

Grace Alone

A Great Year in Store!

Highlights

- ◆ 2003 GTC students
- ◆ College News, speaking opportunities and writing projects
- ◆ Stott on leadership
- ◆ Student profile: Andrew Ure

Grace Alone

is the newsletter of Grace Theological College, a non-denominational evangelical and reformed theological college in Auckland, NZ.

Editors: Andrew Young & Peter Reynolds

All enquiries should be addressed to:

PO Box 75-534,
Manurewa, Auckland,
New Zealand
Fax: (09) 269-2563
Email:
enquiries@gtc.ac.nz

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

The picture below says it all! It's a photo of the student body for 2003 taken on Orientation Evening on January 27th. It shows many more students than we have had in previous years and points to a wonderful teaching year ahead.

A significant number of the students pictured are participating in the Lay Counselling course being taught for the first time. Peter and Margaret Reynolds will provide a brief report on this class in our next issue.

With courses in Counselling, Biblical Theology, Greek, Church History, Practical Christianity, Preaching, Hermeneutics and New Testament Book studies being taught this year, the College is buzzing with activity as never before. But its ministry will once again extend

beyond teaching. Principal Andrew Young will be speaking at conferences in both Australia and Wales, and later in the year another *Effective Shepherds* seminar for church leaders is planned. A new series of weekly web contributions has been launched, and book and Guide writing ministries continue.

So the year holds promise of great usefulness. But we are conscious as it commences that it is only the Lord who can make our efforts of any lasting value in the lives of people. 1 Cor. 3:7 has been impressed on our minds more than once in these opening weeks of the term— "neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who makes things grow." Do pray that the Lord will use GTC to advance his kingdom and glorify his name in 2003.



Orientation 2003

Who's here in 2003?

The pictures below provide close-ups of three of the classes and introduce you to students taking courses for credit at GTC this year. We are glad to see five men studying Greek under the skillful tutelage of Rev. Arthur Palmer. Arthur, a GTC Board member and a retired Presbyterian minister, has a great love of the biblical languages. The students find this infectious.

Five of the students – Dawie Malan, Andrew Ure, Nicholas Allen and Caleb and Alison Gray – are devoting themselves to full-time study for the year. Please make a special point of praying for them.

There is a further block of 20-30 students not shown below that gathers on Tuesday nights to study 1&2 Thessalonians with Andrew Young. This group is drawn from a number of different churches in Auckland, and also links up via telephone-conferencing with people in Gordontown

and Owaka. Video and audio recordings of this class are made each week and are available for borrowing or purchase. Please let us know if you would like to receive copies, or if you would like to be included in our telephone link.

Names of students & staff in the photos below:

1. Gus Sonneveld, Trevor Keam, Andrew Young (lecturer), Nick Allen, Sue Bracefield, Andrew Ure, Caleb Gray, David Robb, Rahai Nanua
2. *Back row:* Alison Gray, Louise Ploeg, Julie Melville-Smith, Anita Macdonald, Geraldine Loef, Kathy Kells, Lorna Kho, Dawie Malan. *Middle row:* Steve Simonds, Peter Reynolds (lecturer), Cherie Lawgun, Robin Hannah, Margaret Reynolds (co-lecturer), Amy Yeung, Maree Dickson, Sarah Malan. *Front row:* Uaita Levi, Rob Hannah Frank Filipino
3. Scott Kennedy, Hamish Macdonald, Arthur Palmer (lecturer), Paul Burton, Andrew Ure, Alex Robinson (Church History lecturer)

Absent: Bruce Levi, Adele Levi, Tony Bracefield.

2003 GTC Students and Lecturers

1. Teaching & Preaching Class
2. Counselling Class
3. Greek Class



College News

- ◆ After graduating in December, speaking at a national youth conference, and snatching a short family holiday, Azriel and Melissa Gray (pictured below) made the long trek south to take up their new calling as church-planters in Gore. Gore is a major rural town in central Southland. For several years now the Wyndham Evangelical Church has provided a ministry to Christians in East Gore, but has been aware at the same time of the need for full-time leadership to develop this work. Last year its core members constituted themselves as the Grace Presbyterian Church in Gore, purchased a building (pictured), and called Azriel to come and serve as its first pastor. Azriel and Melissa felt burdened to take up this work and responded accordingly. They have been thrilled to hear of the way in which the community has worked together renovating the building and preparing for their arrival. Pray for them as they take up the challenge of establishing the church and of reaching the community with the gospel.



