

# PRTS

## Update



MEDITATION • DR. ARTHUR MISKIN

## A CORD OF THREE

*Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.* — COLOSSIANS 4:19

William Still, the seasoned Scottish pastor, once wrote concerning the work of the ministry, “Don’t be a minister if you can help it. It is the worst job in the world.” But then he added, “But it is also the best.” There can be no higher calling in this world than to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and His church to the end of our days; this much any pastor who is truly called of the Lord will unreservedly affirm. But it comes with many trials, challenges, and discouragements which the seminarian cannot always anticipate. This, sadly, is the cause for many men eventually opting out of the pastoral ministry.

Mr. Still, perhaps a little pessimistically, continued by saying that only a small proportion of those who go forward into the ministry are actually called of God! We certainly do not want to dwell on the negative, but it is nonetheless true that men who have undergone thorough training and were given

every tool and assistance in order to succeed have failed in the nitty-gritty of pastoral ministry. This always will lead to a lifelong sense of profound guilt and failure.

The loss of a pastor is an exceedingly sad phenomenon and yet one that is painfully true because it calls into question the very foundation of his calling. But even more, I as pastor need to ask myself, “Could this ever happen to me?” Anyone who knows his own heart would have to answer in the affirmative: “Yes, indeed.” Did he misread his call? Did the man fail to discern the voice of God’s true call? Was he perhaps not called from the start? These all could be true, but I do fear that many failures are rooted far deeper. The Lord nowhere guarantees a safe and uneventful journey in ministry; more often, placement in the ministry itself is God’s supreme test of the man’s mettle. Will a man see it through to the end, or will he throw in the towel? Suffice it to say, the cause of our failure in ministry can never be laid at God’s door but fairly and squarely in our own court for not taking to heart the clear instructions the Lord has given for us to succeed in His calling.

In the passage stated above, Paul advises Archippus to take heed or to keenly watch over the ministry that the Lord has apportioned to him. He warns him that there are many snares, temptations, and pitfalls that he will encounter that may trip him up and hinder him from fulfilling the ministry the Lord Jesus entrusted to him.

How can I prevent myself from becoming another statistic of failure, not only in the eyes of my God, myself, and my people but in the eyes of an ever vigilant and cynical world? By doing what the Word instructs me to do: by jealously guarding the ministry for which we have been set apart and regarding it as the most priceless treasure given to anyone, albeit exercised via the earthen vessels of our frail humanity. This can only be accomplished by *first and foremost* watching ourselves, which is the hardest part. Self-watch comes before watching over the flock (1 Tim. 4:16). Though this admonition may sound trite and oft-repeated in a variety of settings, its truth remains foundational to ministry. Failure toward self will ultimately lead to failure in ministry, and by ministry I mean one that enjoys the outpouring of God’s blessing.

Three things make a minister, Luther is quoted as saying: study, prayer, and affliction. The first two are relentless in their demand, and laziness in this regard will not be countenanced by the Lord Jesus. Be prepared, however, for the last one. Devotion to the study of God’s Word together with prayer must of necessity equip the man of God for the inevitability of the afflictions he will face, and so the three are vitally linked. In whatever form they come, afflictions shape and mold the man toward God’s intended purpose. The God-used Mr. Still says that no amount of difficulty will justify a move out of God’s will and sphere of service. When a man makes this kind of ill-considered move, his ministry will go dead. Through affliction, God is preparing you for greater good and usefulness. Rejoice when He sends afflictions, and do not even consider giving up for whatever cause, because this will simply mean you did not properly appropriate the God-given means to sustain you in ministry. It’s a life of continual striving toward the goal set before us, but this alone is what will secure for us our crown—of gold and not of sticks.

# SCOTT ROBERTS



I am a physician, practicing oncology in North Carolina. It has been sixteen years since the Lord graciously reached down, opened my eyes, and saved me. The Lord early put it upon my heart to find godly authors to act as mentors to

teach me and guide me in biblical knowledge and in conformity to God's Word and Spirit. This search led me to the rich, profound, and pious writings of the Puritans. My wife and I would jest that we had so many dear friends who had been dead for nearly 350 years. While relishing the truths taught by the Puritans, for some time we found no contemporary teaching which embraced these biblical truths.

