



## STANDING STRONG IN A STORM

*Whose I am, and whom I serve (Acts 27:23).*

The church is currently in the midst of a storm. The dark clouds, the flashes of lightning, and the cascading waves continue to threaten it as society rises up in hostility against its God. How can we stand strong in this storm?

The apostle Paul faced this in a literal life-and-death situation, and by God's grace, he managed to stand strong because he knew his identity and his purpose.

### **1. Know Your Identity—“Whose I am”**

Paul knew his identity. He knew that he belonged to God. The almighty God, who was sovereign over this storm, was his God. *This truth gave Paul stability.* Paul's confidence was not rooted in mere positive thinking but in his God—the Creator (Acts 17:24) and Redeemer (Acts 20:28)—who owns him. Paul knew that he was not his own but belonged to his faithful Savior, Jesus Christ (Heidelberg Catechism Q. 1), and therefore, he could remain calm. Not a hair can

fall from his head without the will of his heavenly Father, and everything is serving his salvation! The waves may not cease around us, but they can be stilled inside us when we remember to whom we belong.

### **2. Know Your Purpose—“and whom I serve”**

Paul also knew his purpose. *This truth gave Paul direction.* He was able to focus when he remembered, “I am called to serve Christ.” Rain or shine, stormy seas or smooth sailing, his purpose remained the same. Knowing this did not make his job easy, but it did help him understand what his job was. The same is true for all Christians today. Our purpose is to passionately and humbly serve our Christ.

Sometimes the church seems to be sinking in a storm. But let's remember who rules the seas. Let's know our God, our identity, and our purpose. May these truths enable us to stand strong in the Lord in the days ahead.

—MARK WAGENAAR

## LAURA LADWIG AND HER INVOLVEMENT IN ACCREDITATION ASSESSMENTS

*Tell us a little about yourself and the role you fill at PRTS.*

I have worked at the seminary for thirteen years as the director of the William Perkins Library. I also teach a required research course. I am happily married to John Ladwig, a 2010 PRTS alumnus. We enjoy nature, gardening, cooking, birdwatching, and traditional homesteading skills and are consummate coffee and tea drinkers.

*Tell us a little about the William Perkins Library.*

The William Perkins Library has nearly one hundred thousand print volumes, almost that many e-books, and seventeen subscription databases. It has probably the largest number of electronic resources (e-books, online journal articles and dissertations, and databases) of any seminary its size in North America. We have two full-time staff members and four student workers. The library itself is an attractive, welcoming place to study.

*What is ATS, and how did you first get involved with ATS assessment teams?*

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) is the largest and most robust accrediting agency for theological schools in North America. When a particular institution comes up for accreditation or re-accreditation, the ATS liaison assembles a team with the expertise and experience to adequately provide a peer assessment or evaluation of the institution. I became involved with ATS assessment teams at the request of PRTS's ATS liaison, Dr. Lester Ruiz, whom I first met in 2013 during PRTS's initial accreditation visit. He is someone I respect and from whom I have learned a great deal.

*How many assessment teams have you participated in, and how have the experiences benefited you personally and PRTS in general?*

I have been a member of four assessment teams so far. One of these was in person, and the remaining three have been conducted via Zoom for various reasons, which presents somewhat of a challenge for successfully evaluating a peer institution.

The experience has been stimulating and stretching for me, both personally and professionally. I learn a great deal from working with professional colleagues in this type of setting. Some of the skills I have learned (or am still learning) include conducting interviews, being a professional peer evaluator, and asking open-ended questions that will yield information that enables me to evaluate whether an institution is aligned with the ATS standards for educational and institutional effectiveness. Obviously, this requires tact and professional courtesy.



*What is a typical visit like?*

The team's work begins a month and a half before the actual visit when we receive the school's self-study report and additional documents referenced by the self-study. After reading the report, we meet as a team to discuss our initial conclusions. Each team member is assigned certain standards to write about that reflect that committee member's experience and expertise. The on-site evaluation visit begins on Monday and ends on Thursday of the same week. On Monday evening, there is a meet-and-greet with various school administrative personnel and board members. Tuesday and Wednesday are days scheduled with back-to-back interviews. The team members interview individuals who can speak to the areas we write about. Sometimes these interviews are conducted in tandem with other committee members who need the input of these individuals to write their own section of the report. Throughout the visit, the team gathers to debrief and share findings.