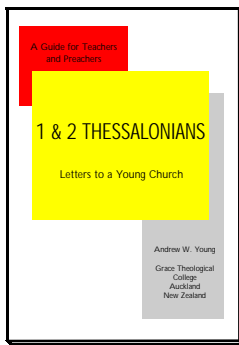
- ◆ GTC Board Chairman Ross Thompson and his wife Lorraine are in the South Island for an extended period of ministry in churches. They too will be based in Gore, but will be serving in surrounding churches as well as assisting Azriel and Melissa. Pray for them as they help establish and strengthen evangelical and reformed churches in the southern part of New Zealand.
- ◆ Speaking of the South Island, GTC now has a South Island Advisory Group to facilitate communication and development in the southern part of the country. The Group consists of David Bayne and Geoff Macpherson (EPC Christchurch/Ashburton), Mark Smith (Grace Bible Church, Dunedin), and Murray Ure (Wyndham Evangelical Church). Their brief includes representing the College in the South Island, liaising with prospective students from the South, coordinating GTC visits, and exploring the extension of the College's ministry to the South Island. They can be contacted by writing to Geoff Macpherson, 59 Kent Lodge Ave, Avonhead, Christchurch, or gm.macpherson@actrix.gen.nz
- ◆ The College is involved in helping to organize the visit of Dr. Peter Jones and his wife Rebecca to Auckland early in May (May 2-4th). Dr. Jones was formerly Professor in New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido, California, but retired from this position last year to take up a more itinerant ministry. He is especially concerned with the re-emergence of paganism in Western societies and will be speaking on this theme when he visits Australia and New Zealand in March-May. *Grace Alone* readers are encouraged to watch for advertised meetings and to attend these where possible.

Coming Overseas Opportunities



GTC Principal Andrew Young has a demanding year of overseas ministry and study this year. In March he travels to Melbourne to speak at an annual conference organized by the South Yarra Presbyterian Church, and then at the Presbyterian Church of Victoria Minister's Conference.

Andrew will be drawing on material from his work in 1&2 Thessalonians at these conferences. He has been asked to speak on three topics at the

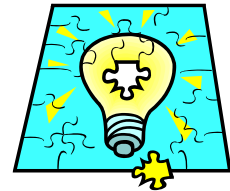


South Yarra conference from 2 Thessalonians – “2 Thessalonians in Bible History,” “The Message of 2 Thessalonians”, and “Christ in 2 Thessalonians.” At the minister's conference the following week he will be drawing lessons from 1 Thessalonians for the encouragement and inspiration of pastors. His topics

there are “The Challenge of Pastoral Ministry,” “The Conduct of Pastoral Ministry,” “Motivation for Christian Ministry”, and “Focus for Christian Ministry.” These speaking opportunities provide an important way of building closer relationships with friends in Australia. Pray that Andrew will be helped to prepare the messages, and that they will be used to strengthen those who hear them.

A little less than three months later Andrew will be overseas again, this time to Britain and the USA. Regular visits to these two countries are part of his research requirements but they also provide opportunities to teach and preach as well. While in Wales Andrew will preach at the end-of-year service at the Evangelical Theological College of Wales, and later participate in a Word and Spirit conference being sponsored by the College. Again, pray for strength, health and wisdom to minister helpfully in these different settings.

Insights for Christians in Ministry



Mid-way through 2002 we began to produce weekly prayer points and devotional messages (on Ephesians 1-2) to keep GTC supporters informed and spiritually encouraged. These were sent via e-mail to a steadily growing number of people. By the end of the year approximately 150 were on the list.

This year we are continuing weekly communication but doing something slightly different. Instead of writing devotional articles, College Principal Andrew Young will be producing a series of “Insights” – in effect, gleanings and thoughts arising from lectures.

The first series flows from a College course entitled “Christian Life and Ministry.” It begins with

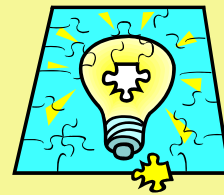
four brief articles on “what matters most in ministry today” – contemporary ideas on essentials for ministry based on a survey of 100 “successful” pastors in the USA. These initial contributions are followed by a more extended series looking at traditional views on this same subject.

The Christian world is awash today with ideas on what makes ministry effective. Hopefully this series will stimulate readers to think and enable them to sift through the many options clamoring for their attention.

On the opposite page we are including a sample of one of these *Insights*. Readers without access to the internet or e-mail who want to receive these each week should write to the College.

What Matters Most In Ministry Today?

(4) Temporal vs. Eternal



There was a third requirement for effective ministry today unearthed in Darius Salter's survey that disturbed me deeply. Today's successful church leaders, apparently, are dedicated to helping people enjoy the here and now rather than preparing them for the future. Or, to put it another way, what really matters in ministry today is that you focus on the temporal rather than the eternal.