Then, about eight years ago, in God's good providence, I came across an endorsement by Dr. Joel Beeke, President of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. By that time, I had already been able to audit courses from several leading Reformed seminaries, and though blessed by them, I had not yet found any teachers who seemed to capture the reverent, pious, and informed heart that I had found in the Puritans. As I turned my attention to explore PRTS, I was amazed and delighted. What a joy it was to hear and read teaching that so beautifully divided and applied God's mighty Word. The men associated with PRTS were reverent and precise in their teaching, and they were amazingly united in their handling of the Word. This was a true oasis and refuge for our souls as we longed to rightly comprehend and conform to God's counsel.

I consider PRTS to be a beacon of gospel purity being used by God to proclaim His truth around the world. God has blessed the faculty there with an extraordinary ability to rightly divide and apply His Word. Their understanding is founded on a rich heritage of biblical knowledge which blossomed in the Reformation and was brought to further fruition by the Puritans. These old landmarks have not been removed, but rather honored as accurate representations of the truths of God's Word. As a result, many errors have been avoided and true biblical balances have been maintained.

Among seminaries, PRTS is unique for its method of handling the Word of God. The instructors at PRTS uniformly handle Scripture with reverence, awe, and a sensible love for Christ and His Word. Levity and humor are excluded from their preaching and teaching of God's Word. They realize that the teaching of Scripture is a weighty responsibility, an honored privilege, and a sacred call of God. When determining the meaning of each text, they carefully and exactly compare Scripture with Scripture to understand the text in the light of the whole counsel of God. They apply sound rules of interpretation to mine the true meaning of the passage. They further add to their study a broad review through church history to assess how our fathers in the faith have interpreted the text in

question. They realize that godly men of the past were gifted of God and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and that their works, though not infallible, are enlightening and edifying. All of this is handled with informed, sanctified reason. As a result, the faculty of PRTS is able to present teaching that is deep, sound, and insightful. Their instruction prepares students to press on toward maturity in understanding the Word of God.

However, the instruction at PRTS is more than academic. It is highly applicatory both to heart and life. All of the seminary's theology is directed at being practical. God's Word is believed to be life giving and life changing; when rightly embraced, it searches the hearts and transforms the lives of its hearers. At PRTS, the Word of God is applied to the whole man. The mind is informed with knowledge, the heart is quickened and warmed with conviction and love, and the hand is motivated to the glory of God. Thus, the Word of God is applied as God Himself intended it: with the Spirit's blessing, to change hearts and lives and prepare God's people for that Great Day of the Lord's return.

As a seminary, PRTS is able to have an expanded impact on the world. Geographically, PRTS is training men from around the world and sending them back to propagate gospel truth in their homelands. Numerically, for every young man trained at PRTS, hundreds or thousands will be blessed by the pure preaching of the gospel. Temporally, PRTS has established a teaching foundation which will not only impact our generation, but is designed to stand firm as a pillar of God's truth for future generations. In many ways, PRTS is greatly multiplying the work of spreading God's Word and preparing souls for the Day of Judgment.

I would like to enumerate several areas where PRTS rightly holds God's truth and avoids the common errors of our day.

1. In the interpretation of God's Word, the faculty of PRTS is not overly influenced by secular sources. Much biblical understanding today has been erroneously shaped by secular science, psychology, philosophy, and liberal critics. The PRTS instructors scrutinize these sources and do not allow them even a foothold of preeminence over the clear proclamation of God's Word.
2. Concerning God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, PRTS rightly holds these two truths as coexistent realities. While Arminians deny the former truth, Reformed Christians often deny the latter truth through a lethargic evangelism. PRTS echoes the Scripture in teaching the urgent free offer of the gospel that is wholly dependent upon God's sovereign grace.
3. PRTS is unique in maintaining the biblical stand which cautions against worldliness. The trend in Reformed churches today is to adopt Neo-Calvinism as taught by Abraham Kuyper. This Kuyperian worldview overemphasizes the creation mandate, common grace, and the use of Christian liberty. Sacred and secular distinctions are blurred. Worldliness is embraced as being glorifying to God, and spirituality, the means of grace, and evangelism are diminished. The biblical call to moderation, discretion, and self-denial is neglected. PRTS maintains the biblical teaching that cautions us to guard our hearts from the compet-

