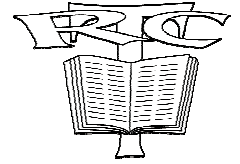


RTC Monthly

No. 31 – 24 March 2009



College News

- Our third Fan the Flame conference was a huge blessing. With 40 people attending from churches in New Zealand, NSW, ACT and Victoria, we again saw that the Lord is stirring in the hearts of many people to think about how they can better serve the Lord and advance the work of his Church and Kingdom. Feedback was extremely positive and it seems the word will continue to spread that this is a key event for people thinking about how to serve the Lord.
- We are delighted to have our largest ever number of evening students. On Monday evenings Alastair McEwen is teaching an overview of the Bible at Moolap Baptist Church, with about 30 attending, and on Tuesday evenings Murray Capill and Henk de Waard are teaching courses on Pastoral Care and the Reformation, with about 55 attending. So 85 all up is great. We are thankful to have this means of helping strengthen Christians and local churches in Geelong.
- The Board's Faculty Search Committee has processed a number of applications for the position of Lecturer in Missions, that we hope to fill from the beginning of next year. Unfortunately, despite some good applications, the Committee did not feel that we have yet found the right person for this position. Please pray that the Lord would lead us to someone who is well-equipped for this strategic role.

Spiritual Formation

In sharpening our focus on spiritual formation at the RTC (see the *Ministry Spot* article below) we have identified four areas of formation that we want students to focus on over a two year period at College. These four areas arise from the pastoral epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus), and are essential to the heart and soul of anyone who is engaged in ministry.

1. Gospel soundness - that is, a heart commitment to and experience of the message of the gospel, and the ability to clearly and substantially articulate biblical truth, advance the gospel and oppose error
2. Personal discipline – that is, development of the physical and spiritual disciplines that help us build healthy lives marked by a strong relationship with God, right priorities, and a commitment to godliness
3. Relational health – that is, the kind of relationships with family, friends, peers, the church and non-Christians, that make the gospel attractive to others and indicate mature self-awareness and relational skill
4. Ministry engagement – that is, awareness of the gifts God has given us, and a commitment to use and develop those gifts as we serve him in gospel work with a servant heart

These four themes will be the focus of our small groups. We want to dwell on each theme biblically and prayerfully, so that these four things increasingly become part of our spiritual DNA.

Faculty News

- Dr Henk de Waard has just been in Adelaide for a weekend, and will be in Christchurch early April to conduct some seminars on 'Short-term Mission'. This is particularly geared towards young people who are considering involvement in mission and perhaps going on a short-term missions trip. He will also be preaching there.
- Dr Steve Voorwinde also heads to New Zealand in April to speak at the Hamilton Easter Convention. He will speak on the theme "How Well Do You Know Jesus? Insights from His Emotions in the Gospels." The Convention will be held at the Hamilton Reformed Church on Good Friday and Easter Saturday. He will also be preaching on Easter Sunday.
- Dr Murray Capill was the guest speaker at the Bible College of Victoria Graduation Ceremony a couple of weeks ago. He has also just been up in Brisbane for some preaching engagements.

Ministry Spot...

(by Dr. Murray Capill)

Forty-six years ago, Martin Luther King Jr had a dream – the dream of a radically changed society in the USA. Many of his words have become almost immortal. It was a great dream, and the articulation of it was a catalyst for change. With the inauguration of the USA's first black President earlier this year, his dream has become reality to a considerable degree, though there is still a long way to go for it to be fully realised.

It's a reminder that there can be real benefit in dreaming a bit, and sketching a picture of what might be. We do well from time to time to outline our dreams for the work of God in our communities, our churches and our lives. It is that final area – the work of God in our lives – that I have been dreaming about recently. What might it look like if a great spiritual work was advanced in the spiritual lives of people who studied at the RTC? At the beginning of the academic year I outlined a dream. I'll sketch it here not only so you know what we are praying and working for at College, but so you might also think about what your dream is in terms of spiritual vitality in your church. If we have no dreams, no aspirations, no desires for greater spiritual vitality there's a good chance we will never see much growth in spiritual life. The old saying is often true: if you aim at nothing, you hit it every time.

So... I dream of the RTC being a place where every person who comes to study here gains not only a great knowledge of biblical and doctrinal truth, but also an awe-inspiring sense of the greatness and glory of God - a sense of God that causes them to love and admire Him with the very core of their being. I dream of their every desire, motive, longing, activity, thought and action being conditioned by their love and admiration of Him.

I dream of this place being a place of worship, praise and adoration; a place of prayer; a place where men and women come to love Jesus Christ in a way they never previously did and of them increasingly counting all things as loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus.

I dream of the gospel of Christ being so deeply etched on their hearts that they will never be able to keep quiet about it again. It will be the driving force of their lives. And so consequently, I dream of this being a place where many missionaries are formed, where evangelists and church-planters are raised up, and where people are inspired to make a difference in every part of society because Jesus Christ is Lord.

I dream of close and healthy spiritual relationships being formed here between students and staff – the kind of rich relationships that shape how they think about relationships for the rest of their lives.

I dream of RTC men and women cultivating habits of personal godliness and piety that are not mere duties but

are the desires of their hearts - habits that will last a lifetime.

I dream of this being a place where people are shaped into ministers – that is servants – and not servants of themselves, or even of others, but servants of Jesus Christ, gladly using their gifts, their time, their money for him, wherever he takes them.

I have a dream of these radical gospel lives of RTC students being so different from the norm that the people they live with – Christians and non-Christians alike – wonder what on earth has happened to them!

It is, of course, only a dream. I think we have a long, long way to go to make it reality, and I know there is no perfection this side of glory. But I remember the prayer of the young Scottish preacher, Robert Murray M'Cheyne: "Lord make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be." And I remember the emphasis of the early Princeton theologians on the two things necessary for the making of a minister: learning and piety; knowledge and godliness; doctrine and life. In the words we use today, academic formation and spiritual formation.

Both dimensions are essential – not only in the formation of people for ministry at a theological college, but in the formation of all our people for serving the Lord in local churches. If we can impart to people a deep knowledge and love of God's Word and biblical truth, and at the same time help them develop deep inner lives of true godliness that are shaped by the gospel, we will raise an army of great gospel warriors.