

RTC Monthly

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College News

- This week the College teaching year has begun with Dr Steve Voorwinde teaching a two week intensive Greek course. The heat will be now on the students instead of on us as we sweltered through 43 – 45 degree days last week. Thankfully several rooms and offices now have air-conditioning, but only one classroom does. Needless to say Steve is using that room this week!
- We anticipate several new students at the RTC this year. Please pray that in these final couple of weeks before regular lectures begin we receive some more enrolments. Orientation Day is on 16 February with regular lectures beginning the next day.
- Please remember in prayer the appointment a new faculty member for next year, when Dr Henk de Waard will step down from his current teaching responsibilities. Applications for the position have just closed and the Board's Search Committee is now processing the applications. We hope that the Board will be able interview a lead candidate or two at its meeting in April. We earnestly desire that the Lord would lead us to a man who will be an excellent teacher and who will strengthen our ability to inspire and train people for mission, outreach, evangelism and church planting.

Faculty News

- Dr Bill Berends is back from his long service leave, having travelled around Australia with his wife Henny.
- Dr Henk de Waard makes another trip to Indonesia later this week. He will spend a long weekend in Jakarta where he will teach and preach in the 'Reformation Church'. He will then go on to Kalimantan where this Reformation Church has a mission outreach as well as social involvement through schools and basic medical aid. He will speak at a retreat for Christian teachers. From Kalimantan he will fly to Sumba where the Christian Church of Sumba will hold its Synod. Apart from attending Synod, he will also visit and speak at a Bible school for evangelists which has been supported by the Geelong CRC.
- In mid-February Dr Murray Capill will be in Sydney for a weekend of ministry. After attending an Australian College of Theology meeting he will be speaking to the youth at Sutherland CRC and leading leading a session on small groups, then preaching at Dee Why CRC Sunday morning. Meanwhile, faculty members are again arranging inter-state trips for the year so as to help promote the College and spend time with supporters around Australia and New Zealand.

- Herman Bavinck's article "The Problem of War" was originally published in 1914, translated into English by Stephen Voorwinde and published in the *Banner of Truth* magazine (July-Aug 1977) pp. 46-53. It has now been reissued by permission of the publisher, retypeset, and presented on-line as a downloadable PDF. Click on [hermanbavinck.org article archive](http://hermanbavinck.org/article_archive) to download.

Book Corner...

(by Dr Stephen Voorwinde)

G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (eds.), *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. 1239pp.

Whenever the diligent Bible reader stumbles across an Old Testament quotation in the New, it always helps to look up the Old Testament reference. An acquaintance with the original Old Testament context will often add an important dimension to the New Testament passage. It may add depth to an action of Jesus or give a deeper appreciation for an aspect of apostolic teaching. Comparing Scripture with Scripture is seldom as exciting as when the New Testament quotes the Old.

This exercise, however, can at times be quite frustrating. Sometimes we fail to see an obvious logical connection between the quote and its source. At other times the New Testament writer seems to be twisting a text or taking it out of context. What do you do at times like this? Comparing the Greek and Hebrew texts can be quite time consuming. Commentaries don't always help. Even the better ones can be a bit thin on the ground when it comes to discussing a difficult quotation. That's where this specialized commentary by Beale and Carson and their associates meets a genuine need. This landmark publication does not avoid the hard questions, but seeks satisfying solutions to all the quotation problems in the New Testament. To benefit from this mammoth effort the reader will need at least to know Greek. This work has been called "a commentary like no other." The diligent preacher will make wise use of it. It will add a richness and depth to his preaching that may come in no other way. All in all, this is a valuable resource and highly recommended.

Ministry Spot...

(by Dr Murray Capill)

During my years in ministry I have seen, every year or so, the rise of a new resource, strategy or approach to Christian ministry that has promised great fruit. I think, for example, of the Toronto “blessing”, the Jesus film, the prayer of Jabez, *The Passion of the Christ*, the Alpha course, 40 Days of Purpose, *Christianity Explained*, *Introducing God*, and so on. I also think of entire movements, like the seeker-service movement, or the house church movement, or the charismatic movement.

Sometimes the new strategy is announced with such fanfare that you are made to think that if you do not use this resource or adopt this approach, your ministry will be by-passed by the incredible things God is about to do. You will miss one of the greatest opportunities in the last 2000 years to advance the gospel and build the church.

But whether the claims are large or modest, every new resource and movement requires thorough evaluation. Each requires theological reflection and prayerful, careful assessment. Just because its the latest doesn't mean it's the greatest. Just because nearly everyone is using it doesn't mean it's right. In fact, sometimes only time reveals that all is not quite right. It is only in recent years, for example, that the seeker-service movement has been critiqued by its own advocates. Some notable seeker-service churches have acknowledged that despite the huge numbers they have drawn, they have not done so well in making disciples of those who were part of the movement.

Church leaders will continue to face new programs, courses, evangelistic tools, resources and movements. And you will have to pick and choose. Like me, you will probably use some of these resources and find them very helpful, but you may also find yourself standing to the side as another movement sweeps through town. That generally makes you feel like a very uncool pastor!

But gospel ministry is not about being cool. Church is not about being trendy. And the gospel is not about a particular resource or program that will “do it” for you and your church. Sure, programs, resources and new models can be helpful and stimulating. We may learn new things, garner fresh ideas, gain helpful tools. But no tool, resource or movement should be too quick to claim too much for itself.

The fact is, the advance of the gospel is not dependent on the latest way of praying, or presenting the gospel, or reaching people. It is dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit as people hear the life-changing message of Christ and him crucified, revealed fully and completely in the Bible, ministered by weak vessels, to people who would find it all foolishness if it were not for God at work within them. Even if you missed every latest trend and resource blasting through the evangelical world but remained steadfast in prayer, active in proclaiming the gospel in culturally relevant ways, and faithful in building the church as a loving, serving, mission-minded, Bible-saturated community, it will be well with your church's soul.

We need to keep our eyes much more on Christ and the power of God's Spirit than on the latest way of “doing” church or outreach.