- ing love for the world. In lieu of seeking fulfillment in worldly pleasures, they teach the need to foster spiritual growth and experiential, practical love for Christ Jesus.
- PRTS has avoided the pitfall of “dead orthodoxy.” There is a great tendency for academically minded Christians to focus on general tenets of theology and confessions, but to simultaneously fall away from vibrant experiential Christianity. God’s Word is meant to inform the mind but it does not stop there. God’s truth should stir the heart with conviction, awe, and love. It should move the life into zealous service for Christ. PRTS emphasizes that Scripture should move us toward piety, godliness, conformity to Christ, and the bearing of the fruit of the Spirit.
  - PRTS teaches a preaching style that will lead its hearers to search their own hearts. God’s assemblies will always contain a mixture of saved and unsaved. Many of the unsaved are living out their days in presumption, wrongly assuming that they are already saved. PRTS emphasizes the need for preaching to reach the hearts of all categories of hearers. The lost are called to faith, the presumptuous are enlightened to their true condition by heart-searching truths, and the saved are moved forward in humility and meekness to further trust and obey Jesus Christ.
  - The faculty of PRTS is credal. Every member of the staff is firmly committed to the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Confession of Faith. These documents have withstood the test of time and scrutiny and are true summaries of the teaching of God’s sacred Word. Many Christian institutions have opened the door for “minor variances” in their faith on these points; thus, the foundations of their beliefs and the future of their institutions are left open for drift and change. PRTS is standing firm as a pillar of God’s truth.
  - PRTS has applied a precise and academic evaluation of the ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Such study invariably uncovers that the truest Greek text in existence is the *Textus Receptus*. All other texts, regardless of their antiquity, are weakened and corrupted copies, which often tend to de-emphasize the deity of Christ. Unfortunately, the majority of academic Christianity has followed liberal scholars who have applied unsound rules of textual evaluation and have acclaimed the corrupted texts to be superior.
  - Lastly, many otherwise sound scholars allow for the possibility of salvation apart from faith in Christ in rational mature human beings. They claim that we should not limit God in His ability to bring people to heaven in ways not yet revealed to us. PRTS rejects this notion since God has limited Himself in His Word, clearly teaching that there is no other way of salvation than through faith in Jesus Christ.

I consider it a great privilege to support the mission of PRTS in any way. To quote a pastor friend of mine, it is good to be “pushing the same truck up the same hill” with PRTS and to know that we are doing God’s work and remaining true to His Word. I am persuaded that the best way God’s people can promote true religion is through the sound training of God’s ministers. PRTS is engaged in this endeavor and by God’s grace is promulgating robust, true, biblical, and experiential Christianity.

I would earnestly encourage all who love the Lord Jesus Christ to join in the work of PRTS through prayer and financial support. As we contribute to PRTS, in a wonderful way, we are contributing to the furtherance of God’s kingdom on earth.

## Faculty Itineraries & Publications

### DR. JOEL BEEKE

#### ITINERARY:

September 7–12: Northern Ireland: Free Presbyterian churches  
 September 13–18: The Netherlands: Itinerary arranged by The Tabernacle  
 October 1–9: Brazil: FIEL Conference and further itinerary  
 October 12–14: Oceanside, California: Oceanside URC Conference  
 October 25–27: Wake Forest, North Carolina: NCFIC Conference  
 November 2–3: Springfield, Illinois: Conference for Curt Daniel  
 November 13–14: Dyer, Indiana: NAPARC  
 November 14–16: Milwaukee, Wisconsin: ETS Conference  
 November 16–18: Rockford, Illinois: Grace Reformed Baptist Church Conference

#### RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

*Feasting with Christ: Meditations on the Lord’s Supper*, comp. and ed. with Paul Smalley (Evangelical Press)  
*What is Evangelicalism?* (Evangelical Press)  
*How to Evaluate Sermons* (Evangelical Press)  
*Parenting by God’s Promises* (Korean)  
*Family Worship* (Portuguese)  
*The Beauty and Glory of the Holy Spirit*, ed. with Joseph Pipa (RHB)  
 “The Puritans on Conscience and Casuistry” and “Children in the Church.” *Puritan Reformed Journal*.

#### FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION:

*A Puritan Theology: Doctrine Unto Life*, with Mark Jones (RHB)—forthcoming in October

### DR. GERALD BILKES

#### ITINERARY:

September 27–October 1: Salisbury, England: Conference  
 October 17–19: Crieff, Ontario: Ministers Retreat  
 November 25: Hull, Iowa: HRC

### DR. DAVID MURRAY

#### ITINERARY:

October 16: Pompton Plains, New Jersey: URC Classis Conference  
 November 9–11: Cape Cod, Massachusetts: Presbyterian Church of Cape Cod Conference

