



Fear is a powerful factor that controls thoughts and determines behavior. Everyone fears something. Some fears are healthy; some are not. Whether rational or irrational, fear is a powerful and persuasive motivating force. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Bible is so concerned about what we do or do not fear. Throughout the Scripture, the Lord commands His people to stop fearing certain things, usually things that in themselves are scary. While the Bible identifies many things, circumstances, and people not to fear, it isolates one object of legitimate fear: God. To fear God, whom we cannot see, and not fear the things we can is a matter of faith. Awareness is the basic component of fear. What we are consciously and actively aware of affects our attitude and actions. Simply said, the fear of God is the conscious awareness of God; it is living in the reality of God. It requires factoring God into every relationship, issue, and circumstance of life. In a significant way, fearing God is the essence and evidence of true religion. It is the

best mindset and way of life for the Christian. The Psalmist declares that God takes pleasure in those who fear Him (Ps. 147:11), and the Preacher admonishes to fear God as the sum of our duty (Eccl. 12:13). Fearing God is His pleasure and our duty. The fear of God is at once the guide against sin, the dynamic of life, and the fountain of Christian thought and effort. It is all-pervasive, starting in the head with the knowledge of God, expressed in the heart with the worship of God, and evidenced through the hands in the ethics of life.

That head-heart-hands rubric sums up the whole ministry and mission of PRTS. Teaching students about God in such a way to bring them experientially to the knowledge and love of God with a view to serving Him in ministry is our ultimate objective. It is our desire to factor God into every aspect of seminary life and every class. Even learning Hebrew is to be done in the fear of God.

—MICHAEL BARRETT



# PRTS, REFORMED CHURCH, AND MALAWI

When you think of Reformed churches, you might not immediately think *Malawi*. But this article may change all that. In fact, after the USA and Canada, Malawi ranks third in the number of graduates from our seminary. And this year at PRTS, we are so blessed to have three students from Malawi.

The three students, Madalitso Dube, Sandram Phiri, and Promise Saindi, are studying at PRTS to be equipped to be pastors and plant Reformed churches in Malawi. They are also in a mentorship program with the University Reformed Church (URC) in East Lansing to gain experience and practical knowledge and apply what they learn at the seminary into practice.

## UNIVERSITY REFORMED CHURCH (URC) AND PRTS



*With Rev. Jason Helopoulos  
at East Lansing*

The URC mentors the students, which allows their seminary education to be applied directly in a church setting. The mentorship program at URC better equips the students with valuable experience, which will benefit them when they go back to Malawi. The intern program at URC provides practical experience, which makes the seminary education relatable in a real-life setting. Rev. Jason Helopoulos, lead pastor of the URC church, mentors the students, and they are exposed to all areas of church life, including staff meetings and sessions. Promise commented, “I like the internship because there are many things I learn here that can help me plant a church in Malawi. This experience is going to shape my ministry when I go back to Malawi.”

## GAINING A REFORMED EDUCATION

When the students were asked why they chose PRTS, Sandram replied, “I chose PRTS because it focuses on Reformed theology. I want to do what I am called to do to serve God. I think PRTS is the best institution for me to learn about Reformed theology.” Madalitso adds, “I came to know PRTS because of Confex Makhaira; he is a pastor back in Malawi. And I’ve been doing an internship with him. Our church is committed to Reformed theology. PRTS is one of the institutions that trains Reformed pastors. Our pastor recommended PRTS so that I can go back Malawi to plant more Reformed churches.” Pastor Confex Makhaira is an alumnus from PRTS and was also part of the URC program.

The three Malawi brothers commented on the importance of the training they get at PRTS. All three gave responses that reinforce the calling PRTS has: to train preachers. Promise commented that “the training I had in the past is not enough for me to serve a church, so I have to seek further training. That is why I am here at PRTS. My study is very important, not only to me but also to the congregation I am going to serve in the future back in Malawi.” Sandram added, “It is going to help me to be an effective servant of the kingdom. I can serve the kingdom without coming to PRTS, but coming to PRTS will help me to become more effective in ministry.” Madalitso remarked, “The training here is important to me. It trains me to be more practical in ministry: to engage with people well, to go deep in the Word, and to apply the Word to my life.”

