



Grace Alone

Grace Theological College
www.gtc.ac.nz

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

Editors:
Arthur Palmer & Peter Reynolds

All enquiries should be addressed to:

PO Box 75-534,
Manurewa,
Manukau 2243,
New Zealand

Ph: (09) 268-1469
Email:
enquiries@gtc.ac.nz

www.gtc.ac.nz



Trainee preachers... see p.6



Off to Africa... see p.4



Ladies' retreat... see p.5



Staff and Students at North Shore campus

"Lean not on your own Understanding"... see p.2

News from our new South Island Principal... see p.3

College News... see p.7

New Opportunities for Involvement at GTC... see p.7

Calvin Symposium... see p.8

Friends of GTC... see p.8

“... and lean not on your own understanding” Proverbs 3:5 A Welcome Reminder



*Peter Reynolds,
GTC Principal*

For any Christian institution of learning and education, including Grace Theological College, the reminder from this verse in the book of Proverbs carries a heavy weight. In our learning, studying and teaching we

are not to lean on our own understanding. To do so is to violate the first portion of the verse, namely, “to trust in the Lord with all our hearts”, and the second part of the couplet in verse six, “in all your ways acknowledge him”.

At Grace College we train the mind, but we dare not neglect the heart. If, in all our learning, we miss having a heart that completely trusts in the Lord, then we will be found leaning on our own understanding. We will be standing, and leaning, on the conclusions and reasonings of men rather than on the Bible. In all our deliberations we must be always checking to see what we are leaning on, what we are resting on, both for our lesson material, our heart convictions, and our life direction.

To trust the Bible, rather than leaning on our own understanding, is a requirement for all of life. It is a basic requirement for day to day living as well as for theological and hermeneutical activity, for speaking to our spouse as much as for interpreting the more difficult to understand parts of Scripture.

In coming to the Bible, we affirm in advance that 1) Since God is the author of the Bible, the Scriptures are reliable in what they say and will not mislead us.; 2) the Bible does not contradict itself and is a unified whole in all its parts; and 3) whatever problems in the Bible remain unsolvable to our understanding are not ultimately unsolvable since they have their resolution in the mind of God, the Divine Author. In these three primary areas of Bible interpretation, we will not lean on our own understanding, but will accept the Bible’s testimony regarding itself. Thus we will acknowledge Him, and He will make straight our paths (Proverbs 3:6).

William Booth is credited to have said that the chief danger to our religion will be

A Christianity without Christ
Forgiveness without Repentance
Salvation without Regeneration
Politics without God
And Heaven without Hell.

We could add to that

A Bible without a Divine Author.

Nowhere in Grace College’s curriculum must we be found leaning on our own understanding. In our biblical courses, our theology courses, and our practical ministry courses the teaching of the Bible and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ must remain the authoritative core around which these courses are developed.

In chapter one of the Westminster Confession of Faith we have no better expression, in the words of men, of the position and role the Bible must play in our lives, our relationships, and in all our learning at Grace Theological College.

New Ministry Underway

*Andrew Young
Associate Principal, South Island*

For the past month or two I have been absorbed with relocating to the deep south of the country – to the town of Wyndham approximately 40 km north of Invercargill. We’ve settled quickly and I’m into the swing of pastoral ministry in the Wyndham Evangelical Church. Earlier this month

I also began GTC lecturing via the telephone to extension students in Christchurch.



I had the privilege of meeting with these students en route south. We devoted part of a Saturday to catching up with their first term work in Biblical Theology. Three of them – Kris Morrison, Holly



Sterne and Robert Reynolds – are taking courses in Church History and Biblical Theology for credit towards College certificates. David Bayne, the pastor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ashburton, travels to Christchurch every second week to

teach the Church History class, and up until now, the students themselves have been working through Biblical Theology notes under the supervision of Rev. Richard Eyre. From this point on, however, I expect to be able to guide them through this course.

I've also had discussions with pastors of two other churches in the South – one in Invercargill and the other in Dunedin – about establishing extension centres of the College in their cities. Both are very open to this possibility, but both see value in making a start next year (2009) rather than this one. It takes time to integrate a teaching programme into the activities of a church in a way that ensures key people are free to be involved. Hopefully all three centres – Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill – will be operating from the beginning of next year.

