



## Shepherding and Self-Awareness

When ministers and elders gather together, they often share their ministry burdens with each other. The calling of a minister of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is high and hard; the weightiness of the calling and its challenges give us the need to discreetly share some criticisms we endure, oppositions we face, and brokenness we encounter. We are usually acutely aware of how these contribute to our own suffering.

It is more rare to hear ministers and elders reflect on how their congregations have suffered because of their ministries, despite the fact that this kind of self-awareness is the route to the most blessed and mature ministries. Why is it such a difficult route? Often because self-centeredness not only makes us shallow and blunt instruments of ministry but also blinds us to the harm done to the sheep entrusted to us. The sobering words of Ezekiel 34:3–4 become increasingly applicable: we fail to strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bring back the straying, and seek the lost. We place hindrances between Christ and His sheep. Distance, apathy, self-pity, or harshness begin to characterize us.

So how do we cultivate a healthy self-awareness in gospel ministry?

First, we need to be engaged in communion with God, using the ordinary means of grace. We need to be in the Word for ourselves and in prayer for ourselves. As we come to Him, the Lord uses His Word and Spirit to remove simple and overly high views of self, making us wise; His pure commands will enlighten us,

including to ourselves (Ps. 19:7–8). He will prune us for greater fruitfulness (John 15:2). As we grow in knowing and communing with the Lord, we begin to see ourselves with far greater clarity, and realize with renewed depth how difficult it is to discern our own errors (Ps. 19:12). We more deeply realize our need of our Lord Jesus Christ and His perfect sufficiency for all (Rom. 7:24–25). Through this, our ministry grows.

Second, we need the communion of the saints for our own sanctification. We need their love and encouragement, their concerns and wisdom. We need to be ready to listen to and heed our wives, elders, and fellow ministers. We also need to be ready to hear from our congregants. They see us, hear us, and know us from week to week. They enjoy the blessing of our ministries; they also suffer under the weaknesses and sin in our ministries. Heart-searching counsel of past ministers is also a help; Charles Spurgeon's essay, "The Minister's Self-Watch," is a good place to begin.

Those who minister will be judged with greater strictness (James 3:1). We are not sufficient for our calling, but our Lord is more than sufficient for us in it. We bear the treasure of God's good news in jars of clay, so that it would be evident that God is the one who saves and sanctifies (2 Cor. 4:7). He provides for and enables growth in faithful, fruitful ministry—including the blessing of coming to a more accurate self-awareness.

—DR. WILLIAM VANDOODEWAARD

# DISTANCE LEARNING *Update*

In 1728, Caleb Phillips set off a revolution. He was an instructor in the art of writing shorthand, and he could not possibly have known the significance of what he was about to do. He put an ad in the Boston Gazette which read as follows: “Any persons in the Country desirous to learn the Art [of writing in shorthand] may, by having several lessons sent weekly to them, be as perfectly instructed as those that live in Boston.” As far as historical records exist, this appears to have been this country’s first attempt at distance education. Then, in the early 1920s, Penn State took out a commercial license to use the radio to broadcast its class lectures to distance students. In 1965, the University of Wisconsin started using the phone to broadcast lectures; in 1968, Stanford did the same with TV. In the year 2000, entrepreneur Michael Saylor promised to spend \$100 million dollars of his own money to develop a totally free, online university that would compete with the Ivy Leagues. This effort continues at [www.saylor.org](http://www.saylor.org). Today, nearly every school in the country offers something to off-campus students. The University of Phoenix is by far the largest online university with over 320,000 students, and Liberty University is the largest Christian school with well over 100,000 students. What a pioneer Caleb was!

In light of all this, you won’t be surprised to hear that PRTS is also leveraging this shift in education to improve our service to off-campus students. From its very inception, PRTS recorded all class lectures to cassette tape. Later, these



cassettes were converted to a digital format (mp3). At that time, our model of distance learning wasn’t much different from what happened on-campus; we simply mailed these recordings to our distance students, along with a syllabus. The student listened to the lectures taking notes as he went. Then, he wrote the paper, took the exams, and mailed it all back in for grading. In 2008, the seminary began using an online learning management system to facilitate this kind of learning, and, in 2009, we began using video-conferencing software to broadcast live video lectures to our distance students.