While the differences between countries can be vast, as the cultures, food, and climate, Sandram observed, “Life here is fast, everything is fast here.” They are experiencing new food and different ways things are done, including trying different food. We are always reminded that while there are differences in culture they bring great diversity and provide our community with new perspectives. While there are differences, we all are reminded that some things are the same: the gospel, Reformed confessions, and God remain the same.

—Leo Meng and Karla Soule



*From left to right: Madalitso Dube, Sandram Phiri, and Promise Saindi*



## REFLECTIONS ON 17 YEARS OF SERVICE WITH PRTS



The Lord brought me to PRTS through a spring 2005 advertisement in the *FRCNA Messenger*. I was visiting my in-laws in Ontario and saw the ad upon my arrival around midnight. I asked Dr. Beeke if I could still be considered as an applicant for the position that same night, and (as could be predicted) he immediately replied.

I started with the seminary as registrar August 1, 2005. The position has grown to include many responsibilities. One of the most satisfying roles has been my interaction with the students, assisting them in a variety of ways. This included working with dedicated volunteers setting up apartments for incoming students. My wife, Margaret, and I spent many hours at the Grand Rapids Ford Airport receiving students from many different countries and states.

I have been privileged to see the seminary grow from serving a dozen students in 2005 to around two hundred students just 17 years later. The team has grown along with the student body needs from 5 to 25!

Whenever asked, “Do you have plans to retire?” my answer frequently has been “Retirement is not a biblical concept.” You may ask then, why am I leaving PRTS? I’ve prayerfully considered this question and have seen the Lord’s leading as He has provided excellent team members who are assuming my responsibilities with zeal and expertise. I saw my responsibilities outpacing my skill set and wanted to leave the seminary with the best team going forward. I also saw a growing need for pastoral work in the congregation I’m privileged to serve, and desire to concentrate my efforts among the members as the Lord guides.

My time at PRTS has been a tremendous privilege and blessing. Serving the Lord with His trophies of grace from around the world has grown my appreciation for the church of Christ and the work of God’s Spirit. Assisting men and women for their roles in Christian ministry has, in many ways, fulfilled a long-held desire to serve the church. Many remarkable providences have filled the journeys of students, volunteers, donors, staff, and faculty, in which I can only conclude that Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary is a work of God’s grace for His glory. May it continue to be so for generations to come until the return of our Lord as His kingdom comes.

—Henk Kleyn

## HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT GOING ON A BIBLICAL JOURNEY?

*Join Dr. Joel R. Beeke, Dr. Michael Barrett, and Dr. Jerry Bilkes and visit Israel and Jordan.*

**MAY 8-20, 2023**

This is a wonderful tour that takes in many sights and stops that we have read about in the Bible. The knowledgeable professors of the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary will provide additional teaching that gives you a fuller understanding.

You will see Mount Carmel, Nazareth, Jerusalem, and even take a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. The days are packed with sightseeing, giving you a further knowledge of biblical accounts. Itinerary locations include the Mount of Olives, Bethlehem, the Garden of Gethsemane, and many more! The tour includes an English-speaking tour guide and first-class accommodations.

Contact Ann Dykema 616-977-0599 ext. 135 or email: [ann.dykema@prts.edu](mailto:ann.dykema@prts.edu) for more information.





## ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURING

Dear PRTS friends,

I trust you are all doing well, by God's amazing grace. The purpose of this letter is to announce the upcoming changes effective May 6, 2022, in the organization structure of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. While this letter announces many new changes, know that we remain committed by God's grace to our calling of equipping pastors, preachers, and teachers to further God's kingdom.

