

Brief introduction Guochao (Jason) Zhao

I was educated as an atheist in mainland China. By God's providence, I heard the gospel for the first time when I was in college, and committed my life to Christ as my Savior and Lord. But I did not realize that the core of my belief at that time was actually Arminianism until several years later. Thanks to several Reformed pastors and the translated theological literature, God reformed my mind and my heart by His pure gospel of unconditional grace. I still remember the relief and excitement when I truly realized that there is really nothing I can contribute to my salvation, as well as the endless mercy and grace in Jesus Christ.

However, the hard truth of Reformed theology also caused controversies and splits among many churches I knew. Some groups, after accepting the free grace of the gospel, even turned to the other extreme of anti-nomianism. All of these experiences motivated me to have a better understanding of the classical Reformed faith, especially its teachings on both the reformation of doctrine and the reformation of life.



My study in Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (PRTS) in Grand Rapids introduced to me the term *Nadere Reformatie*, the Dutch Reformed pietistic movement. I was especially drawn by Wihelmus a Brakel who so brilliantly combines faith and practice, scholastic academic training and popular-level writing together. His comprehensive and robust teachings on Christian living inspired me to rethink the traditional narrative of Reformed ethics. My doctoral project, which will be a double degree program with the TUA (supervision by Dr Adriaan Neele, Dr Jan van de Kamp and Prof. Dr Herman Selderhuis), will highlight the three important concepts of highest good, virtue and law in Brakel's ethics, through which I also hope to reflect the development of Reformed ethics in early modern era. I believe this renewed interpretation of historical reformed ethics will edify the Reformed church's pursuit of sanctification and piety.

More information: <https://prts.edu/profile/guochao-zhao/>