

Stories from PRTS Alumni Serving Christ around the Globe

**“GO YE,
THEREFORE,
AND TEACH ALL
NATIONS...”**



SINCE OUR OPENING IN 1995, the Lord has enabled several scores of students to graduate from Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. Numerous other students have taken courses to enhance their understanding of God's Word. We have assembled this survey of our alumni's current ministries to share with you how the Lord is using graduates of PRTS. We are deeply humbled that our efforts have played a role in developing a wide variety of ministries around the globe. Christ is building His church, and we are privileged to be serving Him in this kingdom-building.

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GEORGE KALENGO

MALAWI
2010 ALUMNUS



I would like to first say that PRTS is one of the best seminaries in the world in terms of training men of God with a biblical point of view. I have been in many colleges here in Africa, but the material that we get from PRTS is unique in the sense that it aims at making a person fully submissive to the Almighty God and His inerrant Word.

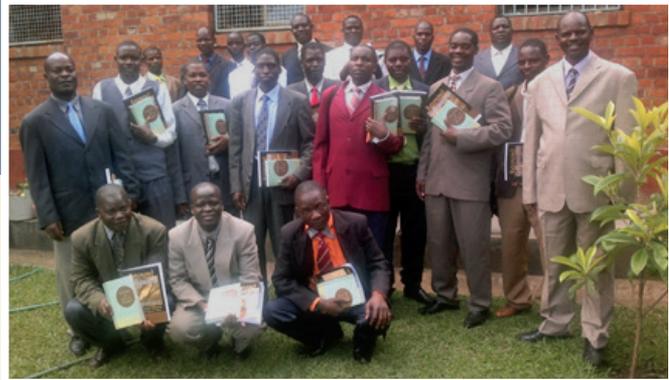
Since I came back here in my home country of Malawi, great work has been done by the Lord through my services. My eyes were opened to true Reformed teaching, as opposed to Arminianism, which is rampant in many denominations here in Africa.

Whenever I preach or minister in any subject, I serve with a mind that is settled in the principles learned at PRTS. Right now I am involved with relief and development work for the synod. This is a diaconal work involving the community via the church. In it we teach people how to run small businesses or do farming or rear livestock. We teach them that it is God who gives all this; hence we need to put Him first in whatever we do.

Both I and my family have benefited from PRTS in terms of knowledge as well as financial support. May the good Lord influence many people to donate to PRTS for the furtherance of the kingdom of God through their sound teaching.

BRIAN KAMWENDO

MALAWI
2009 ALUMNUS



Brian (right) with some “Reformed Confessions Class” students of the seminary in Malawi, Africa after receiving a gift of books from PRTS

Greetings from Malawi, Central Africa. I am writing this letter to encourage you by means of what the Lord has been doing here in Malawi since I left PRTS in June 2009. Allow me to thank you so much for your faithfulness in equipping men from around the world for Reformed, confessional, and experiential gospel ministry—including from small African countries like mine. I can still scarcely believe the wonderful opportunity I had to study on a full scholarship at PRTS. My life has been transformed since attending.

Before I attended PRTS, I did not have a comprehensive knowledge of what Reformed theology was all about, even though I came from a Reformed background. Today, I am able to propagate the doctrines of grace in various churches beyond lecturing at the seminary (see attached photo). Moreover, through the generosity of PRTS, I am even able as an alumnus of the seminary to remain linked to the seminary, its professors, and my fellow alumni. I receive support in terms of books, encouragement, prayers, and updates.

Due in large part to my training at PRTS, I have become a lecturer at our synodical seminary (Josophat Mwale Theological Institute) in Malawi. Since 2009, I have also been serving as the Synodical Senior Clerk of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (C.C.A.P.), which has a membership of nearly two million people.

My prayer is that PRTS would be able to increase the number of students enrolled and have even more influence in spreading the Reformed faith throughout the world. I also pray that the Lord would bless PRTS's expansion program to accommodate more classrooms and offices and library space, as well as to expand its influence through offering a reputable PhD program to train seminary leaders around the world.