It has always been a thrill to see the way in which College courses change the lives of people. Often they begin to see things in new ways, and that affects the way they live. Kris Morrison and Holly Sterne share below how they have been helped by the courses they have studied this year.

Kris writes:

"I always thought studying Church History would be boring. Even though I had studied classical studies and ancient history, somehow I thought that Church History class would simply be a long list of dates and boring church councils. Instead, studying Church History has brought home to me the fact that for 2000 years and more Christians have been struggling with the same issues and battles we face today. Studying the highs and lows of the church has helped me see God's grace and faithful provision for His people. It has also helped me see that the truths about God that we hold to are worth fighting for. It has reminded me that God really does use His people to change the world. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."

Holly adds:

"Studying Biblical Theology this year has changed the way I approach the Bible. It has opened my eyes to the way in which every passage of Scripture builds upon what has gone before and leads on to what is to come. As we looked from Creation through the Fall, and then onto the nation of Israel throughout the period of the Judges and Kings, I learned that the focus of the Scriptures is always on God's redemptive plan for His people. I now view Scripture as one book that progressively and purposefully points to Jesus Christ. It is a book not written directly *to* us in 2008, yet divinely written *for* us. I now view Scripture not through a 'what can it do for me' approach but instead am prompted to ask 'What does this teach about Christ? How did it relate to the people at the time it was written? And, how can I apply that to my life today?'"

My Need of the Balm of Grace

Andrew Dickson, GTC Graduate

Where I have come from:

It was August 2004 and leaving Tanzania hurt. But I up and left. To stay on would have been to harm myself in a worse manner. I was grateful for all the wonderful experiences I'd been able to enjoy, especially given Tanzania had been THE country I'd always most wanted to visit since I was a youngster who read lots of adventure books and Jungle Doctor stories, and now here I was turning my back on the best job I'd ever had – beautiful scenic location, great employer, very big salary and substantial holidays and perks and also the wonderful trailbike riding, 4WDing and

wildlife photography opportunities I knew I would miss terribly. So I watched glumly as my beloved West Kilimanjaro farmhouse and environs passed beneath then settled in for the long flight home to NZ.

I'd grown up in a Waikato Christian farming family and gone on to study Agriculture at Massey and then worked managing dairy farms as well as been a volunteer in Youth for Christ youth work in Hamilton for a number of years. But God changed all that and in Jan 1996 I had arrived a keen fresh-faced VSA volunteer agricultural advisor bound for 2 years work in the agricultural



Andrew Dickson

projects of the Lutheran Church of Tanzania at their Integrated Agricultural Training Centre near Bacho village, 20km west of Babati town (~180km SW of Arusha, Northern Tanzania). I'd extended for a third year there and then afterwards stayed on by forming a timber/furniture company and lastly managing the 1000ha Namuai farm at West Kilimanjaro growing crops for a Dutch seed-export business. So nearly 9 years of working in Tanzania and despite experiencing many cross-cultural frustrations, some malaria, quite some more giardia, el Nino floods, thievery, betrayal, corruption and suchlike, I had never once felt homesick in all that time. Tanzania had felt the place I was supposed to be and God had certainly brought me through some trials – proving His faithfulness to me beyond doubt. I'd been in NZ every couple of years for holidays but was now leaving not knowing when or if I'd ever return.

God had led me to decide to study theology at GTC. I'd looked at studying in other Christian colleges in NZ but God had impressed GTC on my heart for various reasons including a number of those 'coincidences' that occur when you pray sincerely asking for His guidance. I also believed that GTC was the best place to strengthen my faith and equip me for future service. God knew my heart hoped that He would return me to East Africa before too long, but first I needed help to understand my God in a much deeper way. God had been with me through some hard times and I'd always believed that He would keep my faith secure because He initiated our relationship, not I. He had brought me to faith in Him as a child. Nevertheless I had struggled in the last few years to grow in effectiveness in my walk with Him (even though I'd certainly learnt of His faithfulness firsthand). I'd got too isolated from good Christian fellowship by physical distance and my emotions had taken a beating from the sad, totally avoidable, break-up of my marriage about 3 years earlier. I was, in many ways, a humbled, broken man in need of repair and it was time to avail myself of the help God was offering me through the teaching ministry of other believers as well as time closer to family.