After the interviews conclude, the team meets to finalize their initial report. This report includes affirmations, recommendations, and sometimes warnings for the institution. When we are satisfied with our recommendations, we conclude the visit by sharing the report with the institution's administrative staff and leadership. The visiting team submits the final report to the ATS Board of Commissioners, who reviews it and either approves it or not. At that point, the recommendations in the report become public and final.

*From your perspective, what benefit do you see in accreditation, and specifically, how has the rigor of accreditations improved PRTS's theological training of an international student body?*

I have personally seen a definite return on investment from the accreditation (peer-review) process at PRTS. I was here prior to accreditation, have worked through the process, and am now on the other end of the initial accreditation. PRTS has become a more robust, well-rounded, and thorough educational institution with evaluative plans in place that enable it to close the loop on assessment, so to speak, thus continually improving itself through its own evaluation and that of its ATS peers. The process forces us to ask questions like "Are we really teaching what we say we are teaching?" and "Are students really learning what we want them to learn?" During the review process, if students are

consistently failing to meet the course objectives or the broader degree objectives, then the seminary is obligated to ask one of two questions: 1) Are the objectives attainable, and if not, should they be altered? or 2) If the objectives are to remain constant, what can be done to better help the students more consistently meet the desired outcomes?

*Why do you think it is important for potential students, partnering churches, and supportive individuals to know that PRTS is fully accredited with ATS?*

PRTS's ATS accreditation demonstrates that the seminary wants to be held accountable for what it teaches. Our ties to ATS enable us to evaluate primarily the academic rigor and sustainability of our degrees, which is important in our service to the academy. Our ties to various denominations indicate PRTS's accountability and service to the church.



## NEW MASTER OF ARTS IN BIBLICAL COUNSELING (MABC) DEGREE

PRTS is excited to announce its new Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling (MABC) degree program. This program is designed to equip the church with biblical, Reformed, and experiential counselors who teach and model the wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Program Distinctives

- Committed to the Scriptures
- Creedally and Confessionally Reformed
- Grounded in Systematic Theology
- Informed by Biblical Theology
- Drawing on Biblical Examples of Counseling
- Experiential Emphasis
- Hands-on Approach

The MABC degree program requires a total of 62 credit hours and can be completed in two to three years. For more information, visit us at [prts.edu/curriculum/master-of-arts-biblical-counseling](http://prts.edu/curriculum/master-of-arts-biblical-counseling).

*“There is a great need in our churches for pastors and ministry leaders who understand the effects of the fall on individuals and on our social order and who can pastorally care for the souls of men and women in a way that biblically brings about restoration, redemption, and transformation, both with God and with one another. I believe this new MABC program will train such counselors.”*

—Dr. Mark Kelderman, dean of Students and Spiritual Formation and instructor in Pastoral Theology

## FACULTY ITINERARIES & PUBLICATIONS

### MICHAEL BARRETT

March 4–6: Men's Conference for Berean Baptist Church at Camp Cobeac

### JOEL BEEKE | Itinerary

February 13: Cape Coral, Florida: preaching for Pastor Tom Ascol

February 20: Bradenton, Florida: preaching

March 10–12: Greenville, South Carolina: conference for GPTS (Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary)

March 13: Kalamazoo, Michigan: preach for Kalamazoo Reformed Church

March 18: Detroit, Michigan: lecture for Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary

April 29–May 1: Morgan Hill, California: conference and preaching

### Recent Publications

“Spiritual Disciplines for Hoiness in the Life of a Minister,” *Unio Cum Christo* 7, no. 2 (Oct. 2021): 137–53

New titles in Portuguese:

