

# Grace Alone

## Bringing You Up To Speed

### Highlights

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### FROM THE PRINCIPAL

By the time you receive this issue of *Grace Alone* we will have begun our second term for the year. Apologies for the delay, but it's been a busy year and it hasn't been easy to sit down and put together another issue of our quarterly newsletter.

But with term holidays here there is breathing space to write. To

"bring you up to speed," as the saying goes, we have provided an overview of the year so far. We have also included Hamish MacDonald's fascinating account of his journey to GTC, a guest article from Lloyd Kim on his work as a coordinator for theological training in the Asia/Pacific region, and an update from Peter Reynolds in the USA. We are sure you will find it interesting reading.

## 2005 So Far

### Grace Alone

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

Editors: Andrew Young & Arthur Palmer

All enquiries should be addressed to:

PO Box 75-534,  
Manurewa, Auckland,  
New Zealand  
Ph: (09) 268-1469  
Fax: (09) 269-2563  
Email:  
enquiries@gtc.ac.nz

Classes began again on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Right up until a day or two beforehand we were not sure how many students would be turning up this year. There had been one or two new registrations, and we knew that a number of existing stu-

dents would be returning, but the total mix of our student body was a little uncertain. And that is the way it remained for the first week or two of the term.

Through February there were new enquiries and registrations that followed on the heels of these. By the end of the month our classes were settled and into their work. As it has turned out we have a fascinating and di-



Participants in our Women in the Bible course

verse group of students studying a wide range of subjects. Let me introduce you to them and to the subjects they are studying.

### Who Are Our Students?

Hamish MacDonald, Guy McKenzie, Adrian de Vries, Sam Duthie, Falani Filipo and Caleb Gray have all spent at least one year at the College. Hamish is working toward a M.Div qualification through Birmingham Theological Seminary. This requires him to tackle a heavy workload, including studies in Greek and Hebrew. He is a candidate for the ministry in Grace Presbyterian Church and hopes to complete his basic studies at the end of 2006. We have asked Hamish to tell you a little more about himself and his wife Anita in a separate article in this issue.

Guy, Sam, Falani, Caleb and Adrian all came to College without a clear sense of calling to any specific ministry – simply the awareness that God was wanting them to prepare themselves for future kingdom service. They are all making good progress toward the completion of College certificates in biblical studies and pastoral ministry.

There is another group of returning students as well – we might almost call them our “veteran” or “perpetual” students. These are folk who have been studying part time at the College for a number of years, patiently working their way toward completing certificate and degree awards. This number includes Sue and Tony Bracefield, Alex Robinson, Uaita Levi and Rahai Nanua. Sue, Tony and Alex are all within sight of finishing

degrees through Birmingham Theological Seminary, and Rahai has come back for another of year of preparation before returning to the Cook Islands to train at his church’s denominational seminary there. Uaita is now serving a pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church, but continues to sharpen and deepen his understanding of the faith by attending at least one course a year.

Our new students are Alex Chen, Andrew Dickson, Scott Kennedy, Iva Samuelu Taeku, and Pio Leatisolomua. Alex is a recent migrant from China and an even more recent convert to the Christian faith! It is a delight to have him in our classes. Andrew has spent nine years in Africa in various work and ministry roles, and has returned to New Zealand to prepare himself more fully for Christian ministry. Scott recently took up the role of ministry assistant at Covenant Presbyterian Church here in Manurewa, Iva is a mother and church member who longs to learn more about the gospel, and Pio is a former school teacher who has been called to serve as pastor of the Samoan LMS Church in Clendon, South Auckland.

Others including Maria Chuang, Merlyn Patterson, Bill and Delwyn Cockerill, Jesse Killip and Adele McKenzie, attend our Tuesday evening class. Nola Young, Dawie Malan and Rosemary Wing join in on our Systematic Theology class on Wednesdays, and pastors Peter Boyd and Andrew Macpherson benefit from John Haverland’s insight into preaching to postmodern New Zealanders on Wednesday afternoons. As well as these, a group of 14 women have come for our first lecture on Women in the Bible, which began on the first Thursday night this term (see picture on p.1.).

As mentioned above, they form a diverse group. But each one is precious not only to God but to those of us who teach at College. Ian Grant, Arthur Palmer, John Haverland, Sue Bracefield and myself count it a great privilege to have some part in helping equip and encourage these people to serve in God’s church in some way or other.



**Some of our 2005 students:** Back row: Guy McKenzie Caleb Gray, Adrian de Vries, Falani Filipo, Middle: Sam Duthie Andrew Dickson, Alex Chen, Pio Leatisolomua, Front row: Iva Samuelu Taeku, Hamish MacDonald

## What Are We Teaching?

Our College teaching week begins on Monday mornings when Arthur Palmer arrives at nine o'clock to tutor Guy McKenzie in Greek. Earlier in term 1 Tony Howard from Hamilton was linking by telephone to join in on the class, but his timetable made that impractical toward the end. Guy enjoys his Greek and is flourishing under Arthur's excellent tutoring.