Once again, thanks so much, PRTS.



Brian preaching at one of the Communion Centres, which is still under construction (A Communion Centre is a small church which is not yet an autonomous congregation. They are given the right of administering sacraments in preparation for becoming a new congregation. Due to the distances, people can no longer manage to walk to church.)



Brian conducting the Lord's Supper (White is the communion attire for the assisting elders and deacons. Our members of the women's guild also wear white to functions such as these.)

LEONARD KATUNDU

MALAWI
2011 ALUMNUS



Ministerial Students and Faculty during Morning Devotions (a student is sharing)

I thank God who called me to be a minister of His Holy Word and sacraments. I first got my ministerial training at our church's seminary, Zomba Theological College in Malawi, where I got a Bachelor of Divinity degree. God further called me to be an instructor (Associate Lecturer) at the same seminary in 2006. However, my church and the College had no funds to upgrade me to become a full lecturer. My church and I are very grateful to Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary who graciously offered me a scholarship to obtain a Master of Theology degree.

I consider my training at PRTS providential in many ways. Most importantly, at a time when liberal teaching is regrettably becoming popular, the Lord led me to PRTS where I was equipped with biblical and experiential theological teaching which I am sharing with my theological students and parishioners in my home seminary and congregations, respectively. Besides serving as an ordinary instructor, the church recognized some leadership skills in me and appointed me as Principal (President) of the seminary. This is not unique to me because it is true

with my colleagues who also went through the corridors of PRTS. I am therefore grateful to God, my sponsors, and my professors for being true friends. To God be the glory!

Below are some pictures of my seminary.



Part of our Library



Classrooms



*Constructing a bigger library and auditorium
(pray with us for more funding)*

BRENO MACEDO

BRAZIL
2013 ALUMNUS



The Session (Breno Macedo is in the center)

Upon the completion of my ThM program at PRTS, I returned to Brazil and was called to serve as the assistant pastor of a congregation in my home denomination (Presbyterian Church of Brazil-IPB). This congregation is located at the city of Salvador, the capital of a Brazilian state called Bahia. Approximately 180 members congregate and they are a vibrant and diverse mix. People from all ages and backgrounds attend the worship services and the prayer meetings which take place on Tuesday nights. The worship services are very simple and focus on the preaching of God's Word and the administration of the sacraments twice a month.

My pastoral duties focus on three main activities: preaching, catechizing, and visitation. I have embraced the expository Reformed and experimental preaching model as the best method to explain God's Word and as the biblical model for preaching. I have also embraced the *lectio continua*, the Reformed practice of preaching through entire books of the Bible, as the most effective way to instruct God's people. Using these methods, I and the senior pastor with whom I serve have preached through Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians in the morning services and through the Gospel of Mark in the evening services. Now we are working our way through Second Corinthians and Genesis. The members have responded very well to the sermons and the visitors quickly recognize the difference when the preaching is thoroughly Reformed and experiential. The church has become more and more known as a place where the Bible is taught.

Catechizing occupies a good part of time during the week. Several members of the church are seeking pastoral guidance to learn more about the Scriptures and about the Reformed faith. I have been meeting four different individuals for detailed studies in the Westminster Shorter Catechism and in one book of the Bible. Every Tuesday, I meet with a family of four for coffee and studies in Paul's letter to the Romans. Every two weeks, I meet with another family to study crucial aspects of the gospel like repentance, justification, sanctification, and assurance of salvation. The teenagers are also under my responsibility. We meet once every two weeks to study a theological book along with the Scriptures. In the first semester, we read J. C. Ryle's *Thoughts for Young Men* and now we are reading John Piper's *Think* (both titles are available in Portuguese). These are really precious moments of fellowship and of growth in grace, and help me to know better Christ's flock and their difficulties and challenges in their Christian walk.



