



SPIRITUAL WAR

When war engulfs our land or allies, the struggle demands our attention, resources, and sometimes our very lives. Yet we willingly give all this to defend the life and liberty of our families and people. We know that war is different from peacetime. Though only some fight, the whole nation must exert its industrial and economic energies to win the victory.

Sadly, Christians sometimes fail to see that they are in a spiritual war. They think it unreasonable that they should devote much of their time and resources to the spiritual battle. They expect ease as the norm. Or perhaps I should say, “we,” since all believers can fall into this dangerous delusion.

Consequently, we cease to “watch and pray” and become sitting ducks for Satan’s temptations (Matt. 26:41). Whether we like it or not, we war “against the rulers of

the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12) who seek nothing less than our eternal destruction. William Gurnall said there is “a war between the saint and Satan, and that so bloody a one, that the cruelest which ever was fought by men, will be found but sport and child’s play to this. Alas, what is the killing of bodies to the destroying of souls?”

In the spiritual battle, every Christian must fight. But only some are called to lead. Here at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, we train and equip officers for the armies of the Lamb. Pray for us, that God will raise up gospel captains who both preach Christ crucified and take up the cross. And as for yourself, dear Christian, never forget to put your armor on!

—Paul Smalley, Research and Teaching
Assistant to the Chancellor

FACULTY INTERVIEW: MICHAEL BARRETT

Over the next several issues of the Chancellor's Update, we hope to introduce one Puritan Reformed faculty member to our readers. It is our hope that by learning a little more about each of the seminary's professors our readers will acquire a fuller appreciation of the sort of training that takes place in the classroom.

The following questions were asked of Dr. Michael Barrett:



For the sake of our audience, would you provide a little background information on yourself? When and how were you converted? When were you called to the ministry and how did you know you were being called? Where did you attend seminary? What denominations have you served, for how long, and in what capacity? How long have you served Puritan Reformed and in what capacity?

In the good sovereignty of God, I was born into a Christian home. Although I was not born into a home espousing Reformed theology, there has never been a time when I was not aware of the gospel. I was converted at about nine years old when in a Sunday School class, I was struck with the realization that I was a sinner in need of the Savior. I had typical struggles with faith over the years, but always with a consciousness of the gospel. My vocational aspirations were to become an attorney, but the Lord had another plan as He called me into the gospel ministry when a freshman in college. What that ministry was to be exactly I did not know. This was during the Viet Nam conflict, and I thought for a while that military chaplaincy would be my sphere of service. When I entered seminary at Bob Jones University, I became convinced of Reformed theology. When I took my first Hebrew class, the Lord made it clear what the course of my ministry would be. I have served in the church throughout my ministry, but my principal calling has been to the classroom. I taught at Bob Jones University for almost 30 years. For 36 years I served in some capacity in the Free Presbyterian Church of North America. For the last twelve of those years, I served as Associate Minister of Faith Free Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina, where I also served as President of Geneva Reformed Seminary, the denominational seminary. I am now in my 12th year serving at Puritan Reformed. For ten of those years, I was the Academic Dean as well as OT Professor. I currently am the Senior Research Professor of Biblical Studies and hope to continue fulltime in this position as long as the Lord allows.

When did you come to embrace the doctrines of grace and what is it about the Reformed faith that resonated with you?

I was introduced to the doctrines of grace in college and fully embraced them during graduate school days. Among the first things that attracted me to the Reformed faith was

church polity. The Presbyterian form of government was appealing given the independent dictatorial church I grew up in.

From your perspective, what is experiential Christianity and why do you believe it is important for church life and seminary instruction?

In simple terms, it is bringing the facts of the gospel to bear on the issues of living—that is, to live in the reality of what is confessed. It is the direct application of truth to the heart.

Although every church is unique, what would you say the top one or two weaknesses are in western Reformed Christianity and what steps should be taken to remedy the issue(s)?

The disconnect between doctrine and duty. For some, Christianity is just a code of conservative conduct without reference to the gospel. Hence, living the Christian life is motivated by guilt or practiced in drudgery. For others, it is pride of doctrine without any separation from worldly practices. The solution is being overwhelmed with gospel truth to such an extent that it affects living. I often use the mantra: Right thinking about the gospel produces right living in the gospel.

Do you believe there is a lack of emphasis and dependence on the person and work of the Holy Spirit in Reformed Christianity?

Perhaps Christianity in general. I think there is a failure at times to distinguish the different ministries of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life: regeneration, indwelling, empowering, influence. Particularly, not relying on the Holy Spirit to empower and enable for kingdom service must be crucial.

What about prayer? How can we encourage Reformed Christians of the importance of fostering a vital prayer life?

In many ways, prayer is the most difficult of Christian disciplines, perhaps because it is so important. To admit dependence on God leads to prayer. In many ways, prayer is the index to how much we depend on God. There is much about prayer that is mysterious. It is not a means of manipulating God but rather a means of grace that God has ordained to accomplish His purpose. He determines the means as well as the end.

You've written several books and booklets over the years, but of all of them which would be the top two or three that you would encourage Christians to dive into first and why?

I suppose *Complete in Him: A Guide to Understanding and Enjoying the Gospel* has been used by the Lord more than anything I've written. It defines the various components of the gospel message and their implications for life and assurance.