For most students, the College week begins on Tuesday morning. The first hour is devoted to the weekly chapel meeting, a time of worship, ministry and prayer. Our focus during the first term has been on Paul's pastoral counsels to Timothy in 1 Timothy. We have explored Paul's concern for doctrine and worship, and have just begun to consider the requirements he insists upon for church elders. We plan to continue this series through the second term.

Immediately after chapel concludes there is a class in Practical Christianity. There are four units to this course over the year – the first discusses aspects of the Christian Life as it relates to ministry; the second gives an introduction to evangelism; the third is a course in discipleship; and the fourth a course in worship.

After an hour break for lunch some of the students are back again for an introduction to Ministry of the Word. This is a small class that will attempt to gain the skills required for preparing and delivering messages from the Bible.

Tuesday classes haven't finished when Ministry of the Word I is dismissed. Some students come back again at night – and are joined by others as well – for Ian Grant's lectures on Biblical Theology. Ian is thoroughly enjoying his introduction to College teaching, and the students are appreciating his ministry deeply as well.

On Wednesday morning some fourteen students comfortably fill our lecture room for the three-hour session on Systematic Theology. They have all pre-read (or at least are *supposed to have* pre-read) the chapters in the textbook we are using as a basis for the course, and spend the class time clarifying key concepts of Christian doctrine. For many, this is proving the most challenging and

rewarding part of their course. Concepts such as God's eternity, the Trinity, and God's concurrence with man's actions in providence, have stretched their minds and left them in awe and wonder of the greatness of their Creator.

Nearly half of these students stay on for an afternoon class with Dr. John Haverland. John, the pastor of the Reformed Church of Pukekohe, completed a D.Min dissertation some years ago on the subject of preaching to post-modern New Zealanders. This was subsequently published under the title *Feed My Sheep* (Christchurch: Grace and Truth Publications, 2000), and forms the basis of the course he is teaching.

Arthur Palmer returns to College on Thursday mornings to teach a class in Old Testament Introduction and then a class in Hebrew. Hamish MacDonald is into his second year of Hebrew studies. Housewife and mother Kaye Christenson joins him for this.

That covers the range of subjects we have been teaching so far this year. In term two Sue Bracefield is offering an evening class entitled *Women in the Bible*, and later in the year when he arrives, Carl Stevens will teach advanced courses in Biblical Theology.

## What Else Has Been Happening?

Teaching has absorbed most of our time and energy so far this year, but there have been other things happening as well. Each week we have been producing *Insights* for the web, and there are regular administration tasks that demand attention too. From time to time we have visitors call on us, including some from overseas. One of these provided a highlight of the first term. On February 15-16<sup>th</sup> we had the joy of welcoming Lloyd Kim to the College for a visit. Lloyd has recently been appointed to serve as part of the Presbyterian Church of America's Mission to the World (MTW) team for the Asia/Pacific region. His special responsibility is developing theological education in emerging churches in the region. We spent an exciting two days together. It was a thrill to talk about ways in which we might be able to assist the MTW team in the years ahead helping fledgling colleges and training schools get started in different countries.

Hopefully you feel “brought-up-to-date” now after the overly long delay since our last issue of *Grace Alone*. Rejoice with us in all the blessings we are enjoying. And do pray for strength, pro-

tection and enthusiasm for students and staff alike. Without the Lord’s constant support we would fall easy prey to the adversary.

## My Journey to GTC by Hamish MacDonald

Hello, my name is Hamish MacDonald. I am in my second year of study at Grace Theological College in what, God willing, will be a three year stay to complete a Masters in Divinity. Supporting me in this endeavour is my wife, Anita, who is working as a procurement analyst at Tip Top Ice Cream.

We live in Manurewa, and have lived here for the majority of our lives. We both grew up at Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church and are now members of Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Looking back I can trace my journey to GTC to my childhood. I have fond memories of learning Bible stories as a young boy in Sunday School. As the years passed I continued to enjoy learning about God and, even more, teaching others about Him. When I finished school I had in mind to go to the University of Auckland to do degrees in Arts and Science. As I looked towards university, however, there was a part of me that felt that a regular working life was perhaps not what lay in the future. I had a sense that God was calling me to serve him in some special way.

In the holiday between high school and university I had the privilege of being involved in a short term OMF trip to Thailand with a group of people my own age. This event was formative in my personal and spiritual development as I experienced the love of Christ expressed through the people of his church in many ways. For some, a missions experience delivers a burden to take the word of God to the world; for me it increased the burden to take his word to the people of New Zealand.