Teaching

Visitation is the other activity to which I've been dedicating my time. In fact, the more I do it, the more I become convinced that it is a crucial part of pastoral ministry. These pastoral visitations differ from the catechizing meetings because they aim to raise awareness for the shepherding of the elders. I perform these visitations preferably in the company of one of the ruling elders. During the visit, we read a portion of Scripture, frequently from a book of the Bible that is being preached in the worship services, we pray and we ask the members about their Christian life and their spiritual disciplines. We also ask how the church could help the family with their spiritual life and encourage them to get involved in church life.

As of next year, I've been called to teach historical theology at one of the seminaries of my denomination in the city of Teresina. I will also be serving as assistant pastor of a Presbyterian congregation in the same city, which will allow me to keep in touch with pastoral ministry, particularly with preaching.



Family Catechizing group



Teenage Bible Study Group

ROBÉRIO AZEVEDO

BRAZIL
2008 ALUMNUS



Pastor Robério's family

By the grace of God, I had the opportunity to study at the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary for two years. These were years where I learned a lot about the Reformed faith from the experiential perspective. I am immensely grateful for the scholarship I received while studying at PRTS.

After completing my studies, I returned to Brazil and today I am serving at the Bethel Presbyterian Church in the city of Feira de Santana, in Bahia state (a church affiliated with the Presbyterian Church of Brazil-IPB). I am the senior pastor of the church, working with five assistant pastors who help me in the work of planting Reformed churches in our city and region. Currently, we are planting seven new churches and two of them will become independent churches next year, God willing.



Monthly Fellowship Meeting at the Bethel Presbyterian Church

I am also a guest professor at the North Presbyterian Seminary (Recife, Brazil) and at the Northeast Theological Seminary (Teresina, PI). Both

seminaries belong to the Presbyterian Church of Brazil-IPB. I am teaching expository preaching, biblical theology, and the theology of prayer.



Preaching at another planted church in a rural area (countryside)

Our church is also organizing the annual Reformed Faith Meeting, a conference for pastors and leaders. The church's goal is to have an inexpensive conference where many leaders can participate and come to buy good Reformed books. Generally we work for a year raising money to subsidize the meeting. This year (October 24–26) we are expecting to have 350 registered leaders.



Reformed Faith Meeting. Dr. George Scipione answering questions.

We have seen the growth of the Reformed faith in Brazil. Many leaders of other denominations have attended our meetings, which is a great blessing from the Lord. Please pray for us!



Social project for poor children who live in the church neighborhood

KUSHAL RAI

INDIA
2010 ALUMNUS



*Some members of the congregation at my ordination service
(Kushal is in the second row on the far right, wearing a gray suit and tie.)*

As someone born in the foothills of the great Himalayas, a comparatively less developed part of India, the thought of coming to the United States was distant and unreal. For someone who earns a little over one hundred dollars per month, studying in the United States was only a dream. Yet the opportunity became a reality five years ago, for which I thank the Lord.

At Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, I received the very best of theological education—and that free of cost. Thank you, PRTS, for providing scholarship fees and all other expenses during my two-year stay in Grand Rapids. I pray that the Lord will continue to bless the seminary as they train men for God’s ministry.

I returned to India in July 2010 and rejoined Darjeeling Hills Bible School as a teacher after two years of study leave. I have been ministering at the Bible School full-time ever since. We train about ten to fifteen students annually at various levels. With small enrollment and only a few teachers, I am teaching various courses (about fifteen credit hours per week). This usually keeps me busy for the weekdays. We also conduct English chapel services on Sabbath morning, which is attended by about fifteen people. Currently I am doing a series on Paul’s letter to the church at Colosse. At the Bible School Daily Worship, which we conduct every morning, I have been doing a series on the Epistle to the Hebrews since October 2011.

On April 14, 2012, after two years of internship, I was ordained as minister of the Eastern Himalayan Church Council (Synod) under the United Church of Northern India. The Synod consists of 13,000+ members, with over a hundred churches and forty ministers. Considering the fewer number of pastors to churches, I fill various vacant pulpits, preaching, administering sacraments, handling visitation, etc. I am also called to speak at various conferences and seminars.