First, Mr. Henk Kleyn, vice president of operations, will retire May 6, 2022. We are immensely grateful for his faithful services rendered to the seminary, faculty, staff, students, and alumni for the past 16.5 years. His work has always resonated with his email signature line, "Serve the LORD with gladness" (Ps. 100:2). Consequently, he has been a huge encouragement to many over the years. He will be greatly missed, but we are pleased to announce that Mr. Chris Hanna has been appointed as director of operations, taking over much of the work of Mr. Kleyn. A farewell event for Mr. Kleyn transpired on Saturday, April 23, 2022, at the seminary.

Second, Dr. Michael Barrett, academic dean, vice president for academic affairs, and professor of Old Testament has been appointed as Senior Research Professor Old Testament. Having served for ten years as academic dean—and having guided the seminary through two accreditation processes, among other accomplishments—we are grateful that Dr. Barrett will continue teaching for us on a full-time basis as well as taking up his new position, which will include research, writing, and publication. Presently, he is already hard at work on an Old Testament Introduction textbook that Reformation Heritage Books can't wait to publish! We are pleased to announce that Dr. Jonathan Beeke has been appointed as the new academic dean

and associate professor of historical theology. The official transfer of deanship will take place at the May 6, 2022, graduation ceremony.

Third, Kim Dykema has been appointed to a new, much-needed position as manager of hospitality and events, reporting to Mr. Chris Hanna, underscoring the importance of communal practice on campus and beyond. Then, too, Giselle Huang has been appointed as assistant to the MA Counseling Program, reporting to Dr. Mark Kelderman. We wish both of them God's blessing and joyous service in these positions.