Given my interest in Africa and missions many have asked me why I didn't study at a more missions/cross-cultural orientated college. It certainly would have been much easier financially. But God called me to Grace, and I'm glad He did because studying God Himself, the detail of who He is and the principles He works by is the foundation that must be laid before one goes on to construct methods and approaches of reaching out to disciple people. From what I have seen, long before my study, having the fundamentals of faith correct, and really understanding these is critical to producing fruit that lasts eternally and so glorifies God. If one doesn't value what God values highly enough one is too easily tempted to compromise with pragmatism to make 'progress'. Such progress is deceptive.

So I started at GTC in 2005 and last year completed a Master of the Arts in Christian Education. I didn't study to 'get' a qualification per se, but it is useful piece of paper to have. How can I cover in a few words what an amazing time I have had sitting under the word of God? I don't regret leaving the life I loved in Tanzania, that was a small price for the spiritual riches I gained from godly tutors and the friendships I made with them and others having a heart after God and His wisdom. I am indebted to you all, but most of all to my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, mighty God. He has cut away much immaturity through challenging me as to my heart's desires. GTC has been a sharp instrument in His capable hands. The hands that once bore nails for me.

I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. Riches and honour are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold...and my yield than choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries (Prov 8v17-21).

Where is God leading me now?

God is such a good Father to me. In Sept 2006 God brought the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of America's Uganda Mission (OPUM) to my attention through the RCNZ (I'm a member of Hamilton Reformed Church since 2005). After much emailing, I visited for a month in Jan '07 and the rest of the year was spent waiting on the Lord to confirm my call to the work as I continued study at GTC. I applied late last year, was accepted, and this year have been working out all the arrangements involved



in getting me over to serve as an associate missionary deacon with the OPUM. And I should be on my way to Mbale, Uganda within two months...Praise God, for He does things in His timing and according to His wisdom not mine!

Anyone interested in being informed and encouraged by what God is doing in Uganda, especially that area I will be directly involved with, is welcome to contact me at dicksonaj@gmail.com and I'll include you in my newsletter mail-list. God be with you.

Women Bonding: Laughter was the best medicine

Ruth Lowe, GTC student

Kathy Kells, Wendy Kerr, Marion Smith and I, all study in various courses at Grace Theological College. We got together and decided to go on a GTC woman's retreat during the first week of the term break. We were sitting our exams on Thursday and by next Friday we were at camp. No three month planning, no committee, just a real desire for a break and to bond.

And bond we did!! At the Pukekohe Scout camp in the bush, we woman roughed it for two nights. When I discovered half a worm on my plate, as I was eating the puha we had gathered and 'washed', I just about died with repulsion. You can imagine the laughter and it just kept on coming.

We built an outside fire (like real bush men) and roasted marshmallows. Some deep discussions developed around the warmth of the fire, including what sins we would like to throw into the fire. This was a time of sincere honesty, sharing and trust. It was beautiful.

Our card games, pictionary and 'bob it' games showed that the quieter members of our team weren't so quiet after all!! And then came the singing. Sing praises to God, sing praises. Praise Him as Psalm 150 says. With the accordion, keyboard, guitar, and pots and ladles banging, and of course our wonderful voices, we sang praises! It was an amazing feeling of togetherness and sisterhood in Christ.

Some of the most wonderful times for me and I know for the others also, was the large amount of time we spent discussing what we have been learning at GTC and the impact it has had upon our hearts and lives. How we are being guided into a more intimate relationship with God and beginning to have a real understanding about redemptive history and the plans the Lord may have for our lives. The impact of Romans 8:1, that there is no condemnation and that we are already justified and being progressively sanctified, was a wonderful reminder that we are loved so much. This is just a taste of the enormity of the heartening talks we had. It helped us to imagine heaven and the fellowship we will have there.

The peace and rest to clear our heads and also the awareness of God in moments of quiet times was great too. The beauty of creation also reminded us that God is an amazing God and cares for us. In this way we are to 'consider the lilies' (Matt 6:28).