In September 2013, on the Sunday evening before the 113th birthday of Dr. Graham's Homes School (the school where I studied), I was asked to preach at the birthday service to about 650 residential students. The school was established by a Scottish Presbyterian missionary in 1900. Though very little of Christianity remains, it was wonderful to share the Word. The majority of the students are non-Christian.

God willing, beginning in February 2014, we hope to administer distance theological (advanced) training for men who are already in various ministries in co-operation with Miami International Theological Seminary (MINTS), Florida (part of the URC).

Do remember me in your prayers. Times have been hard with many failures and disappointments; stormy clouds of bitterness hover around our heads, driving us to the point of lifting up our hands in despair and defeat. Yet, the Lord, gracious and tender-hearted, always surprises us with His mighty grace and joy beyond all measure. His grace is all that we need and He never leaves us disappointed. Therefore, we rejoice all the more in our weakness, for then His strength is made perfect.

I shall forever remain indebted to the seminary and the entire PRTS family for all the help I received while I attended. May the Lord bless the seminary.



Mission Church Building in India

JOEL OVERDUIN

ONTARIO
2005 ALUMNUS



After graduation in 2005, I was called to serve the Free Reformed congregation of Mitchell, Ontario. The Lord blessed us during our years there, allowing us to form good friendships and to learn the skills of ministry in preaching, teaching, and pastoral work. When I began in Mitchell, I thought I might never leave, and that would have been all right with us. But early in 2013, a call came from a Free Reformed Church in Vineland, Ontario (www.vinelandfrc.org), and after much prayer and wrestling, it was clear that the Lord was directing us there. I was installed on June 9 and am getting into the responsibilities of ministry in a new and different congregation.

Our family is settling in well, for which we are thankful. When we began ministry in 2005, we had a one-year-old daughter. Since then the Lord has blessed us with four more children and today we are a busy, bustling family of seven. I am writing this in September, and every September I think back with much appreciation to those Septembers I spent at PRTS. Those foundational years were much used and blessed by the Lord. I pray that I would always be a faithful ambassador for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20), for the building of the church of the Lord and ultimately to the glory of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

ROBERT VANDOODEWAARD

ONTARIO
2012 ALUMNUS



With a thankful heart to the Lord, I accepted a call in November of 2012 from the Free Reformed Church of Brantford, Ontario. They called me to minister as a church planter in the Nipissing region of Ontario. This church plant had been started by a group of four Reformed families and “adopted” by the Free Reformed churches in 2009. The group now consists of seven member families and a few regular visitors. Meeting for worship in the town of Powassan, the church is uniquely positioned geographically as there are no other Reformed churches within about a two-hour drive. With many beautiful lakes, hills, and forests, our region is a tourist area, especially the summer months often bring us numerous vacationers from other Reformed and Presbyterian churches.



We have begun efforts to bring the gospel to our community, beginning with ensuring that people are aware of our church. We had a book table at the Powassan Maple Syrup Festival in the spring and at the fall fair; both were very well attended. We have also set up a table at the local Saturday farmer's market and begun some door-to-door canvassing. A website, www.nipissingfrc.com, has been developed, and some targeted internet advertising has been used.



Nevertheless, we have found that the relationships and personal invitations from church members have been the most effective means of outreach. Many people in our region are nominally religious. Most claim to be Roman Catholic, Anglican, or United Church members, though there is little church attendance and very little knowledge of gospel truth. This can make outreach difficult; so few see their “need of a physician.” We have, however, been blessed with a number of regular visitors from various backgrounds. Some of our visitors have found our Reformed foundations and approach to worship refreshingly biblical. It has been a joy to grow together with them in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Please pray that the work of ministry in the community is blessed, and that many more will see their need of the Savior.

Our family has settled well into this area, and the church families have been warm and welcoming. In January 2013, we were blessed with our fifth child, Abigail Mae, born quite soon after we moved up to this area. We all enjoy the small-town, rural lifestyle and the gorgeous scenery. In many ways, the culture is more traditional than it was in other places we have lived. It is our hope and prayer that the Lord would use our small group to call this community back to His Word, and that His church here would be built up to be a solid Reformed witness.

