



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.

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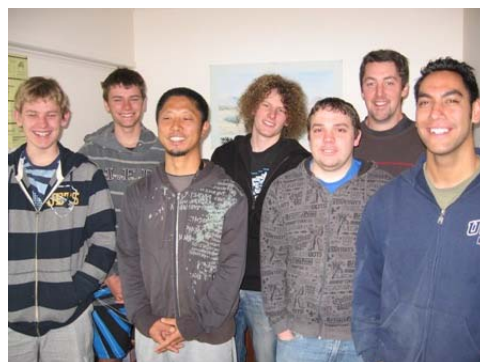


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A Year of Growth at GTC

Peter Reynolds, GTC Principal

2009 has been a year of growth for GTC. Student numbers have been at an all time high with the introduction of new courses, and accompanying timetable flexibility with evening courses and multiple teaching localities.

With the growth in student numbers has come the need to upgrade our computer resources, thus enabling us to provide a dedicated computer room for students to research and write their papers and assignments.



We have seen significant growth in our library stock with the generous long-term loan of books from the personal library of Dr Robert Oxner. In excess of 5000 volumes have been added to our library resources, giving us the opportunity to expand shelving, and to process our current stock of books.

Growth has also been seen in the development of GTC training centres around the country. This year, in addition to the Manukau and North Shore training centres, we have offered courses in Gisborne, Christchurch, and Wyndham.

Finally, growth has been seen in the addition of new faculty members; Travis Scott in Manukau, Geoff McPherson in Gisborne, Trevor Webb in Christchurch and Stuart Johnson in Dunedin.

We have been humbled with all the Lord is choosing to do through the men and women who teach and study at GTC. It is all due to his grace and blessing, and to him belongs all glory and honour. When God moves in his world, and in the hearts and lives of people, we stand amazed at the evidence and power of his work. Toward the end of the book of Job God asks of us all, "*Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? ... Have you ever given orders to the morning or*

shown the dawn its place? ... Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? ... Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom? ... and then comes the reminder, "Naked I came from my mothers womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised". Indeed, may the name of the Lord be praised in all that he has done at GTC in 2009.

At Grace College we believe we hold a unique place as a theological educational institution in New Zealand. We believe that it is possible – indeed imperative – to join academic rigour and pastoral excellence within a sound biblical curriculum that teaches distinctively in the areas of redemptive history and biblical counselling, while holding to the complementary view of men and women in church life. We train men for pastoral ministry, and men and women for service in Christ's church. To these ends we offer courses leading to undergraduate certificates, plus our post-graduate Masters programmes in ministry, counselling, and biblical studies accredited to Birmingham Theological Seminary in the USA.

Our uniqueness is further seen in our curriculum, where we place a high premium on interpreting and applying the Scriptures to life and ministry. Thus we are concerned to teach *biblical theology* (learning how all of the bible points and speaks of Christ); *systematic theology* (learning how all of the bible teaches one coherent message about who God is and what he has done); *apologetics* (learning how to articulate and defend the faith in modern society); *church history* (learning how the church has wrestled with issues of text and context over the years); and *practical theology* (learning how to preach and apply the bible in the church today and finding it effective for the counselling and pastoral care of the God's people).

In each of these areas Grace Theological College stands within the historic Reformed traditions of evangelical Christianity.

As you hold this edition of *Grace Alone* in your hands you may be wondering about studying at GTC yourself, or supporting someone who does. Here are a few reasons why study with us at a GTC training centre may be the next best step for your life, or for the life of someone you know.

1. To Face the Big Questions in Your Life and World

Taking time out to study at GTC allows you to give close attention to those nagging questions we are often asked but which tend to get pushed to the back of our minds when life is busy. Why is the world so messed up? What is God doing about it? Why are there so many denominations? What is the difference between Christianity and other religions? What does the Old Testament law have to do with the Christian life today?

2. To Place Your "Secular" Work Under the Guidance and Authority of God

You may already have some tertiary training, be in a career, or you may be getting ready to leave high school and begin your new career. Have you thought through what it means to be a Christian in your chosen place of work? Studying at GTC will give you the opportunity to think about your life and career from a distinctly Christian perspective, one that is Christ-centred and God honouring.

3. To Seek God's Direction for Your Life

During your time of study at GTC you will come to understand yourself, God, and the world more accurately, and so be in a better position to make decisions about your future for God's glory. You will thus gain enough knowledge, experience and insight to make well-informed life decisions.