The general consensus was that the fellowship was the best. Our classes together at GTC have made a bond that I found most refreshing and encouraging, and this weekend proved to just enhance this more. This was a well needed break for us all and we really did have a lovely time of caring and sharing together.





GTC Preaching Workshops

The Preaching Workshop is providing an opportunity for men to try their hand at preaching. Some are seasoned preachers, and some have never preached at all, and the rest are somewhere in between.

In this class we discuss how to preach redemptive sermons from the different literature types (genre) in Scripture. From these redemptive understandings we are then able to apply the rich and grace-filled truths of Jesus Christ and his life in the Gospel to the hearts and lives of God's people.

Here we have the three men in the preaching workshop on the North Shore, Bert, an egg farmer, Bruce a district health board employee, and Don a retired school teacher.

Don writes

I have been an elder at the North Shore Reformed Church for a number of years. On many occasions I have been asked to lead the worship service when the minister has been absent. Up until this year, in accordance with our church ruling, I have read sermons written by ministers in our denomination.

I enrolled in the Preaching Class to help with my sermon delivery. The class has not only helped me to do this, but we have also been taught how to prepare our own sermons and then preach them from notes. The course has showed us how sermons are constructed, with



Preaching Workshop attendees: (1) Don, Bruce, Bert (2) Ivan, Tadimitsu, Nathan, Rob, Rusty, Dan

the use of different methods for the different Old Testament genres (i.e. historical narrative, poetry, wisdom and prophecy). This has given me a better understanding of the sermons delivered by other preachers.

I am looking forward to the next semester

where we will be preparing and preaching sermons from the New Testament genres.

Bert writes

The preaching workshop has been extremely beneficial to me in that it is teaching me the basics of redemptive preaching from the individual biblical genre.

The structure of the course - comprising of one lecture per genre, followed by the opportunity to prepare and preach my own sermons (followed by rigorous critique) - has been very conducive to gaining the necessary skills and confidence to preach God's word.

I've been able to use these sermons in several local churches, where the preaching has been a blessing.

For me personally the course has been challenging, has driven me to search the Scriptures more deeply, has increased my confidence to preach and has increased my love for the word of God and a desire to study and proclaim it.

Bruce writes

Talofa lava. I have thoroughly enjoyed the preaching workshops this year. The preaching class has given me the confidence to develop the sermons in a framework which has not taken all week like it used to in the past. The framework forced the preacher to link the text to the greatest story of all time, which was God's plan to save His people. Like a lawyer, the preacher presented the evidence in support of this from different parts of the Scripture always taking it to the incarnate Lord Jesus Christ.

The frankness of the feedback from the lecturer and peers within a loving supportive environment enhanced sermons from average to excellent. In this time of feedback, the application aspect of the sermon is further developed so that sermons were ensured to be preached to ourselves before they were preached to congregations. I have preached three times at Providence church this year and also at Covenant church. I encourage churches to remove any financial barriers and invest in and sponsor their budding preachers and leaders to attend these preaching workshops, as the return of investment (blessings for both student and church family) is very high.

For a **timetable of courses for Terms 3 & 4** in Manukau and North Shore or the South Island see our website www.gtc.ac.nz or contact us at GTC (see back page)

College News

FAREWELL TO THE FOUNDING PRINCIPAL

On April 18 the Board members and their wives met together at the home of Peter and Margaret Reynolds to farewell **Andrew and Nola Young** as they leave for pastoral duties in the South Island, and to thank them for their 13 years of faithful service to Grace College. As our Founding Principal, Andrew has shaped the ethos of the College, established its direction, and recruited a base of support among churches and individuals throughout New Zealand and overseas. For this we truly give thanks to the Lord.

Andrew spoke about the call of God upon his life and the story of God's leading through his different ministry endeavours.

We are very grateful that Andrew, and the Wyndham Evangelical Church, have agreed to Andrew giving some of his time to Grace College now that he is located in the South Island, and to that end the Board has appointed Andrew as Associate Principal (South Island). In this capacity, Andrew will be seeking to build on the work being done in Christchurch and establish further centres of GTC training in Dunedin and Invercargill.

In recognition of the esteem in which Andrew and Nola are held by the GTC Board, they were presented with a dinner set and a trophy by which to recall God's blessings over their many years of faithful service. We wish them God's richest blessings in their continued labours for his kingdom.