This showed itself particularly in the preaching of the "successful" pastors Salter surveyed. Modern preaching, he observed, is pragmatic, need-orientated, positive, upbeat, brief, non-controversial and non-doctrinal (pp. 46, 47, 50, 51). Its general bent is illustrated in sermon titles like the following - "'The Winning Spirit,' 'How to Experience Spiritual Renewal,' 'Building the Walls of Your Life,' 'What to Do With Your Sins,' 'Authority of the Believer,' 'Back to Basics,' 'Making Christ at Home'" (p. 48). Successful preachers are more concerned with practical issues of the "here and now rather than the eschatological issues of forever and ever" (p. 49).

"The growing congregation," he continues, "assumes that appealing to the here-and-now needs of persons will be more effective in producing spiritual maturity than focusing on the rewards of heaven or the fears of hell ... preachers are preaching to middle-class listeners who are very comfortable on this planet and not likely to sing 'This World is Not My Home'" (p. 53).

Once more, "Pastors do not sense a need to motivate their people by the allurements of heaven. Because of luxurious materialism, most of us are already enjoying 'heaven on earth,' and no one has recently challenged us with the mysteries of eternity to an extent that would enable middle-class Americans to recognize the paltriness of their existence and limitations of their finiteness. To speak of hell from the pulpit is almost beyond imagination. Psychology has persuaded the church that such negative suggestions will only further depress parishioners who have to wrestle with the hellishness of a frantic, scurrying society" (p. 123).

So, there is apparently little place for doctrine, for confrontation, or for eternal realities in modern day ministry! What are we to make of this?

There can be no doubt that we are to be alert to the times in which we live and to the needs of people we reach and serve. There is a proper theology of "audience adaptation" (Calvin used to call it "accommodation"). Christian preachers, teachers, disciplers, Sunday School teachers and Bible study leaders need to understand where people are at and minister to them at their point of true need.

But that is exactly the issue. They must minister to them at the point of their *true need* – and not pander to their culturally induced and sin-affected *desires*. People need to learn doctrine, be confronted with sin, and prepare for eternity, whether they want to hear about these things or not. Preoccupation with the present is perilous (Lk. 12:13-21). There is a vast difference between sensitive adaptation to the circumstances of people and sinful accommodation to their desires. The one is ministry skill while the other is culpable compromise.

A Challenge for Church Leaders

In a recent book, well-known pastor, author and theologian John Stott wrote,

During the last thirty-five years or so I have had the privilege of travelling to many countries and observing the church and its leadership. As a result, it is my firm conviction that there is too much autocracy in the leaders in the Christian community, in defiance of the teaching of Jesus and his apostles, and not enough love and gentleness. Too many behave as if they believed not in the priesthood of all believers but in the papacy of all pastors.

Our model of leadership is often shaped more by culture than by Christ. Yet many cultural models of leadership are incompatible with the servant imagery taught and exhibited by the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, these alien cultural models are often transplanted uncritically



into the church and its hierarchy. In Africa it is the tribal chief, in Latin America it is the machismo (exaggerated masculinity) of the Spanish male, in South East Asia the religious guru fawned on by his disciples, in East Asia the Confucian legacy of the teacher's unchallengeable authority, and in Britain, the British Raj mentality, the overbearing pride associated with the period of British rule until Indian independence in 1947. It is easy for Christian leaders to assimilate one or other of these models without realizing it. But we need to determine that there is no place in the Christian community for the guru or the Confucian teacher, for the African chief, the British Raj mentality or Spanish machismo. These models are not congruous with the spirit of love and gentleness." John R. W. Stott, *Calling Christian Leaders, Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry*, (Leicester: IVP, 2002), pp. 129-30

Back to the future . . . by GTC student, Andrew Ure

Yes it certainly has the feel of déjà vu sitting in lectures all over again but more of that in a moment.

As with previous students I've been asked to explain a little about my background and what has led me to GTC this year.

There have been many things which have led to this year of Bible College but probably the key thing has been a desire to minister in areas where the gospel is less well known, whether that be in NZ or overseas. My wife (Kate) and I are originally from the deep south, Kate from the Catlins, and myself from a rural area just outside Wyndham, (45 minutes drive from Invercargill for those unfamiliar with the south). Yes we are a long way from home!

Both Kate and I have been blessed with Christian homes and upbringings, something we continue to thank the Lord for, and something very important to where we are now. For Kate that background involved being a "preachers' daughter" as her father ministered at the Owaka Presbyterian Church. For me it involved being born in a mission setting in Ethiopia, and being brought up in a home which continued to focus on missionary activity around the world. For both of us this led to a knowledge of the Lord from an early age and a growing personal desire to be active in His kingdom work.