#### PROJECTS

Video: Christians Get Depressed Too DVD

#### RESEARCH

Puritans on Old Testament Christology

#### FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION

Created to Create – Our Creator’s Call to Creativity

### DR. WILLIAM VANDOODEWAARD

#### ITINERARY:

September 3: St. George, Ontario: FRC Church Day  
 September 9–December 16: Grand Rapids, Michigan: Theology of Calvin lectures at Harvest OPC  
 September 27–29: Halifax, Nova Scotia: Canada Presbytery (ARP)  
 October 24: Comstock, Michigan: Reformation Conference, Maranatha Bible Church

PURITAN REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
**FINANCIAL REPORT**

For period 8/1/11 – 7/31/12

Thank you for your generous support of PRTS. Once again, we are closing out the year debt free; and for that, we thank the Lord and his people for graciously providing the resources needed to meet our operating expenses. However, I would like to ask you to please consider giving a generous gift today to our Building Expansion Fund. Seventy-five percent (\$2.1 million) of the \$2.8 million needed for this project must be raised before we can break ground. We currently need an additional \$600,000 to meet this target. Your partnership with us in this endeavor is greatly appreciated!

—Chris Hanna

	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget	Variance	Percent of Annual Budget
<b>Income</b>				
HRC/FRC				
Church Support	\$ 229,447	559,916	(330,469)	41%
Other Donations	1,178,508	792,378	386,130	149%
Tuition	291,188	220,000	71,188	132%
Scholarships	181,413	235,000	(53,587)	77%
Other	<u>126,220</u>	<u>40,320</u>	<u>85,900</u>	313%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 2,006,777</b>	<b>\$ 1,847,614</b>	<b>\$ 159,163</b>	<b>109%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Instruction	\$ 1,019,666	1,055,072	(35,406)	97%
Scholarships	312,719	235,000	77,719	133%
Administrative	<u>579,554</u>	<u>557,542</u>	<u>22,012</u>	104%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,911,939</b>	<b>\$ 1,847,614</b>	<b>\$ 64,325</b>	<b>103%</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 94,838</b>			

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Dr. Joel R. Beeke, *President & Professor of Systematic Theology and Homiletics*  
[jrbeeke@puritanseminary.org](mailto:jrbeeke@puritanseminary.org)

Dr. Michael Barrett, *Academic Dean and Professor of Old Testament*  
[michael.barrett@puritanseminary.org](mailto:michael.barrett@puritanseminary.org)

Dr. Gerald M. Bilkes, *Professor of Old and New Testament*  
[jerry.bilkes@puritanseminary.org](mailto:jerry.bilkes@puritanseminary.org)

Dr. David P. Murray, *Professor of Old Testament and Practical Theology*  
[davidperts@gmail.com](mailto:davidperts@gmail.com)

Dr. William VanDoodewaard, *Associate Professor of Church History*  
[william.vandoodewaard@puritanseminary.org](mailto:william.vandoodewaard@puritanseminary.org)

Rev. Mark Kelderman, *Dean of Students and Spiritual Formation*  
[makelderman@puritanseminary.org](mailto:makelderman@puritanseminary.org)

Henk Kleyn, *Executive Director of Operations*  
[henk.kleyn@puritanseminary.org](mailto:henk.kleyn@puritanseminary.org)

Jonathon Beeke, *Admissions Director and Registrar*  
[jonathon.beeke@puritanseminary.org](mailto:jonathon.beeke@puritanseminary.org)

Chris Engelsma, *Distance Learning Director*  
[chris.engelsma@puritanseminary.org](mailto:chris.engelsma@puritanseminary.org)

Chris Hanna, *Development & Marketing*  
[chris.hanna@puritanseminary.org](mailto:chris.hanna@puritanseminary.org)

Laura Mustafa, *Librarian*  
[laura.mustafa@puritanseminary.org](mailto:laura.mustafa@puritanseminary.org)

Dr. Fred Sweet, *Theological Librarian*  
[fred.sweet@puritanseminary.org](mailto:fred.sweet@puritanseminary.org)

Ann Dykema, *Faculty Administrative Assistant*  
[ann.dykema@puritanseminary.org](mailto:ann.dykema@puritanseminary.org)

Kim Dykema, *Library Assistant*  
[kim.dykema@puritanseminary.org](mailto:kim.dykema@puritanseminary.org)

**PURITAN REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

2965 Leonard Street NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525  
 Tel: 616-977-0599 • Fax: 616-855-5740

E-mail: [info@puritanseminary.org](mailto:info@puritanseminary.org) • Web: [www.puritanseminary.org](http://www.puritanseminary.org)  
 Seminary EIN: 20-2394341 • Foundation EIN: 20-2394946