WELCOME TO WENDY KERR

We are delighted to be able to introduce you to Wendy Kerr, our new librarian and administrative assistant. Wendy is also a pastoral counselling student at the College, and so divides her time between study and sorting books, etc. Wendy and Bruce have three adult children and three grandchildren.

New Opportunities for Involvement at GTC

Books for the Library

There are some gaps in our library shelves, and we would be very excited to receive any surplus books you may have in your personal library collections. We will identify them as belonging to you if you wish only to loan them to us. That way they would be readily identified should you wish to receive them back. We are looking for:

Commentaries (Old and New Testament):

Tyndale Series

Bible Speaks Today Series

New International Commentary series

Books on:

Biblical Spirituality

Preaching

Systematic Theology

Old and New Testament Background,

Survey and Introduction

Worship

Evangelism

Discipleship

Pastoral Theology

Church Growth and Renewal

Christian Education



New Training Centres

GTC is committed to seeing its courses being taught in various localities around New Zealand, and anchored in local churches. If you think you would like to be one of our teachers, or you know of people in your locality who would like to do some GTC study, then you may be exactly what we are looking for. Please get in touch with us and we will discuss how we can bring GTC to where you are. Are you interested in financially supporting these new training centres? Your support may well enable the ministry of GTC to come to where you are, and help us to train people in your church for ministry leadership.

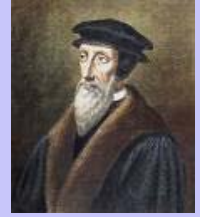
Resources for Local Churches

Our teaching materials are available for use in local churches as part of that church's own educational programme. If you have a desire to teach in your church the kinds of subjects we cover, then our materials can be made available to you, and to the teachers in your church.



Calvin Symposium

Next year is the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth. John Calvin of Geneva was a key figure in the Reformation period of church history who sought to bring the gospel to bear on church life and Christian living. He left behind a rich legacy of writing to inspire future generations in their walk with the Lord, and their study of Scripture.



To celebrate this anniversary, Grace College is hosting a Calvin Symposium on April 18, 2009. Invitations are extended to any of Reformed persuasion who wishes to present a 30 minute (plus Q&A) paper to the symposium concerning the impact of Calvinism on their life and ministry in New Zealand. The papers will then be published by the College and made available for general distribution.

If you would like to present a paper then please let the College know, giving us an indication of your paper's content. The Academic Committee of the GTC Board will consider all applications and arrange the itinerary.

Items for Praise and Prayer



Give Thanks for

- ◆ God's blessings on Andrew Young as he gets established serving as our Associate Principal, South Island
- ◆ God's leading on Andrew Dickson into mission work in Uganda
- ◆ The recent time of refreshment and spiritual encouragement for our women students
- ◆ Encouraging feedback from our preaching workshops on the North Shore and in Manukau

Please pray for

- ◆ Peter Reynolds as he heads up the College as Principal
- ◆ Wendy Kerr in her work as librarian and administrative assistant
- ◆ Suitable churches to become GTC Training Centres and use our resources
- ◆ The upcoming Calvin Symposium

Become a Friend of GTC



- ◆ Receive quarterly updates from the Principal and Associate Principal
- ◆ Receive the College newsletter *Grace Alone* and
- ◆ Receive an invitation to our annual College graduation service.
- ◆ Help GTC by giving us a more predictable donation income stream
- ◆ Membership of *Friends of GTC* costs a minimum donation of \$10 per month or \$120 per year
For those who already contribute this per year, we will automatically enrol you in Friends of GTC

- To join tick the box in the coupon below and mail to us or contact us via email
- More information on Friends of GTC is available on our website or by contacting us at GTC

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

- Yes! I want to know more about Grace Theological College
- Yes! I want to be a financial supporter of Grace Theological College by
 - a one off gift of \$_____
 - joining **Friends of GTC** a monthly gift of \$_____
- GTC Bank Account Number 12-3032-0876019-00*
- Please update my changed details



NAME: _____ Email: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Please return the coupon to
 Grace Theological College
 PO Box 75-534 Manurewa
 Manukau 2243
 New Zealand

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