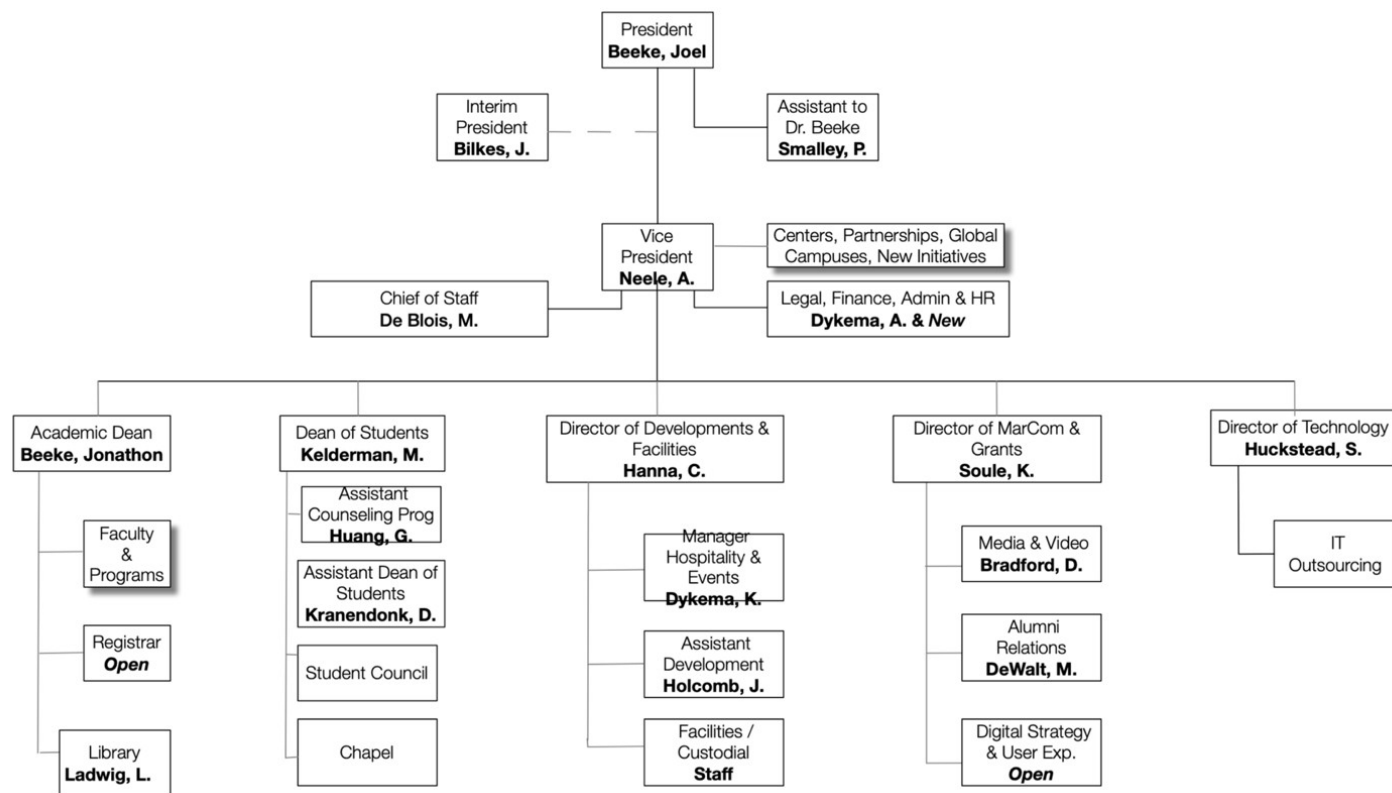


*From left to right: Chris Hanna, Kim Dykema, Jo de Blois, and Jonathan Beeke*

Fourth, Dr. William VanDoodewaard accepted a position as vice president, academic dean, and professor of church history at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Taylors, South Carolina. Having served PRTS well for 12 years as church historian, he will be sorely missed, but we pray that the Lord will continue to bless him and his family as well as his labors at GPTS and beyond. We are, however, pleased to announce that Dr. Maarten Kuivenhoven (PhD, Calvin Theological Seminary) has been appointed as assistant professor of church history, effective June 1, 2022.

Fifth, since Dr. Greg Salazar has been increasingly feeling called to pastoral ministry, he has tendered his resignation and will leave us effective July 31, 2022. Having served for 5.5 years at PRTS, he will also be missed, but we pray that the Lord will bless his future labors as a pastor. Pray that God will make His will known clearly for Dr. Salazar. A farewell event for Drs. VanDoodewaard and Salazar transpired at the last chapel of this semester, April 27, 2022, followed by a fellowship lunch.





Sixth, we are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Bruce Baugus, professor of systematic theology and apologetics, effective August 1, 2022, coming to us from Reformed Theological Seminary (Jackson) with a wealth of research, education, and publication experience. Dr. Baugus will be teaching systematic theology, ethics, apologetics, Calvinistic philosophy, and so on.

Considering the growing needs of the seminary that include these changes of faculty appointments, the board of trustees decided at their February 25 meeting to request the June 2022 Synod for permission to open a faculty search for two new faculty members, one of which will be in New Testament studies. Please pray that God will fill these positions with godly and capable men who may serve faithfully among us to His glory.

Finally, although I will remain president of PRTS and continue to teach on a full-time basis so long as my health remains good, I will be reducing my workload in the area of administration and daily operations to dedicate more time

to research, writing, and publishing. If my health should degenerate, Dr. Jerry Bilkes would step into my position as “interim president.” Meanwhile, Dr. Adriaan Neele has been appointed as the vice president of PRTS and will be overseeing the administration and daily operations, reporting to me on a regular basis (see organogram), as well as continuing to teach in the ThM, PhD, and DMin programs. He will be assisted by Dr. Marjolein de Blois, who will serve the seminary and faculty in developing a variety of programs and projects. Taking all these changes into account, the board of trustees has appointed the following persons to serve on PRTS’s executive team: Dr. Jerry Bilkes, Dr. Jonathon Beeke, Dr. Adriaan Neele, and me.