—Chris Engelsma

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# STUDENT TESTIMONY *of Jacob Jan Matze*

*Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now I am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.*

This song of John Newton is connected to both my father's life and mine. I am Jacob Jan Matze, a student at PRTS in Grand Rapids. I was born in Zeist, the Netherlands. I was raised in a godly family with the privilege to hear Bible education every day. In addition, my parents were and are a real example to me in showing their love to God. John Newton has a significant meaning for my father's life.

Though I had the privilege of being raised in a godly family I was still in need of a radical conversion in my life. When I was 14 years old and went to the Middle High School, I enjoyed sin and pretended to live spiritually. On April 26, 2005 I was involved in a bike accident on my way home. God graciously intervened, spared me and started to knock more intently on the door of my heart.

I lived in the little village of Langbroek between the church and a building that belonged to the church. Once a month this church building was filled with people from all parts of the country to listen to a Christian guest speaker, who delivered a message on a specific theme. My parents were involved with these evenings and helped the organization to prepare for the evening program. On an evening that I was asked to help set up the chairs, Rasak Avakthi was invited. I did not know this man, but I heard that his story was very impressive. When Avakthi arrived in Langbroek, he asked me my name. I answered with, "Jacob." He told me that the name Jacob means liar and made a joke of it. He asked me however to stay that evening to listen to his story.

I stayed that evening and heard that he was a former bodyguard of Saddam Hussein, who eventually came to the Christian faith in the Netherlands. Avakthi served in Hussein's army in the 90's and planned to kill Saddam with a Kalashnikov when he was once standing beside him. Avakthi was arrested and brought to a terrible prison in Baghdad. After being tortured physically and mentally he tried to kill himself with a sharpened spoon. He survived this and was returned after his hospital stay to the jail. After spending a long time in a prison worse than before in the country of Iran, God opened the way to freedom for Avakthi. He was able to flee to the



Netherlands, where an evangelist was used by God to lead him to Christ and taught him the Scriptures.

When Rasak was sharing his life story he suddenly said, "There was a boy earlier this evening named Jacob. Is he here? Jacob, stand up!" Totally surprised, I stood up. He said, "Jacob, I told you that your name means liar, but I have to tell you that Jacob's name was turned into Israel. I tell you that God will do something great in your life as well."

When I met this special brother, Rasak Avakthi, a few years later, he remembered me and said, "Jacob!" I was able to tell him that God indeed worked powerfully in my heart and changed my life. To God be the glory, who saved a wretch like me.

Pray for me that God indeed will make me a blessing to others, especially in my family and future ministry.

*But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel (Isa. 43:1a)*

I was doing mission work in Germany when I realized that I needed more theological training. I was introduced to PRTS through my close friend, Pieter VanderHoek, and am now an MDiv student training for the ministry. I hope to return to the Netherlands upon completion of my studies. My wife and I have two children and worship with the Grand Rapids FRC, where we have been received with much love. We are grateful for the Lord's remarkable providence in our lives.

# REGISTRAR/ADMISSIONS *Report*

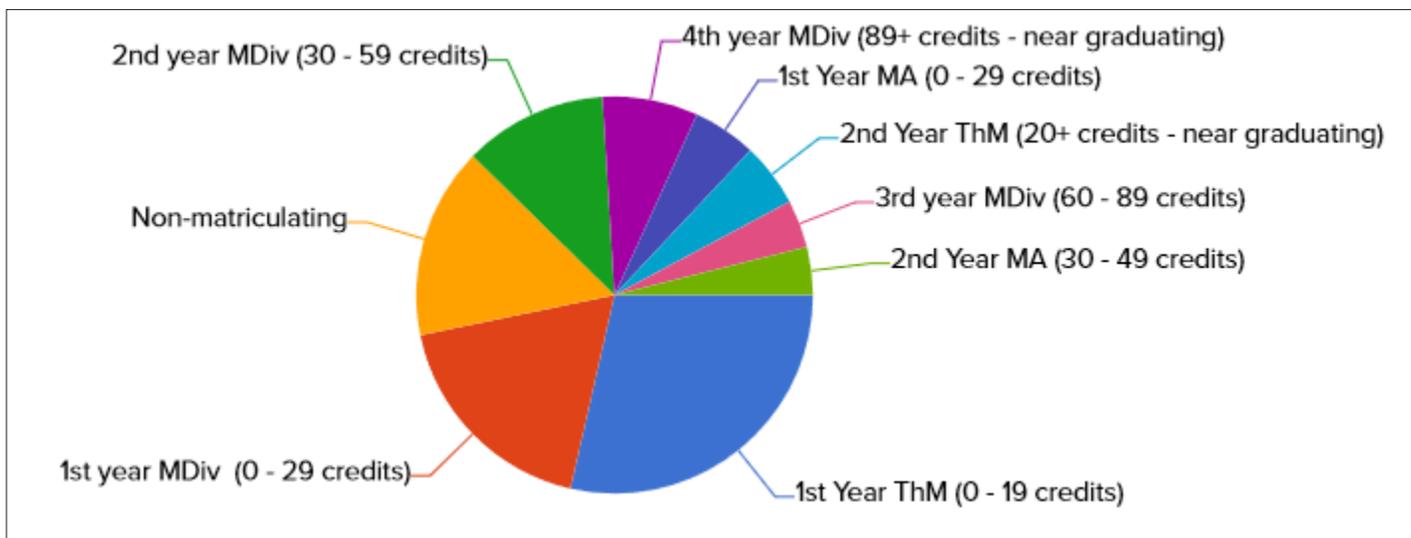
The current fall semester is closing quickly; the countdown for final assignment deadlines has begun. Again we have much to be thankful for as this semester marked the highest enrollment in the history of PRTS.

