



# RTC Monthly

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## College News

- Barkley Hall, the College's on-site residence, seems to be thriving. With over 40 students it is pretty much running to capacity. Students come from various cultural backgrounds. It is particularly encouraging to have some regular Bible study groups operating, led by RTC students.
- The College has just purchased a video camera which at this stage is chiefly being used in the preaching class. It's often not a very comfortable exercise having to watch yourself preach, but it is a good way of seeing what needs to be worked on!

## Listen to Sermons

It is very easy these days for preachers – as well as many others - to hear the best of preaching via the internet. For a preacher who is always giving out it can be tremendously helpful to hear good preaching that feeds the soul. It also helps us think about our own preaching ministry as we have opportunity to learn from others. Sermons from people like John Piper, Tim Keller, Rob Bell, Don Carson, Dominic Steele and a host of others have been a help to many. A little "googling" will take you a long way.

One large source of free sermons from the Reformed and Evangelical corner can be found at [www.sermonaudio.com](http://www.sermonaudio.com) Alastair McEwen commends some recent sermons posted on that site by Andrew Quigley on the subject of Hell. There is also a web site at [www.reformedvoice.com](http://www.reformedvoice.com) which is the RPCNA site (a sub-set of sermonaudio). Happy browsing and listening!

## Faculty News

- Dr Stephen Voorwinde presented the Second Annual Edersheim lecture in Melbourne, put on by Christian Witness To Israel and held at Ridley College. He spoke on the topic, "How Jewish is *Israel* in the New Testament?" Steve will be repeating the lecture for us here at College this week.
- Murray Capill heads to Christchurch this weekend for a brief time of ministry with the Christchurch Reformed Church.

## Ministry Spot...

(by Dr. Murray Capill)

In Reformed Church practice, the seriousness with which we take the preaching of God's Word has meant the pulpit has been carefully guarded. People are not readily asked to preach. We have not tended to go in for much "lay preaching". We believe good preaching requires considerable knowledge of God's Word and biblical truth, as well as much skill, and we prefer preachers to be fully trained before being "let loose"

on a congregation. Our tradition has preferred to get elders to read a minister's sermon rather than have them try to write their own.

This guarding of the pulpit safeguards truth, but unfortunately it does little to help discover and cultivate the gifts of new preachers. In fact in this model men may attend theological College for a couple of years before they really get a chance to test whether they actually have preaching gifts. But that is far too late. Much earlier in the piece the local church needs to be cultivating and testing people's gifting for public preaching and teaching.

How can that be done while still guarding the pulpit?

The answer, perhaps, is found in developing a number of stages along which a person may progress in the local church, leading up to preaching.

First, for example, some teenage guys may be asked to take Scripture readings in the church. They should be given some guidance and some feedback so that they learn to read well. As they evidence gifts, some may also be asked to lead Bible studies in a home group or youth group. Again, they should be given some training so they learn how to study a passage and put together a Bible study, how to ask questions and lead a discussion. Another step may be to invite them to lead a devotion in a retirement village, or present a five minute Bible talk at a church camp. Further down the track they may be asked to lead a brief prayer in the worship service. After that they could be asked to lead a section of the worship service – maybe the time of confession and assurance of God's grace. As gifts and maturity develop they may lead in congregational prayer. All the way through they are being mentored – someone is alongside them giving them help in preparation, teaching them basic skills, and giving them feedback.

A young (or not so young) man who shows growing competence in this range of public speaking and Word ministry situations should have his gifts developed further. He should be encouraged to read some basic books on preaching. He should be urged to listen to the best preachers that can be heard (particularly on the net). He should be guided through the process of putting a sermon together. Just the exercise of studying a passage in detail, thinking about its central message and its main applications, and structuring a message, will help him grow in leaps and bounds. When he's done that a few times he may be invited to preach one of his messages.

In some churches a small group of such men has been put together for group interaction. With their pastor they develop basic preaching skills and receive feedback and encouragement.

Such an approach continues to take biblical preaching seriously. The pulpit is not opened up to all-comers. But it also allows gifts to be identified and developed. It recognizes that in the body of Christ it is probably not only the minister who is able to edify others. It allows for the development of a team approach to the ministry of the Word. And it can pave the way for the most gifted to be challenged to think about training for a full time preaching ministry.