TERRETH KLAVER

BRITISH COLUMBIA
2006 ALUMNUS



The story of my ministry begins in my teens. I was fifteen when the Lord savingly worked in my life, and not long after I felt a burden and desire to serve Him in full-time ministry. At first, I did not know what form that ministry would take. I initially assumed it would be youth ministry—a natural assumption, as I was myself a youth.

I was very active in various ministries and my prayers and desires were focused on serving the Lord. The classes I chose in high school, the university I attended, and the courses I selected were all geared toward serving the Lord in full-time ministry. As I pursued my bachelor's degree, I realized I should study for the ministry generally and wait and see what the Lord's leading would be regarding youth ministry, missions, or whatever particular work to which the Lord might be pleased to call me. I knew the next step would be choosing a seminary, so I began reading many different theologians and investigating the different emphases and distinctives of various denominations. I visited different seminaries and spoke to their professors. Through this process of investigation, I was convicted I needed to cast in my lot with the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC). Upon completing my Bachelor's degree, I was approved by the HRC to be begin studies at PRTS.

Studying at PRTS was a great blessing. I had opportunity to fellowship with like-minded students. I received tools and training in

linguistics, exegesis, theology, and counseling that I use every day in the work of the ministry.

After graduating from PRTS, the Lord made it clear that I was to serve a small church and small denomination in Launceston, Tasmania, in Australia. I was ordained as Pastor of the Southern Presbyterian Church (SPC) there in February 2007. Later that year, I married my dear wife, Martha. Serving the folk in SPC was a great blessing. I was encouraged as the Lord granted strength for the work and blessed my ministry among both the folk of our own congregation and denomination as well as outside of them. I was preaching twice regularly on the Sabbath and preparing weekly Bible studies with regular outreach Bible studies and worship services in different locations. While serving in the SPC, my wife and I were blessed with three children (Julia, Job, and Ezra). The SPC is still very much in my thoughts and prayers—particularly now as they are looking for another pastor. In March 2013, I accepted a call to serve the HRC of Chilliwack, British Columbia, where I had previously served for an extended internship during seminary. Leaving behind our church home in Tasmania to return to North America was difficult, but the Lord once again made His calling very clear.

I took up the work of the ministry in Chilliwack in May and the last six months have been blessed. I have been encouraged when I see God's faithfulness to the people of Chilliwack. New faces have joined the church and much spiritual growth is clearly evident. Upon arriving, I got to work right away, including hosting an intern in our congregation for two months and having several friends and family come to visit. Through all these changes, the Lord has been with us, and the love and support of our new church family has been constant and encouraging.

That is the story of my ministry thus far. It began when I was fifteen and I am now thirty-five. I began a young single man and now I am blessed to be a husband and father of three. Please pray that the Lord would grant me and my family many more years in His service.

The Spirit of our Lord Jesus be with you.

RAY PENNINGS

ALBERTA
2011 ALUMNUS



My motives for pursuing a theological education at PRTS were probably a bit different than most, given my leadership role at Cardus (www.cardus.ca), a Christian think-tank involved in political and cultural conversations in Canada and the United States. My studies were intended to help me think more systematically through a theological framework that would support my role of engaging primarily unbelievers in an increasingly secular and post-modern culture. I also am involved in various leadership roles within my local congregation (<http://calgaryfrc.com/>) and the Free Reformed denomination (www.frcna.org).



My work at Cardus is being blessed and our voice is increasingly being heard in the media as well as in the corridors of economic and political power. We have experienced steady growth since our inception in 2000 and today, with a staff of over a dozen, we are regularly engaged in policy discussions where we are able to provide a different perspective on the issues of the day, informed by both God's general and special revelation as we seek to provide answers to the questions that our neighbors are asking.

My church work includes serving on several denominational committees, including as the chair of the FRC Outreach Committee which supports our church plants, a radio broadcast, and a special ministry of developing Reformed resources and publications for those who come from East Asian cultures (www.truepathtogod.org). I also am privileged to fill the pulpit in vacant congregations from time to time and, as I do so, I recall with thanksgiving the homiletics instruction that I received at PRTS.