This semester, 82 students (and 14 auditors) are registered in one or more courses. As indicated by the pie chart below, these 82 students are representative of the three degrees offered at PRTS (the MA, MDiv, or ThM), as well as visiting students who are not formally accepted into a degree (non-matriculating students).

A snapshot of one class offered this semester might give more substance to these somewhat abstract numbers. Popular this fall is a course taught by Dr. Joel Beeke entitled 412/ST882 – Theology Proper, a class taught at both the MA/MDiv and ThM levels. Total enrollment in this course is 39

students; this number includes the four auditors, as well as the ten students taking this class from a distance as a live-streamed course. Students taking this course come from a variety of countries including Canada, China, Kenya, Korea, Lithuania, Malawi, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Singapore, Slovakia, Tanzania, United Kingdom, USA (various states), Venezuela, and Zambia. As these students from varying backgrounds, cultures, and denominations study this important subject this semester, our desire is that they become more enamored with the character and attributes of our triune God, and emboldened to share the good news of the gospel in whatever spot of the vineyard they are called to labor.

—JONATHON BEEKE  
Registrar and Director of Admissions



## INTERVIEW *with* REV. ANUP HIWALE

***Anup, please provide a little introduction to you and your family, and where you are serving.***

Theological education under godly men who are faithful to Reformed, biblical convictions is hard to find these days, but what a privilege that we as a family had to study and learn at Mid-America (2006) and Puritan Reformed (2014). My seminary education has equipped me to teach teachers and head up a mission organization in India called Mission of Peace Making Society (MPM). My family and I live and work in and around the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains. I oversee MPM's Reformed Theological Institute (RTI), as well as provide oversight to the development work of the Evangelical Reformed Church (ERC). Currently, RTI has 40 students.

My wife, Promi, and I have three children: Hanokh (17), who is a graduate of Plymouth Christian School in Grand Rapids, and who will be studying Biology at

Calvin College; Maria (15), who is currently homeschooled and in the 9th grade; and, Micah, who is our 21-month-old little boy. Promi is a busy mom who also works at our local counseling center for women in need. This year, we have 100 women who will graduate with certificates in biblical education and sewing. We are grateful for the partnership between MPM and Word & Deed, for much of what we do is because of a close working relationship between these two ministries.



**What first brought you to PRTS and what degree did you earn?**

Mission of Peace Making Society has been working on developing the Reformed Theological Institute for the last several years. Since I head up the parent organization, it was thought important that I be theologically qualified. After 7 years of searching for the right fit, I applied to the Master of Theology program at PRTS, which I completed in 2014.

**What does Reformed, experiential ministry look like in your current context?**

I am grateful for the emphasis that PRTS puts on Reformed, experiential piety. It was while studying there that I first grasped the importance of this truth. Since returning home, I have been taking what I learned in the classroom and incorporating it into our RTI training and at the counseling center. We are praying that God fans into flame this truth all across India.

**How has your seminary education helped you in ministry?**

The training I received at Puritan has given me a broader theological understanding that has aided me in addressing various needs within the church in India. It has also helped me to better order my daily teaching lessons and my preaching schedule.