From teenage years at small local high schools (an area school in Kate's case), life changed to the wide world of university in Dunedin. An interest in sciences and desire to be "people orien-

tated” led me into medical training and, 2 years later, the same was true for Kate, a time that saw our paths crossing. It was a great time for both of us in the sense of establishing identities and directions in life ... obviously our marriage was not insignificant in all that! We both thoroughly enjoyed the university and the opportunities which existed there, (Go Otago!) but also found it a real time of maturing and being nurtured in our Christian lives by our church and university Christian group connections.

While studying in Dunedin, the ministry of GTC commenced and we quickly saw the fruit of that ministry with Mark Smith moving to Dunedin to establish a youth work which we became a part of. The combination of being involved in this work ourselves and also seeing what a benefit the GTC time had been to Mark would have to be part of our movement towards this year of college.

Another development involved the use of medical electives for exploring medical mission work as a possible avenue of service. In the sixth year of the medical course

(yes, studying is somewhat familiar to us!) there is the opportunity to explore for 3 months one area of interest in medicine. We used those opportunities firstly for myself to spend 7 weeks at a small mission hospital in PNG, and subsequently, in Kate’s elective period, for both of us to travel to Nepal and work in a small mission hospital there. Our goal in these ventures was twofold; firstly to gain an understanding of what is involved in mission work, and secondly to seek to understand more clearly whether that is where the Lord is leading us.

Our time overseas confronted us with the tremendous physical and spiritual need which still exists in many areas of the world (including opening our eyes to the real needs back here in NZ). It

showed us that we need to be well equipped to deal with the physical, spiritual and social challenges of those environments. In light of this we moved to Rotorua last year where we both worked in the local public hospital; a hospital where approximately 40% of the patients are Maori and the community has a significant Maori cultural aspect. (We’d have to confess that the area has excellent mountain biking as well!) From a medical perspective this has also lead to further post graduate training for both of us with Kate using this year to study for a diploma in Woman’s health while working at Middlemore Hospital.

One further question which we had to consider prayerfully was “is GTC the best place to study with a potential mission focus in mind”. Grace College seeks primarily to equip men and women for ministry in NZ, and as such does not offer specific “missions” papers. While it is impossible to definitively answer the above question, I see my time here as a time of gaining spiritual tools for dealing with the spiritual, physical and cultural



Kate and Andrew Ure

challenges which third world ministry involves rather than “definitive answers” for every eventuality. From that perspective being able to study in depth the unfolding revelation of God’s redemption (eg. in Biblical Theology), seeing its fullness in Christ and learning to apply lessons and principles from this revelation personally to our own time and culture under the Spirit’s guidance, is fundamental. Such lessons are applicable and vital within any culture or ministry.

So here we are, in Auckland, once again both students, back to the books, looking ahead to the future, seeking by the Lord’s grace to be equipped to “...do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”. (Eph 2:12)

Please join us in....

Thanking God for

- ◆ Students enrolled for 2003
- ◆ Opportunities for ministry for past students: especially Azriel & Melissa Gray as they take up church planting work in Gore
- ◆ The establishment of the GTC South Island Advisory Group
- ◆ His blessings towards us in opening up so many opportunities



Praying for

- ◆ Our lecturers, especially Alex Robinson, lecturing for the first time, and Rev Arthur Palmer who has not lectured at GTC for some years.
- ◆ Andrew Young's speaking engagements in Australia this month
- ◆ The organisation of Peter Jones' conference to be held in Auckland in May
- ◆ Andrew Ure as he studies and seeks God's will for future direction

Please return this coupon if you have any interest in the following:

(Tick [√] the appropriate box/es)

- Yes! I want to know more about study at Grace Theological College
- Yes! I will commit myself to regular prayer for Grace Theological College
- Yes! I want to be a financial supporter of Grace Theological College by
- a one off gift of \$ _____
 - a gift of \$ _____ for [translation and printing projects](#)
 - a gift of \$ _____ for [the scholarship fund](#)
 - giving \$ _____ per month / quarter
 - I would like these payments to be by direct debit from my bank account
- Please update my changed details below / Please add the following person to the *Grace Alone* distribution list (for those wishing to receive *Grace Alone* from the Web, please e mail us rather than sending this form)

NAME: _____ E mail: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Please return the coupon to
 Grace Theological College
 PO Box 75-534 Manurewa
 Auckland
 New Zealand

Phone: (09) 268-1469 Fax: (09) 269-2563 Email: enquiries@gtc.ac.nz Location: 75 Rogers Rd, Manurewa, Auckland