Beginning at Moses: A Guide to Finding Christ in the Old Testament was my first book and represents my great passion in OT studies. It has been used as help to open up the Christian message of the OT to many.

Do you have any writing projects in the works? If so, what contribution(s) are you hoping to make to the academy and/or the church?

My current project is an OT Introduction. The tentative title is *Back to Basics: An Elementary Introduction to the Old*

Testament. This is an old school, thoroughly conservative Introduction. It is designed to serve as a textbook for beginning seminary students as well as a resource for laymen that are interested in issues of biblical studies.

Whether talking to prospective students or donors, what is unique about Puritan Reformed? In other words, why train at Puritan Reformed and/or why support it?

The thing that attracted me to Puritan Reformed when wrestling with the call to serve here was the world-wide vision to see Reformed ministry established throughout the world. This vision has been translated into reality not only with a multinational student body but also by partnerships with seminaries around the globe. It has been exciting to see.

FACULTY ITINERARIES AND RECENT PUBLICATIONS

DR. JOEL R. BEEKE | *Itinerary*

January 18–20: Fort Myers, Florida: Founders Conference
February 11: Kingsburg, California: preach for Grace Church of the Valley (morning)
February 11: Visalia, California: preach for Trinity United Reformed Church (evening)
February 12–13: Los Angeles, California: chapels for John MacArthur's Master's University (on Monday) and Seminary (on Tuesday)
February 16: Wyoming, Michigan: Redeemer Free Reformed Church conference
February 18: Cape Coral, Florida: preach for Grace Baptist Church (a.m. and p.m.)
February 27–28: Fenton, Missouri: First Baptist Church conference (7 addresses)
March 1–3: Minden, Nevada: Grace Community Church conference (3 sermons)
March 12–14: Matthews, North Carolina: Christ Covenant Church (Dr. Kevin DeYoung's Coram Deo Pastors Conference)
March 14–16: Louisville, Kentucky: LaGrange Baptist Church conference (3 addresses)
March 17: Kinnelon, New Jersey: preach for Heritage Reformed Congregation (a.m. and p.m.)
March 25 – April 6: Egypt: annual Puritan Reformed Seminary Tour (Biblical sites in Egypt)
April 12–15: Paris, France: Bonne Nouvelle Conference (HeartCry/Paul Washer; 4 addresses)
April 19–20: Jordan, Ontario: Ontario Conference on Evangelism (2 addresses)
April 21: Jordan, Ontario: preach for Heritage Reformed Congregation (a.m.); Fenwick, Ontario: Free Reformed Church (p.m.)
April 25–26: Ridgecrest, North Carolina: Church and Family Life Conference
April 27–29: Morgan Hill, California: Soli Deo Gloria Conference (addresses and preaching)

Publications

Teologia Sistemática Reformada, vol. 2 (*Reformed Systematic Theology: Man and Christ*, in Portuguese) (Sao Paulo: Editora Cultura Crista)
How Men Should Lead Their Families (in Portuguese) (Brasília: Eden).

Justification by Faith Alone (in Portuguese, with John MacArthur, R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner, etc. (Sao Paulo: Editora Cultura Crista)
Knowing and Growing in Assurance of Faith (in Korean) (Seoul, Korea: Good Seed).
Reformed Systematic Theology, vols. 5 & 6, in Korean (Seoul: Revival and Reformation Press)
Traind pentru slava lui Dumnezeu: O Introducere in Calvinism—a Romanian edition of *Living for the glory of God: An Introduction to Calvinism* (Dascalu-Ilfov, Romania: Magna Gratia)
A dozen articles in various periodicals.

DR. JONATHON BEEKE | *Itinerary*

April 22–29: Teaching two ThM courses at Martin Bucer Seminary, Sao Paulo, Brazil

DR. ADRIAAN NEELE | *Itinerary*

January 29–Feb. 1: Mexico: Presbyterian Seminaries
February 24–March 1: Netherlands: William Ames Congress
March 8–15: South Korea: Hapdong and Kosin Seminaries
April 8–12: Chile: MBS Chile
January–April: preaching in various congregations.

DR. DANIEL TIMMER | *Itinerary*

January–April: Montreal: “Old Testament Theology” at Faculté de théologie évangélique

Publications

“Non-Israelite Participation in the Cult in Deuteronomy 23 and Isaiah 56: Dimensions of Intertextual Theological Development,” in *Isaiah and Intertextuality*, ed. A. Abernethy and W. de Angelo Cunha (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023), 41–54.
“Jonah, Book of,” in *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023), 403–7.
“Nahum, Book of,” in *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023), 556–60.
“The Election of the Nations,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of Election*, ed. Edwin C. van Driel (London: T & T Clark, 2023), 45–62.



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As we start a new calendar year, we want to ask if you would consider committing to pray for Puritan Reformed each week—pray for our students, faculty, and staff. Know that your prayers are truly a blessing to our whole seminary community and are like a sweet aroma to the Lord.

If you are able, becoming a monthly partner with the seminary would be a real encouragement to us. The support we receive monthly helps us to train students and equip them with a biblical, Reformed, experiential, and practical education—and is both an expression of your commitment and an inspiration to us. You can give online (prts.edu) or use the donation form found here. For Canadian donors, please email: DevelopmentCanada@prts.edu, and a form can be emailed to you.

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—Karla Soule

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