**How can the seminary community pray for you, your family, and your ministry?**

Pray that the Lord would protect my family, the work we are doing in our region of India, the relationship between MPM and Word & Deed, our children's education and health, as well as our boldness in preaching Christ. Please also pray for my PhD studies.

## 2016 PURITAN REFORMED *Conference*

The 2016 Puritan Reformed Conference was held on August 25–27, at the Prince Conference Center in Grand Rapids. This marked the conference's eighth year. The theme for this year's event was *The Beauty and Glory of the Christian Worldview*. Speakers included some old favorites like Michael Barrett, Joel Beeke, Jerry Bilkes, David Murray, and Derek Thomas, as well as some new faces, such as Charles Barrett, Assistant Minister at Wayside Presbyterian Church in Signal Mountain, Tennessee, and son of Michael Barrett; Brian Cosby, Senior Pastor at Wayside Presbyterian Church; and Mark Kelderman, Dean of Students and Spiritual Formation at PRTS.

The many exhibitors had a steady flow of individuals interested in their ministries. Reformation Heritage Books was on-site, offering a wide range of Christian titles at unbelievable prices, and many of the conference attendees were taking advantage of the opportunity to purchase these books and even interact with some of the authors who were on hand.

The conference's opening address, "Joyful Exiles: A Worldview for Pilgrims," was masterfully delivered by Charles Barrett. It set the tone for what would turn out to be a wonderful conference filled with many poignant and profitable messages. Dr. Barrett also led a breakout session on Friday afternoon. His topic was "Viewing This World by Following Jesus into the Next."

Derek Thomas concluded Thursday night with an address on the Christian's worldview of the Trinity. He showed how the Christian's worldview is solely grounded in the Trinitarian nature of the Godhead, and that is



Dr. Derek Thomas



something in which the Christian can take great comfort. Dr. Thomas opened Friday morning with an address entitled “The Christian Worldview for Daily Life.” Once again, he tenderly but honestly challenged everyone to mortify the sin that so easily entangles and to look to the finished work of Christ for help on a daily basis.

David Murray’s Friday morning message, “The Christian Worldview of Human Identity,” looked at a number of personas that people use to identify themselves, all of which start and end in the wrong place. He then went on to challenge the audience to find their true, multifaceted identity in Jesus Christ.

Dr. Brian Cosby delivered a timely message entitled “A Christian Worldview of Suffering.” In it, Dr. Cosby addressed what suffering from a Christian perspective doesn’t mean and what it does imply. He gave a number of very practical applications, which included being quick to listen and slow to judge, not offering empty platitudes to those facing difficult trials, never apologizing for God, as though a particular experience is outside of God’s control, and caring for those who suffer long after the church meals have stopped coming.

Mark Kelderman provided a breakout session on Friday afternoon entitled “A Christian Worldview of Sexuality.” In it, Rev. Kelderman clearly pointed out that our culture views sexuality through a sin lens, which distorts in a number of different ways God’s intended meaning and purpose for sexuality. In closing, Rev. Kelderman directed the audience’s attention once again to the cleansing and finished work of Jesus Christ, a work that transforms and realigns our understanding of what a biblical worldview of sexuality is and was always meant to be.

For the final address on Friday night, Joel Beeke expounded upon what a general worldview would have included for seventeenth-century Puritans. In this address, Dr. Beeke outlined five areas that were central to the Puritans’ understanding of a Christian worldview: 1. Personal Godliness, 2. Family Piety, 3. Church Reformation, 4. Economics, and 5. Politics.

Michael Barrett opened Saturday morning with a powerful address from Ecclesiastes, entitled “The Christian Worldview of the Old Testament.” Masterfully unfolding the riches of the text, Dr. Barrett reminded the audience that God’s governance of all things, good or otherwise, is for the purpose of creating a greater faith in and dependence on Him.

Jerry Bilkes delivered the conference’s closing message, “The Christian Worldview of the Great Commission,” from Matthew 28. In it, Dr. Bilkes wonderfully defined the great commission as “the gracious calling appetite and enablement to make disciples in Christ’s world, in the name and power of the triune God, so much so that every fiber of our spiritual being aims and stretches itself forward to the glory of Christ and to the conversion of sinners.”