4. To Prepare for Ministry

GTC's driving vision is to provide practical Bible-

based training so that the next generation of pastors, church leaders and workers will be thoroughly equipped to present Christ in all their serving, leading, teaching, guiding, counselling and preaching.

5. To Stretch and Transform your Mind

Theological study can broaden your perspective and be a source of great personal growth and spiritual development. Whether or not it leads to employment in Christian ministry, it will equip you to serve God and others more thoughtfully, more faithfully, and more whole-heartedly.

OK, but I don't have time

At GTC you have the flexibility to study full time, part-time, during the day or in the evenings.

OK, but I don't live near the College

We can come to you! Our courses are available at a growing number of training sites around New Zealand.

OK, but it has been a long time since I was in a classroom

We have a student in her 70's who comes back year after year to do our courses. She would love to have the company of her peers in the classroom. Maybe you could be one of them.

Check out our 2010 courses in our new prospectus, found at www.gtc.ac.nz. Then to enrol, download a General Registration Form and fax to GTC at 09 268 1471. See you in 2010.

News from the South

*Andrew Young
Associate Principal, South
Island*

It's Thursday as I sit to write this brief update on GTC South Island ministries. I've spent the morning with Matthew Tarbotton, our local church intern and GTC student here in Wyndham, exploring Paul's epistles to the Romans and Colossians and the dynamics of Christian spiritual life. Tutoring Matthew is a regular Thursday morning event, and one that never fails to result in rich



*Andrew Young working with
Matthew Tarbotton*


spiritual
nourishment for us both.

Tutoring Matthew is the main form that GTC teaching has taken for me personally since relocating to the South Island last May. Earlier in the year, in keeping with GTC's desire to foster church-based teaching programmes, I tried to incorporate a College course into the regular mid-week life of our church. However, the nature of the course and the

needs of the people didn't quite match. The depth and demands of the course were more than most mid-week Bible study members could absorb. Other church pastors with whom I've discussed the idea of teaching College courses as part of a local church's education programme have made the same observation.

On that basis, it would appear (at this time anyway) that it is best to offer our College courses as a distinct entity, though, as in my own case here in Wyndham, often in close connection with the life of a local church. That's been happening in Christchurch for the last several years as David Bayne and Geoff Macpherson have taught courses in Church History, Systematic Theology and Westminster Confession of Faith in conjunction with their work as church pastors. Next year Trevor Webb will continue this by teaching Biblical Theology 1.

In 2010 we will begin offering GTC courses in Dunedin. Stuart Johnson, his wife Gail and their daughters have taken the year to settle into life in Dunedin, integrate with student and church ministries, and "survey the field" for potential students for GTC courses. Stuart is confident that there will be a keen core of young people ready to take on Biblical Theology 1 and Ministry of the Word 1 next year. This is an exciting prospect.

What's made it even more encouraging has been the unexpected gift of several hundred books

from the Reformer's Bookshop in Sydney to lay the foundation of a College library in Dunedin. Mid-way through the year, Duncan Parker, Chairman of the Trust that runs the Bookshop, contacted us offering to donate surplus books to GTC. This extremely generous offer has given a great start to the building of a significant theological library for the new Dunedin extension centre. All that's needed now is a suitable place to locate them!

From next year, then, we hope to have two GTC city-based extension centres operating in the South Island as well as our rural, internship-based centre in Wyndham. From time to time we will also be offering block course intensives. This past year Principal Peter Reynolds taught courses in counselling in Christchurch, and will do so again in Dunedin and Invercargill next year. There have been invitations to conduct seminars and courses in Hokitika as well.

I am very excited at the way in which our College ministry is shaping up in the South Island. City-based extension centres in Christchurch and Dunedin cater for larger population centres and student communities, while the rural internship-programme we have operating here in Wyndham allows young people to access theological training while continuing to work on farms. Short block course intensives add a third prong in our approach to theological education, making it accessible to a wide range of people.

New GTC Staff Member— Travis Scott

2009 saw the addition of Travis Scott to the GTC faculty. Travis, with his wife Brooke and daughter Sophia moved to Auckland from the USA this past January. Travis studied at Reformed Bible College where he finished with a B.S. and went



on to graduate with honours from Covenant Theological Seminary in St Louis. His areas of

focus include Apologetics, Evangelism, Cultural Engagement, and Youth Ministry. Travis will be teaching various practical theology courses for GTC. In the first semester of this year Travis taught a course on Engaging Cults and New Religious Movements which focused on the teachings of various non-Christian groups and how to winfully engage their adherents with the Gospel. For the second semester he is teaching the Spiritual Development course in which he is focusing on a grace based approach to Christian growth and maturity. In 2010 Travis will be repeating the Spiritual Development and teaching a course in Evangelism.