Early on in my time at University it became clear that what really excited and stimulated me was not scientific endeavour but the attempt to under-

stand and learn about humanity. This led me to adjust my studies to a Bachelor of Arts. In completing this I spent large amounts of time studying history, political theory, philosophy and psychology. While I found this fascinating and a great opportunity to understand the world and people around me, it left me somewhat limited in terms of career opportunities.

After a few months of fruitless job searching, a new door opened, a door that was to continue my path to GTC. This was a job opportunity in an area that I had never considered, namely, as a client host at Totara Springs Christian Centre. The job appealed to me as a chance to work in a Christian environment, to work with people (especially kids), and to be paid at the same time. I look back on my year of work in Christian Camping with the fondest of memories. It was an opportunity to be a witness to Christ each and every day to a constantly changing array of campers, and it was an opportunity to develop skills and gifts in a challenging environment.

While at Totara Springs I was introduced to Soccer Plus, a Christian Soccer organisation that uses soccer as a means of outreach. Through this contact I had an opportunity to travel on another missions trip, this time to Singapore and Cambodia. This trip reinforced to me the value of meeting people where they are at and of using what you are passionate about for the glory of God. Yet again, this trip only intensified my desire to serve God and to do it at home.



**Hamish MacDonald**

After a year working at “the Springs,” I felt a strong call to return home to marry Anita and to support her through her business degree – a role in which she is now graciously reciprocating. In our quiet moments as a couple we sometimes dream of returning to Christian camping, a life we would quite happily return to if I hadn’t felt the call of the Lord to explore pastoral ministry.

After several years of work, mainly in the realm of customer service, our local church confirmed that call and I became a candidate for pastoral ministry in the Grace Presbyterian Churches in New Zealand. This brought me to GTC where I

have truly enjoyed my first year of study, and continue to do so till this very day.

I look forward to the days ahead with even greater excitement however, to see what God has in store for us. I feel a call to teach and to train others to better live their lives as Christians and to be more effective in their service of God. I would love to work in South Auckland, a place that I call home, and have a heart especially for young people. Most of all I look forward to being used by God and seeing Him faithfully lead, provide and care for us through everything that comes our way.

## Theological Education Opportunities in Asia/Pacific

Lloyd Kim, MTW, Manila, Philippines

When I first came to Manila as a Mission to the World (MTW) missionary for the Asia/Pacific team, I was asked to be the theological education guy. I wasn’t sure at that time exactly what that meant. In fact, the role still seems to be evolving even as I write.

Now that I am about five months into the position, however, I believe I have a better handle on what I need to do (whether I *can* do it is another question). Here is what I’ve come up with so far.

Our “bread and butter” at MTW is church planting. We are about initiating and supporting church planting movements. What this often looks like is partnering with national workers, pastors, and leaders, equipping them to lead churches. So the obvious need in this scenario is training for these workers and potential pastors.

It seems that God has really opened the door for church planting in several new places in Asia, i.e. Vietnam, Sri Lanka, South India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan. And yet, the work is moving faster than we can provide missionaries for these fields. In order to meet the needs of these church-planting works, we need to provide short-term teachers and professors to train the indigenous workers and pastors.

That may seem to be simply a short-term solution, and from one point of view it is. However, while we are providing short-term teachers, we will also send the best and brightest national workers to places like Manila, India, New Zealand, Australia, or the United States to get their training. They will in turn come back as the professors of their local Bible schools.

Where do the 14 Bible schools/colleges that are affiliated with MTW fit into this picture? Part of my role is to get to know these schools, find out how we can help them achieve their goals, and also challenge them to be a resource for the new church planting works. Certainly we can send students from the new church planting locations to study at these schools, but we can also encourage the faculty and graduates of established institutions to go to these fields and assist the church planting movements by teaching in their own developing Bible schools. It makes financial sense to use faculty and pastors in Asia/Pacific to help with these new Bible schools.



Lloyd Kim

Here is what is on the horizon. In order to facilitate communication between potential teachers and the different needs of the developing Bible schools, I'd like to set up a web-site that will list the schools, courses that need to be taught, dates for the courses, and requirements for the potential teachers. Those in the States or in Asia/Pacific can see the needs, feel the burden, and plan ahead to meet the needs.

There will also be a list of books that these emerging schools need for their libraries. We want to set up a process that enables willing donors to provide exactly what the schools need.

The idea is to make it easy for people to come and teach or to give to these new works. In addition, we'll be setting up a special fund to help subsidize the travel costs for teachers and professors to go to these different sites.

I'll be honest with you. It is easy for me to feel overburdened and overwhelmed by the vast needs here in Asia/Pacific. My only comfort is that our powerful, sovereign, creator God is more than able to meet these needs and go beyond our wildest imagination. Someone once told me to start small, build deep, and think big. I think that's good advice.