We hope and pray that this organization may serve to the glory of God and the extension of His kingdom and to the welfare of the students and alumni—and that we would all be blessed as faculty, staff, students, and alumni. May we ever be faithful to the vision and mission of the seminary in equipping the next generation of pastors, preachers, and teachers in biblical, Reformed, experiential, and practical theology. May the Lord of the harvest send many who are called by Him to be trained at this seminary. Let us lift up our eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white, ready for harvest (Matt. 9:38).

Warmly,

Joel R. Beeke, *President*



# HONORARY DOCTORATES



*Rev. Cornelis Pronk*

## PRTS AWARDS FIRST HONORARY DOCTORATES

The Board of Trustees approved the awarding of the Doctor of Divinity honoris causa to Rev. Cornelis (Neil) Pronk of the Free Reformed Church of North America (FRCNA), and Professor Franklin Ferreira of Martin Bucer Seminary Brazil (MBS Brazil) for their distinguished vocations in the service of the church and academy.

Rev. Pronk served several congregations in the FRCNA and was an instructor at PRTS for many years. He distinguished himself as a church historian with a specialization of the Dutch Secession (*Afscheiding*) through many publications contributing to the transmission of Dutch ecclesiastical history to the Reformed community and beyond in North America.

Professor Ferreira's contribution in Reformed theology and thought in Brazil and the Portuguese speaking world at large including his being as an ordained minister of the gospel (1996); founder and senior pastor of Trinity Reformed Baptist Church, San Jose dos Campos; founder and director, and professor of Martin Bucer Seminary Brasil; editorial advisor of Fiel Ministries publishers; editorial advisor of Vida Nova publishers; president of the Gospel Coalition Brazil; general secretary of the Council of the Brazilian Institute of Law and Religion; columnist of various Brazilian newspapers; author of 30 books on Reformed theology, including but not limited to a systematic theology which is in its 10th edition, as well as author of hundreds of articles on Reformed theology. He is also a sought-after conference speaker and lecturer in Angola, Brazil, Japan (Brazilian diaspora), and Mozambique.



*Professor Franklin Ferreira*

## EQUIPPING MEN AND WOMEN FOR SERVING GOD'S KINGDOM MASTER OF ARTS IN BIBLICAL COUNSELING

There is so much suffering in the world today. Many people deal with illness, loss, fear, addictions, and emotional issues, just to name a few. The need to offer biblical counseling to those around us is critical and to do so requires the proper training.

Last year Puritan Reformed received accreditation for the Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling. The program has been designed to train Christian leaders who have a God-given passion to walk beside those who need a listening ear. This training will be thoroughly based in Scripture and the Reformed faith. We train counselors to work with those who are struggle with spiritual, psychological, social, behavioral and emotional issues. Our program will train people how to best offer counsel based on Biblical principles. This new course will be open to men and women. It is our vision to have men counseling men and women counseling women within the church and outside the church, but serving under the church.

Please know that we have never lost our focus of providing seminary education to our future pastors and leaders. That is our core focus and we take that responsibility seriously. We will continue to train men who called to the ministry. This program will expand our offerings but it in no way takes away from our core focus however, it does present a way to better serve God's kingdom. Because we feel it is vital for pastors to also be adept at soul care, we will also offer an extended year of study to the Master of Divinity program so that pastors can receive both the MDiv degree along with the MABC degree.

This program allows us to teach those, men and women, who are called to walk beside others and providing support and counseling services to those who are hurting. If you desire to learn more about this course or know of someone who may be interested, please contact: Dr. Mark Kelderman at: [mark.kelderman@prts.edu](mailto:mark.kelderman@prts.edu)



◆ 2022 PURITAN REFORMED CONFERENCE ◆

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FACULTY ITINERARIES & PUBLICATIONS