The conference drew to a close at noon on Saturday with a mixture of emotions for most everyone in attendance. On one hand, people were ready to return home, yet saddened that the conference had to end. Looking back, I believe this was one of our finest events. Each member of the Godhead was highly exalted and believers were encouraged to find their identity, comfort, and rest in the eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit while living in this tumultuous world.

Next year’s Puritan Reformed Conference, *The Beauty and Glory of the Reformation*, will be held on August 24–26, God willing. You will surely want to plan to attend. Our speakers will include Joel Beeke, Ian Hamilton, Michael Haykin, Elias Dos Santos Medeiros, Carl Trueman, William VanDoodewaard, and Rebecca VanDoodewaard.

—Chris Hanna, Director of Development & Marketing



**DR. MICHAEL BARRETT** | *Itinerary*

*Projects*

*God's Radical and Comprehensive Call to Holiness* in collaboration with Dr. Beeke

*Here's Life: A Study of Ecclesiastes*

New and revised editions of *Beginning at Moses* and *Complete in Him*

**DR. JOEL BEEKE** | *Itinerary*

December 4: preaching in Aruba

January 15: Jordan, Ontario: HRC

*Recent Publications:*

*Family Worship Bible Guide*, ed. with Michael Barrett, Jerry Bilkes, and Paul Smalley. Grand Rapids: RHB.

*Revelation, The Lectio Continua Expository Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: RHB.

*John Bunyan and the Grace of Fearing God*, with Paul Smalley. Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R.

*Genesis Journible*, 2 vols., with Rob Wynalda. Grand Rapids: RHB.

*A Puritan Theology Study Guide*. Grand Rapids: RHB.

*How Can I Cultivate Private Prayer?* Grand Rapids: RHB.

"The Church Fighting Satan Defensively and Offensively," and editor, *2016-2017 Yearbook: HRC*. Grand Rapids: RHB.

"Wilhelmus à Brakel's Biblical Ethics of Spirituality" and

"Images of Union and Communion with Christ," with Paul Smalley. *Puritan Reformed Journal* 8, 2 (July 2016).

"The Family Man: Luther at Home." In *The Legacy of Luther*. Sanford, Fla.: Reformation Trust.

"A Comprehensive Piety." *Tabletalk*, Oct. 2016.

"Biographical Preface: Philip Henry." *Christ All in All* by Philip Henry. Grand Rapids: RHB.

"Biographical Preface: John Brown of Wamphray." *Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life*. Grand Rapids: RHB.

"Biographical Preface: William Mason," with Paul Smalley. *A Spiritual Treasury for the Children of God*. Grand Rapids: RHB.

**DR. JERRY BILKES** | *Itinerary*

January 8: Jordan, Ontario: Jordan HRC

*Writing projects:*

*Study on James*

*Study of the Gospel of John*

**REV. MARK KELDERMAN** | *Itinerary*

Preaching most Sundays at various supporting PRTS churches.

*Project:*

DMin in counseling from Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

**DR. DAVID MURRAY** | *Itinerary*

January 1: Coconut Creek, Florida: Emmanuel Baptist Church

*Projects*

PhD on Matthew Henry with Free University of Amsterdam

Three books with Crossway

**DR. WILLIAM VANDOODEWAARD** | *Itinerary*

*Writing project:*

*1 & 2 Peter*, Evangelical Press

*Research projects:*

*The History and Theology of Seceder Presbyterians in Ireland*

*Divine Revelation and the Discovery of Ancient Worlds: Genesis Interpretation and Ancient Historical Contexts*



Students having lunch together.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

For period 8/1/2016–11/22/2016

Income	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget	Variance	Percent of Annual Budget
HRC/FRC				
Church Support	\$ 69,291	466,500	(397,209)	15%
Other Donations	494,235	1,667,000	(1,172,765)	30%
Tuition	213,306	520,000	(306,694)	41%
Scholarships	28,390	310,000	(281,610)	9%
Other Income	<u>33,288</u>	<u>152,500</u>	<u>(119,212)</u>	<u>22%</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 838,510</b>	<b>\$ 3,091,000</b>	<b>\$(2,252,490)</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Instruction	\$ 353,058	1,113,038	(759,980)	32%
Scholarships	142,952	310,000	(167,048)	46%
Administrative	<u>404,486</u>	<u>1,667,962</u>	<u>(1,263,476)</u>	<u>24%</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 900,496</b>	<b>\$ 3,091,000</b>	<b>\$(2,190,504)</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ (61,986)</b>			

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—CHRIS HANNA

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