with the 82nd Airborne Division, and two deployments to Afghanistan as a contractor. It was on a vacation from the third deployment that God chose once again to alter my path.

Some funds gained from being overseas allowed me to purchase a new Mustang. One day I took my brother and sister for a joyride on a long road near our house. We sped down the road at over 150 mph before I lost control and used all the means of stopping and turning. I still remember seeing the gash on my sister’s forehead as I carried her out of the car. The fact we are all still alive and well is nothing short of miraculous.

It was at this point that matters of religion occupied my daily thoughts. God directed me to several websites and sermon videos. Finally, I came across a video sermon on Romans 9 from which I could not escape. That day marked the beginnings of real and vibrant faith in Jesus. The desire to not only learn more about Him but to proclaim Him continued to well up until I received a speaking opportunity at my family’s church. This was granted, along with another. It slowly became clear that pastoral ministry was the direction God was calling me to.

I applied to several different seminaries, but the sincere piety of PRTS is evident the moment you walk in the door. In fact, after all the visits, PRTS was the only one where someone prayed with me. A few months later, I received the letter of acceptance into the M.Div. program.

Many aspects of confessional tradition, church polity, and church history are very new to me; this wasn’t the background I came from. But the professors and faculty have been very gracious in teaching the Reformed faith. Although it has been quite difficult, Hebrew class has been a highlight. There is no comparison to reading God’s Word in the original languages. However, my favorite class is Practice Preaching. It has been invaluable to receive gracious feedback from professors and fellow students about preaching, the most important aspect of pastoral ministry.

PRTS has allowed me to labor with other like-minded students in the pursuit of proclaiming to the ends of the earth Christ and Him crucified. Lord willing, I hope to graduate in 2018 and be ordained into the Associate Reformed Presbyterian denomination.
**Faculty Itineraries & Publications**

**DR. MICHAEL BARRETT | Itinerary:**
May 3: Grand Rapids, MI: Heritage Reformed Church  
May 11–15: Manchester, NH: Presbytery of FPCNA  
May 29: Greenville, SC: Graduation at Geneva Reformed Seminary  
June 11–13: Petersburg, KY: Reforming Families Conference at Creation Museum  
June 14: Indianapolis, IN: Indianapolis Free Presbyterian Church  
June 28: Hamilton, Ont.: Free Reformed Church  
August 9: Hull, IA: Heritage Reformed Church  
August 20–22: Grand Rapids, MI: PRTS Conference  

**Writing Project:**  
Final edits of *The Next to the Last Word*, to be released in August.

**DR. JOEL BEEKE | Itinerary:**
May 2–4: Maryville, TN: Conference for Grace Community Church and preaching for Pastor Ron O’Dell  
May 11–23: Israel: Leading a tour group for a 12-day trip through Israel with Halvor Roning  
May 31: Bailey, MI: North Casnovia Baptist Church, address and preaching for Pastor Aaron Shaw  
June 11–12: Petersburg, KY: Reforming Families Conference at Creation Museum  
June 13–14: (morning) Mountain City, GA: The Captivated Conference and preaching for Grace Bible Church (Pastor James Anderson)  
June 14: (evening) Powder Springs, GA: preach for Midway Presbyterian Church (Dr. David Hall)  
June 24–26: Mount Zion, KY: AiG Mega Conference for Creation Museum (Ken Ham) at Florence Baptist Church  
July 7–10: Hastings, MI: HRC Youth Camp  
July 11: Dundas, Ont.: Free Reformed Student Society  
July 12: Hamilton, Ont.: preaching for Free Reformed Church  
August 20–22: Grand Rapids, MI: PRTS Conference  

**Recent Publications:**  
*The Book of Revelation (Journible)*, with Rob Wynalda. Grand Rapids: RHB.  

**DR. JERRY BILKES | Itinerary:**
May 24: Hamilton, Ont.: Free Reformed Church  
June 21: Mitchell, Ont.: Free Reformed Church  
July 5: Hamilton, Ont.: Free Reformed Church  
July 25–26: Wattisham, Suffolk, England  
July 27–31: Cardiff, Wales: Conference  
August 9: London, Ont.: Free Reformed Church  
August 21: Grand Rapids, MI: PRTS Conference  

**Writing Project:**  
*Reservoirs of Strength: Studies in James*.

**REV. MARK KELDERMAN | Itinerary:**
May 3: Kalamazoo, MI: Immanuel Fellowship Church  
June 7: Bradford, Ont.: Heritage Reformed Church  

**DR. WILLIAM VAN DOODEWAARD | Itinerary:**
May–June: Grand Rapids, MI: Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church  
June 9–11: Flat Rock, NC: ARP General Synod  

**Recent Publication:**  
*The Quest for the Historical Adam: Genesis, Hermeneutics, and Human Origins*. Grand Rapids: RHB

**Writing Projects:**  
1 & 2 Peter, Evangelical Press.  

**ANNOUNCEMENT:** Summer of 2015 Matching Gift Campaign! Any donation made to the PRTS Operating Fund (monthly gifts included), up to $300,000 (USD), during June and July will be graciously and wonderfully doubled. Any new monthly supporters who sign up in either of these two months will have their donations tripled for the months of June and July. This means that a $100 ongoing monthly gift from a new partner in June will be tripled to $300 for both June and July. Please prayerfully consider a gift of any size during this matching gift campaign and help us to raise these much needed funds (see page 8).
Thank you for supporting PRTS with your prayers and financial contributions. If you would like to learn more about giving options, please contact me at 616-432-3407.

— CHRISS HANNA