*Teologia Sistemática Reformada, vol. 1 (with Paul Smalley) (ECC)*

*Puritanos: Toda Vida Para a Glória De Deus (DoE)*

*Puritanos: Licoes Sobre o Puritanismo (DoE)*

Editor, *A Beleza e a Glória do Pai (ECC)*

Editor, *A Beleza e a Glória de Cristo (ECC)*

Editor, *A Beleza e a Glória do Espírito Santo (ECC)*

### STEPHEN MYERS | Recent Publication

*God to Us: Covenant Theology in Scripture* (Reformation Heritage Books, November 2021)

### ADRIAAN NEELE | Itinerary

February 15–March 15: Apeldoorn, The Netherlands: teaching at Theological University Apeldoorn

### DANIEL TIMMER | Itinerary

January–April 2022: Montreal, Quebec: teaching Old Testament Theology at Faculté de Théologie Évangélique

### BILL VANDOOEDEWAARD | Itinerary

February–April 2022

April 7–8, 2022: Kingston, Ontario: Canadian Presbytery (ARP)

### Recent Publications

“English Puritans and the Recovery of Pastoral Care” in *The Puritan Reformed Journal* 14, no. 1 (January 2022)

“Trouble in Ephesus” in *Tabletalk Magazine* (January 2022)

# FINANCIAL REPORT

For period 8/1/2021–12/10/2021

	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget	Variance	Percent of Annual Budget
<b>Income</b>				
Donations	\$ 1,383,918	\$ 2,486,030	(\$1,102,112)	56%
Tuition Income	229,351	600,000	(370,649)	38%
Scholarship Donations	608,505	500,000	108,505	122%
Other Income	<u>124,708</u>	<u>349,970</u>	<u>(225,262)</u>	<u>36%</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 2,346,482	\$ 3,936,000	(\$1,589,518)	60%
<b>Expenses</b>				
Instruction	\$738,876	\$ 1,905,171	(\$1,166,295)	39%
Scholarships	199,282	505,000	(305,718)	39%
Administrative	<u>595,125</u>	<u>1,525,829</u>	<u>(930,704)</u>	<u>39%</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 1,533,282	\$ 3,936,000	(\$2,402,718)	39%
<b>Net Income</b>	\$813,200			

*We at PRTS want to thank all of our partners who supported the seminary throughout 2021 with their prayers and financial gifts.*

## YES, I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE!

- I would like to financially support PRTS by giving \$ \_\_\_\_\_, designated for:
- Operational Needs     Scholarship Fund
  - PRTS Foundation     Puritan Resource Center
- I would like to enroll in the monthly giving program and give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month.
- I am enclosing \$20 USD for a 2022 US subscription to *Puritan Reformed Journal*.  
(See *Journal* for international rates.)
- Send a free copy of *Pastors and Their Critics*, by Joel R. Beeke

## PAYMENT METHOD

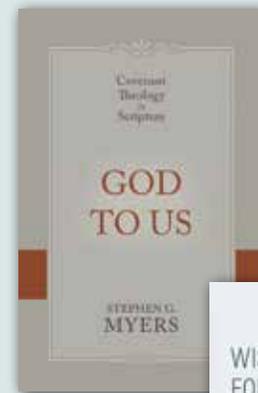
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- Beneficiary Bank: Mercantile Bank of Michigan
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I am excited to announce two new books by PRTS faculty. The first is Dr. Stephen Myers's long-awaited book *God to Us: Covenant Theology in Scripture*. This work is a sterling blend of thoroughly sound and Reformed exegetical, biblical, historical, systematic, and experiential theology presented in both an academic and popular way, such that I believe it is the best basic book on the subject of covenant theology that I have ever read. I highly recommend it!

The second work that I am thrilled to announce is my esteemed colleague Dr. Michael Barrett's informative and very readable new book, *Wisdom for Life: 52 Old Testament Meditations*. Whenever my brother Michael writes anything on the OT, I always learn something. This is a great book for every Christian to read—you too will be educated and edified. Both books can be purchased at <https://www.heritagebooks.org/>.

—Joel R. Beeke

## PURITAN REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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