On the family front, Kathy and I are looking forward to celebrating twenty-five years of blessed marriage next year, the Lord willing. Our only son, Chris, expects to graduate with a Policy Studies degree from Mount Royal University at the end of this academic year; we expect the upcoming year to be one of transition as he pursues his vocational path and we (likely) begin the adjustment to being empty-nesters. We trust that God's gracious provision, which has been bountiful in supply for us as a family through cross-continent moves as well as a very demanding travel schedule, will continue to supply all of our needs in this next phase of our family life.



MARTY SLINGERLAND

BRITISH COLUMBIA
2010 ALUMNUS



I am serving as a prison pastor of the Heritage Reformed Congregation (HRC) of Jordan Station, Ontario, for the Redemption Prison Ministry (RPM). My ordination and commissioning was on August 25, 2013. RPM is a Reformed, parachurch ministry in Canada which seeks to facilitate the church in the evangelization, teaching, and discipling of Canadian prisoners, and their reintegration into church and society. It has been fulfilling its mission since 1996 and includes a Board of Directors, several staff members, and numerous volunteers. I am one of two pastors; Pastor Rudy DeVries serves in and around Kingston, Ontario, while I am serving in the federal prisons in Western Canada, particularly British Columbia, where there are seven regular male-populated institutions, one women's institution, and an Aboriginal healing village. The seven regular male institutions are where most, if not all, of my focus is spent. RPM also desires to facilitate the churches in sending more ordained men into this mission field.

A major part of the work of RPM is its Bible correspondence ministry. Inmates receive free courses of different levels. These are then graded and returned, with a note of encouragement, by approved volunteer instructors. RPM also provides prison chaplains with Bibles, the annual inspiration calendar, and other resource materials. My responsibilities

as a prison pastor are to teach, counsel, and build relationships in one-on-one visits (usually in a side room in the chapel) with RPM students as well as with any non-students who request a visit. This requires much timely preparation through study and prayer as I seek to lead inmates to our Lord Jesus Christ and then to grow in sanctification. I seek to build relationships with the prison chaplains and other prison staff. I also lead chapel services. So far, the doors have been wide open with God's blessing! To find out more, you may visit www.redemptionprisonministry.ca.



(taken from <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/institutions/001002-5005-eng.shtml>)

The Lord has also blessed me with a wonderful family. My wife, Jessica, and I have been married since 2010 and we have two healthy boys—Jonah and Caleb.

DANIEL HYDE

CALIFORNIA
2010 ALUMNUS

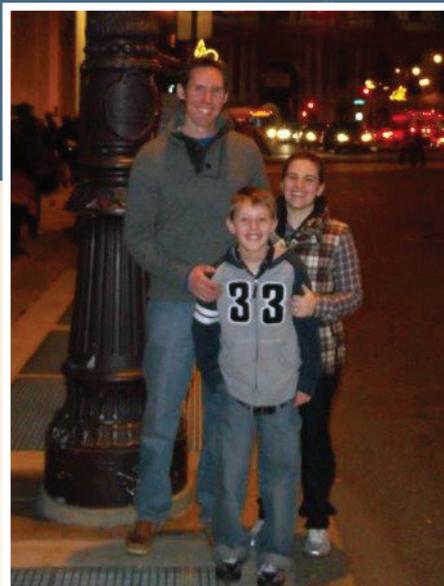


While I was at Westminster Seminary California the Lord put on my heart the desire to plant a new Reformed church somewhere in Southern California. No other Reformed church brought the full gospel message to those who, like me, did not grow up Reformed. I have been the church planter and pastor of the Oceanside United Reformed Church (<http://www.oceansideurc.org/>) since 2000.