Travis Scott with wife Brooke and daughter Sophia

Travis is an ordained minister in the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and is pastor of City Presbyterian Church, a new con-

gregation in Central Auckland. Travis is also a contributing editor for Critique a publication of Ransom Fellowship (www.ransomfellowship.org). We decided to put a few questions to Travis in order to get to know him better:

Since your teaching at GTC is mainly in the area of Practical Theology could you say a bit about its importance in the life of Christians?

Sure, but I should start by saying that I think all theology should be practical. What I mean by this is that throughout Scripture you never see God concerned just with someone's theology, He's always deeply concerned that what people know in their heads is manifested in their lives. Our orthopraxy is just as important as our orthodoxy. Any divide between these is unbiblical. Our Biblical and Systematic Theologies should be practical and our Practical Theology should be Biblical and systematic. With that said the field of Practical Theology focuses on the living out of the Christian faith by the Church as a whole and by Christians individually. Worship, liturgy, preaching, spiritual development, discipleship, evangelism, apologetics, and worldview are all areas of practical theology. From the list itself you can see why this field is an important one and why it's crucial that we approach each of these subjects from a theological rather than pragmatic

basis.

Who has been most influential to you in your own approach to theology and ministry?

That's a tough question because it's a very long list. A short version of the list would include John Calvin, C.S. Lewis, John Stott, Anthony Hoekema, Francis Schaeffer, Lesslie Newbigin, F.F. Bruce, Derek Kidner, Jerram Barrs, and Tim Keller among many others.

As a pastor, what is your desire for City Presbyterian Church?

My desire is to see this congregation become a missional church that exists in the city, being an open and safe place for non-Christians to explore the beliefs of historic orthodox Christianity. In John 20:21 Jesus tells us that he is sending his church into the world in the same way that the Father has sent him. I think the implications of this passage are huge for the life of the Church.

What sort of things do you do in your downtime?

Obviously I love spending time with my wife and daughter. I also enjoy reading, watching good films, listening to music, exercising at the YMCA, and exploring our new city and country whenever I get a chance.

GTC Student- Tadimitsu Nishimura

Tadimitsu is a young man who has come to GTC from Japan to study and prepare for ministry. Here is his story in his own words.

Personal Testimony

After I graduated from high school I started to live a stupid life. As a result I became addicted to alcohol. Jesus saved me from my hopeless life, and I was baptised at 6th July, 2003.

My home church is the Sendai Evangelical Church (SEC) which is located in the Miyagi prefecture which is in the north east of Japan. SEC is one of Japan Evangelical Church Association (JECA) co-operated with OMF missionaries. If you are interested in, they have a new web page. Please have a look at www.Sendaichurch.com

Reason for Coming to NZ

I came to NZ February 2004 for one year to learn English. I was thinking of staying longer in NZ,

but I went back to Japan and decided to get trained by a missionary. I was full-time at first, half-time in the middle and eventually being away from church. I sinned against God, I was mentally a bit sick wanting to be alone. Then I got an email from NZ after a long time. He said, "Are you still interested in learning the Bible in NZ?" It was like a bright light for I was crying out to God every day.



Tadimitsu Nishimura

GTC Courses

While at GTC I have done courses in biblical and systematic theology, preaching, counselling, spiritual development, and one on new religious movements. When I first came to GTC it was so hard to catch up on things that they were doing. Nevertheless it was like cold water on a hot day. My heart was gradually healed by God's love through his words and the love of the people coming to GTC. I was sometimes like a stray dog being alone to feel lonely, sometimes like a brute beast barking to the tutors. But God has been good to me, and I have been helped a lot by brothers and sisters here.

One of my favourite courses is Preaching class. I was just sitting in the classroom for the first year. Despite my lack of knowledge, my tutor gave me the opportunity to preach even at church. I am so thankful to God and his people here. Spending time on the Bible to construct a sermon according to what I have been taught in class has been giving me a lot of blessings to know more of God's

grace and mercy. God's words have the power to strengthen our hearts by his love.

And also through Counselling course it has been a lot of blessing to my heart. I learned that counselling is a relationship caring about the heart becoming vulnerable towards us, listening well and understanding well, the problem is still among us but the relationship keeps us going in God's love. Quite gradually my life has been changed through this course.