## Update From Peter Reynolds

*[Regular readers of Grace Alone will remember that Peter and Margaret Reynolds are midway through a planned three-year study programme at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. They were able to make a brief visit home to New Zealand over our summer to catch up with their children and with other friends. It was a delight to see them again. Peter has provided this update on where he is at in his studies.]*

Warmest greetings from Covenant Seminary. We are deeply grateful for the way many of you have kept us in your thoughts and prayers. We are being carried along by the Lord as he provides for us every step along the way.



**Peter and Margaret at Covenant Seminary**

In three weeks I expect to participate in the Seminary's graduation service, and emerge with a ThM degree in Pastoral Care. I have found the studies very challenging and thought provoking. They have reinforced my conviction that Christian counselling ought to be done within a local church under the oversight of the pastoral staff. Pastoral counselling, or the care of souls, has always been a necessary and major aspect of the church's ministry. With this in mind, my writing project for the ThM degree covered some of the issues concerned with pastoral care in a local church setting.

Preaching that presents Christ in all his gospel glory opens wide the front door of the church, while pastoral care closes the back door of the church where people tend to slip away unnoticed. Future pastors and/or church planters need to be trained in both if we are to see the establishment of healthy, strong, and stable congregations. Effective preaching will always raise pastoral issues in the lives of the hearers, and these issues are best addressed in a one-on-one ministry of the Word. When pastoral care is biblical, reformed, and warmly evangelical much blessing will result in the lives of helpers and helpees, and the congregation at large.

With my studies at Covenant Seminary drawing

to a close, Judy Dabler has offered me a job in her Counselling Center. Since the Counselling Center is a ministry of the Kirk of the Hills Presbyterian Church (PCA) I am able to work at the church as a Biblical Mentor offering pastoral care to individuals that have been referred to me by the pastoral staff of the church, or by the Counselling Center itself. I am gaining some wonderful hands-on experience, and being well supervised in the process. Judy also has me in a teaching role at the Counselling Center. There are some 20 counsellors there and my task is to provide biblical insights on the care of souls.

Margaret has another 12 months before her graduation. While I am waiting for her to finish I

will continue to work for Judy Dabler at the church, and, the Lord willing, will begin working on a Doctor of Ministry degree in Pastoral Counselling from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, my old school. I am part way through the application process for the D. Min., and expect to know in a month's time if I have been accepted. If accepted, I will be able to complete all the course work here in the States, with the writing project to be completed back in NZ. For the writing project I would like to focus on the use of the Bible in counselling. Especially, I would like to reflect on how insights from a redemptive-historical approach to biblical interpretation can contribute to the way the Bible is used in the care of souls.

## College News

### Dr. Carl Stevens

We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of Dr. Carl Stevens later in the year. Carl, his wife Irma-Maria, and their daughter Mona, are currently in the USA on what their mission calls Home Assignment. This involves them attending missions conferences and visiting supporting churches. They are also trying to contact new churches to support them during their next period of missionary service here with us at GTC in New Zealand. In his last communication with us Carl said they hoped to arrive in New Zealand on or around September 14<sup>th</sup>. We would encourage our readers to pray for them as they undertake the arduous task of intensive travel, speaking and visiting.

### Visitors From The USA

We are looking forward to welcoming two visitors from the USA over the coming weeks and months. **Dr. Steve Williams** is a specialist in pastoral care who has been working with Mission to the World for a number of years in Europe. Recently he and his family moved to Hawaii, but they are considering relocating to New Zealand to establish a base for promoting the ministry of pastoral care in the Asia/Pacific region. Steve will be visiting us at GTC in the latter part of April and early in May to discuss his plans.

In July we expect to have **Dr. Dave Matthews** from Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama visit us for a week. In recent years Dave has been working on a D.Min degree majoring in church-based Christian Education programmes. We have asked him to teach a brief course on this subject when he visits us. It is bound to be of interest and help to a wide range of people involved in Sunday School and adult education programmes in churches. We will advertise details of his lectures nearer the time. Please contact us if you are interested.



*Dave Matthews*

### Generous Donors

A long-time friend and supporter of GTC recently sent several boxes of new and used books for our library. Through the vision and generosity of such people our library continues to expand.

## Please join us in....

### Thanking God for

- ◆ Our diverse student body and their keenness to study God's Word
- ◆ The visit of Lloyd Kim, and his role in trying to co-ordinate theological education in the areas of Asia and the Pacific where Mission To the World is working
- ◆ The generous gift of books for our library



### Praying for

- ◆ Hamish MacDonald and our other students, that their time at GTC may prepare them well for future ministry
- ◆ Peter and Margaret Reynolds as they complete their studies in the USA, in preparation for returning to New Zealand for further ministry
- ◆ Carl and Irma Maria Stevens as they continue to raise support and plan to come to New Zealand in September

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