In our beach community, there is nothing else like us with a strong commitment to expository, doctrinal, and experimental preaching; a devotion to the faith as outlined in our confessions; a love of the Psalms in singing; and all this wrapped in genuine love. After finishing my ThM at PRTS, I have been privileged to go back and teach there as an adjunct instructor in the areas of theology and missions. The Lord is in the midst of OURC, transforming the lives of those who have never heard the gospel and the lives of those caught in the clutches of much of the evangelicalism here. My wife, Karajean, and I have four children (Cyprian, Caiden, Daxton, and Sadie) and consider it the highest calling of all to be a part of Christ's kingdom on earth until He comes again.

RENTON RATHBUN

PENNSYLVANIA
2011 ALUMNUS

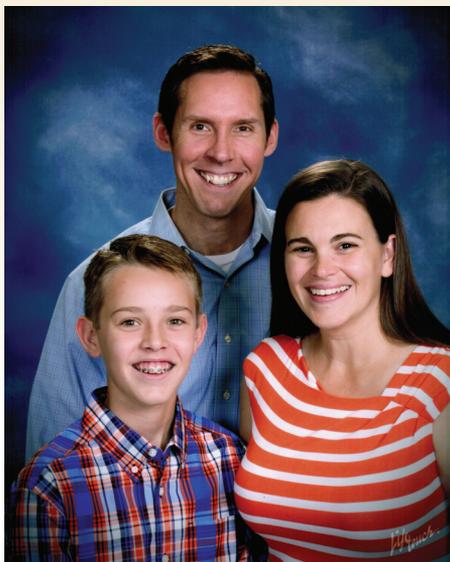


After graduating with my ThM from Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in May of 2011, my wife, April, son, Daniel (then 10), and I moved from Toledo, Ohio to Philadelphia in order for me to begin my PhD studies at Westminster Theological Seminary in Historical and Theological Studies. The Lord supplied every need we had, and we had many.

We own a house in Toledo and, in a fallen economy, selling it was impossible. A month before we were to leave, God provided a renter, who remains there today. I was teaching full-time at a community college in Toledo at the time, but we could not find work in Philadelphia. The chair of my department asked if I would stay on at the college in Toledo but teach fully online. So God provided a steady income for us as we left for Philadelphia. Tuition is expensive, but the Lord provided a PhD scholarship. And He did not stop His blessings there. As a full-time professor, full-time student, and full-time head of a home, the Lord provided me with time necessary for family time and the joys of fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ.

We have had several opportunities to serve as well. The Lord has given me a burden for those young men studying to enter into the ministry, especially in their relationship with their wives or future wives. I started a men's group called "Man Up," in which I was able to teach biblical, experiential lessons about leading a home to both traditional as well as international students. The group allowed the men to see exactly what Scripture demands of a family in ministry and what headship looks like. At our church, Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Lord has given me the opportunity to teach both adult and children's Sunday school.

Currently, I have completed all my course work at WTS and am now studying for my comprehensive exams, which will take place in April 2014. At that point, I will be ready to begin work on my dissertation.



BRIAN NAJAPFOUR

MICHIGAN
2009 ALUMNUS



I was born and reared in the Philippines. Since 2001, I have been a minister of God. Called to the gospel ministry at the young age of sixteen, I began my theological education in 1997 at the Center for Biblical Studies Institute and Seminary in the Philippines, where, with God's help, I earned my Bachelor of Theology (BTh) degree in 2001, followed by my Master in Biblical Studies (MBS) degree in 2004. From 2001 until my coming to the U.S. in 2006, I served as a pastor in the Philippines. With a desire to further my education, however, I arrived in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 2006, where I enrolled in Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (PRTS). Here I studied for my Master of Theology (ThM) degree, which I completed by God's grace in 2009.

PRTS pressed upon my heart the importance of personal holiness in the life of a pastor. In this seminary I saw theology and piety mixed together. For example, you can rarely find a seminary today in which a professor would first read a portion of Scripture and pray before he begins his lecture, and then would pray again at the end of his class. I call PRTS a producer of godly ministers of the gospel. I thank and praise the Lord for this institution.

Currently, I am pursuing a PhD degree while pastoring Dutton United Reformed Church, Caledonia, Michigan. My wife (Sarah) and I have one daughter (Anna). After receiving my PhD, I am hoping to return to the Philippines to minister there.