Future Plans

I quite frankly confess that I am not sure what I am going to do in the future. But one thing that has never been changed on my mind since I was saved by Jesus is to see the salvation of the lost that I used to be living in the darkness. Sharing the Gospel with people to ultimately worship the Lord together is my future plan. The Gospel of the truth sets us all free from darkness into eternal light.

College News

Calvin Symposium

To celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin, GTC hosted a symposium of speakers who spoke of the influence of Calvin on their life and ministry in New Zealand. These lectures are available to be read and downloaded from our website www.gtc.ac.nz.

Library

With the generous long-term loan of books from



Speakers at the Calvin Symposium:
Dr John Haverland, Geoff Macpherson, Dr Andrew Young, David Bayne and Michael Beck

the personal library of Dr Robert Oxner of Thames, we able to provide a study centre for under-graduate and post-graduate students who wish to pursue research in reformed studies and biblical theology. Furthermore, we are able to pass on books surplus to our requirements, to the new GTC study and training centre in Dunedin.

Faculty

2009 saw the addition of three new faculty members, who were welcomed at our faculty study day. **Travis Scott** is from the USA, and a graduate of Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis. Travis and his family are here in New Zealand at the invitation of the Grace Presbyterian Church to plant a new church (City Presbyterian Church) in Auckland's inner city. We are delighted to have the services of Travis at the College, where he is currently teaching in the area Spiritual Development and New Religious Movements. **Stuart Johnson** is from Australia, and has moved this year, with his family, to Dunedin. There Stuart is teaching part-time at Otago University, and is heading up our training centre in Dunedin where, next year, he will be teaching Biblical Theology. **Trevor Webb** is an elder in the Grace Presbyterian Church, Christ-



Systematics Class 2009

church. For many years Trevor has had a passionate interest in the redemptive story of the Bible and we are delighted that he will be available to teach Biblical Theology in Christchurch next year.

Training Centres

This year we have offered courses at Manukau, Auckland's North Shore, Gisborne, Christchurch, and Wyndham. These training centres are based in local churches with the support and encouragement of the local church leadership. The courses taught fit with the teaching and educational objectives of the local church, and serve to complement the development and maturing of God's people in works of service.

Visitors

This year the College site at Manukau has hosted two distinguished visitors. **Rev. Frank van Dalen**, a New Zealander, who grew up just down



Frank van Dalen (centre) with Russell Cross and Dirk van Garderen

the road from the College, and is presently the Director of the missions arm of the Associate Presbyterian Church of America, in Greenville, South Carolina. For many years Frank and his family were missionaries in Pakistan. At GTC he lectured on Christian outreach to Islam.

Our second visitor, **Dr Zack Eswine**, is a Presbyterian pastor from St Louis, USA, and the author of two books on preaching. On his visit to the College Dr Eswine talked to us about the humanness of the preacher and the Christ-centeredness of his message.

Church Based Seminars

The Principal, Peter Reynolds, has developed three weekend seminars to be offered to churches. They include a marriage seminar, one on caring for one another in the body of Christ, and a third on how to understand the whole Bible as speaking of Jesus Christ. The marriage seminar he teaches with the help of his wife Margaret. While these seminars have mainly been presented in the Auckland area, he is available to travel to your church for a weekend seminar of teaching and preaching.

Graduation

The College graduation service will be held this year on December 18, at the Covenant Presbyterian Church, (75 Rogers Road, Manurewa) beginning with a shared meal at 6 pm. We would be delighted to see you there to encourage our students as they give glory to God for their academic successes.



Zack Eswine and his children

Items for Praise and Prayer



We are so thankful to the Lord for

- ◆ the increase of students that he has entrusted us with
- ◆ the generosity of Dr Oxner in the many books he has set to our library
- ◆ the gift of books from the Reformers Bookshop in Sydney to the GTC training centre in Dunedin
- ◆ our new faculty members, Travis Scott (Manurewa), Geoff MacPherson (Gisborne), Trevor Webb (Christchurch) and Stuart Johnson (Dunedin)

Please pray for

- ◆ all our faculty members as they prepare their courses for 2010
- ◆ the men and women across the country who are considering GTC courses for 2010
- ◆ that new GTC training centers will be established throughout New Zealand
- ◆ that the growing GTC work in Dunedin will find a place in which to provide library, teaching and study facilities

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

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