**JOEL BEEKE** | *Itinerary*

April 29–May 2: Morgan Hill, California: Coram Deo Conference for Trinity Bible Church  
May 11–12: Lisburn, No. Ireland: Reformed Presbyterian Church, address on assurance; Evangelical Fellowship of Ireland, conference  
May 13–17: Scotland: Scottish Reformed Conference (14th), preach in Abbeygreen (15th), address ministerial fraternal (16th)  
May 18–19: Budapest, Hungary: conference for Come Over and Help (COAH)  
May 20–21: Ridgecrest, North Carolina: Church and Family Life conference  
May 22: Kalamazoo, Michigan: Kalamazoo Reformed Church  
May 27: Burgessville, Ontario: noon—update businessmen on PRTS; evening: installation of Dr. Kuivenhoven as PRTS professor  
May 29: Ontario: preach in Jordan (a.m.), Tillsonburg (p.m.), Burgessville (eve.)  
June 29–July 19: Brazil: preach 24 times at 5 back-to-back conferences throughout Brazil

*Recent Publications*

*Following God Fully: An Introduction to the Puritans*, with Michael Reeves (RHB)  
Introduction to *Sermoes Selectos de Thomas Watson* (Spanish) (Guatemala: Dort)  
*Following God Fully: An Introduction to the Puritans*, with Michael Reeves (Korean)(Seoul: rMaeng2)  
*One Man, One Woman*, with Paul Smalley (Korean)(Seoul: rMaeng2)  
*Fighting Satan* (Korean)(Seoul: rMaeng2)  
General editor, *Family Worship Bible Guide* (Arabic)(Egypt)  
*I Need to Trust God; I Need to Hope in God; I Need to Love God; I need to Love Other People*, with Mary Beeke (4 books in Korean) (Goyang-si: Coveant Books)

**STEPHEN MYERS** | *Recent Publication*

“New Covenant Christianity,” in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022.

**ADRIAAN NEELE** | *Itinerary*

June 6–10: Yale University: Jonathan Edwards course  
June 13–20: Sorbonne, Paris: Homiletic conference  
June 27–July 4: São Paulo, Brazil: Martin Bucer Seminary (course)  
July 6–11: London, UK: Pastors International meeting

**GREG SALAZAR** | *Itinerary*

May 4–6: Birmingham: Gospel Reformation Network National Conference, Briarwood Presbyterian Church  
June 21–24: PCA General Assembly

*Recent Publications*

*Calvinist Conformity in Post-Reformation England: The Theology and Career of Daniel Featley*. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).  
“The Puritans and Written Prayers,” Featured article on Desiring-God.org.

**DANIEL TIMMER** | *Recent Publications*

“Law and Mission: A Neglected but Foundational Biblical Pair,” in *God’s Grace Shining Through the Law*, ed. J. R. Beeke (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2021), 131–46.  
“The Material and Immaterial Significance of the Feast in Isaiah 25:6–8,” *Biblical Interpretation* 28 (2022): 66–82.





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Our seminary continues to equip pastors, preachers, and teachers to further God's kingdom. Please consider a gift in your will, a real estate gift, or an IRA gift for PRTS. We work with Barnabas Foundation in the U.S., which is available to help you prepare wills and trusts, advise you on tax-wise giving, and provide you with advice on how to best steward your assets.

Your gift will make a difference and helps our seminary continue to prepare Christian leaders to proclaim the gospel around the world. Please contact Chris Hanna for more information or if you have questions ([chris.hanna@prts.edu](mailto:chris.hanna@prts.edu)).

Thank you for your prayers and generous giving.  
—Karla Soule

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## 2022 PRTS GRADUATION

You are cordially invited to the 2022 Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary Graduation Service, May 6, at 7:30pm. We will be joining with this year's 28 graduates and their families to celebrate the successful completion of their programs and to thank the Lord for His sustaining grace as they seek to service Christ and His church throughout the world. We are honored to have Dr. John W. Tweeddale of Reformation Bible College as this year's commencement speaker. We will gather at the Heritage Reformed Congregation, 540 Crescent St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Come and celebrate with us!

### PURITAN REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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