MICHAEL IVES

RHODE ISLAND
2005 ALUMNUS



Greetings in Christ Jesus! He is Lord of all.

After graduating from PRTS in 2005, I eventually accepted a call to serve the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Rhode Island, a small church in our denomination. The Presbyterian Reformed Church is a largely North American body embracing the heritage of Scottish Presbyterianism and is quite similar to the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing).

I have been serving here for seven years, and the Lord has richly blessed, giving many encouragements. I inherited a very well-grounded congregation from my predecessor, Dr. William Young. He continues to worship with us every Sabbath, living at home with the care of live-in assistants. We've seen spiritual growth and maturation in the people through preaching, visitation, outreach, and mid-week prayer meetings. While we have a small body, we are very much united. Recently, one family of ours adopted some girls from abroad, adding to the number of our baptized children. It was a very special day to celebrate baptism with these children.

Not long after taking the call to this church, I was determined to make regular outreach a part of my labor here. Inspired by Thomas Chalmers's parish principle and his courageous example in the slums of nineteenth-century Scotland, I decided to stake out a parish of my own. There really was not a good, residential community near our place of worship; it is located in a very commercial area. Because of this as well as my

continued interest in reaching minorities and especially Spanish speakers, I landed on an area in South Providence, a multi-ethnic, working-class community bordering a large urban park. I've been regularly engaged in door-to-door visits and am making my fourth round through the area in about as many years. I head out with Reformed literature and information about our church and talk to folks who are willing to discuss the things of God. I have had very few bad encounters and many interesting and engaging conversations. Some have come to church, though we still wait for fruits of genuine conversions. Of course, it is not our job to produce fruit. We must simply "plant and water."

This district has a high concentration of Spanish speakers, mostly from the Dominican Republic. My Spanish is far from perfect, but I've been able to establish a number of good contacts nonetheless. Several of them have invited me into their homes over the last few years, and I've been able to read the Scriptures and pray with them in Spanish. Most are nominal to devout Roman Catholics; yet even the devout are willing to engage in conversation. We've had a public meeting in Spanish with the help of a translator, and we are about to start up a pilot effort for 3–6 months to try monthly Spanish meetings on the Lord's Day. As I am improving my Spanish, I'll be practicing and delivering short messages by Brownlow North on *The Rich Man and Lazarus*. As I become more competent, I hope to preach my own messages extemporaneously. My long-term goal is to have a weekly service in Spanish in the parish itself. So please pray for these efforts. And if you'd like to receive a periodic prayer update, send me an e-mail at mjives.refparish@gmail.com, and I'd be happy to put you on the list.

On the academic side of things, I am also pursuing postgraduate research part-time through the University of the Free State in partnership with the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale. Perhaps not surprisingly, the topic is on Thomas Chalmers's advocacy of the urban parish as a vehicle for Christian missions.

I do write from time to time, mostly for reformedparish.com, which is our de facto local website, as well as my special-interest blog on ministry & parish missions, westportexperiment.wordpress.com. But because I'm trying to get my dissertation done, I don't do much more than this.

The highlight of everything is my wonderful family. I am so profoundly blessed with a godly wife in Aubrey. We are about to enter our fifteenth year of marriage, and it only gets better with each passing year. We now have four children. Gabriel is almost 13; he enjoys the fiddle,

amateur photography and cinematography, computer design, and just being a boy. Geneva is 11 going on 29. She is our expert craftswoman, always busy with the sewing machine and assorted artsy projects. She also loves to read. Anastasia is almost 8; she also loves to read, and when she's done, she plays hard, getting dirty and destroying clothing. All three of them are in karate and are doing very well. Annie recently joined Gabriel and Geneva in sparring, and apparently she's pretty dangerous. Last, but not least, is our four-year-old curly one, Monica. She turns a lot of heads and, yes, we all dote on her way too much.

The Lord has been very good to us. We are not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of the truth which He has showed us.



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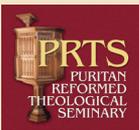
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