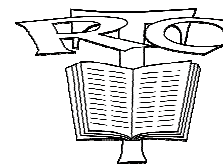


RTC Monthly

No. 33 – 29 June 2009



College News

- The first semester is now over with students having completed exams. The lecturers are now finalising their marking and sending sample material off to our accreditation body, the Australian College of Theology. We are glad to have several new students enrolling for next semester which begins 13 July.
- The College will be hosting part of the Victorian Target 21 Conference at the end of this month, with several lecturers contributing to the program.
- The RTC is also joining with MTS in co-hosting a one-day ministry training event. On 23 July Dr Barry Webb, a lecturer at Moore Theological College in Sydney and author of several OT commentaries, will be the keynote speaker. He'll preach from Zechariah and talk about how to approach ministry from this often forgotten Old Testament prophet.

Preaching Workshop

The RTC's 8th annual preaching workshop will be held at the end of September. We continue the tradition of tackling aspects of preaching and books of the Bible that are not entirely straight-forward, so as to strengthen and help preachers in their work. This year the theme is "Preaching the 7th century B.C. Prophets". We'll be looking at the messages of Jeremiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah. Rev. Alastair McEwen will have a large role to play this year, along with our guest speaker, Rev Martin Pakula, lecturer in Old Testament at the Bible College of Victoria.

In past years we've found that the workshop has not only been good for preachers, but has also been enjoyed by many others as well: elders, those aspiring to ministry, and interested church members who just want to get to know God's Word better. For enrolment information contact the RTC Office.

Distance Ed

July 13th is the starting date for the **Christian Worldview** unit by distance education. This is an excellent introduction for academic or practical studies in any field. If you are a businessman, politician, home executive or engineer, here is where you can find some guidance on doing your

work in a Christian manner. If you are a student and your present studies allow for an elective this is the opportunity for some Christian input. Check it out at: www.refstudy.org, or follow the link on the RTC website.

Book Corner

(a recommendation from Dr Henk de Waard)

Ancient Christian Devotional: A year of Weekly Readings (edited by Cindy Crosby, IVP Books, 2007) is another aid for devotional life. There are 52 weeks of readings, following the liturgical year. Each week has a theme, readings from Old and New Testaments, reflections on these readings from the Church Fathers (at time with novel interpretations) and prayers which also draw on ancient sources. These devotionals not only connect us with Scripture but also with our spiritual roots as expressed by the Church Fathers. Well worth considering.

Faculty News

- Henk de Waard is now back from Indonesia, Murray Capill is back from New Zealand, and Steve Voorwinde is back from NSW. We value the opportunities we've had for ministry in other places. The next few weeks will be spent preparing for the second semester. Murray will also be attending a conference of the South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges being held in Adelaide during the first week of July.
- A few weeks ago the faculty had a one day in-service training event, spending time reflecting on trends in ministry, praying and enjoying the input of a Presbyterian Church planter in Melbourne, Rev. Peter Owen. Peter's main theme was striking – church planting, in fact any ministry, is hard work and full of suffering. And the suffering doesn't come from outside the church. It comes from within – from the messy and often ungodly lives of church people. He said Colleges need to prepare people for the realities of ministry – especially the reality of suffering!

Ministry Spot...

(by Dr Murray Capill)

A little while ago there appeared on my desk a brief paper entitled, "How to waste your theological education". I don't know where it came from and so it is not possible for me to give due credit. Many of the 45 brief points apply specifically to a person's time at a theological college, but quite a few are of more general relevance to people in ministry positions and church leadership. I've selected a few, combined a few and added one or two interpolations for people in ministry. I suspect there's something here for everyone. So here's **how to waste your theological education**:

1. Nurture an attitude of superiority, competition and condescension toward fellow seminary students [or ministry colleagues]. Secretly speak ill of them with friends and with your spouse.
2. Neglect personal worship, Bible reading and prayer. Love books, theology and ministry more than the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Set aside fellowship and accountability with fellow brothers in Christ. Instead, fill your life with questionable movies, television, internet and music.
4. Protect yourself from real fellowship by only talking about theology and never about your personal spiritual issues, sin and struggles.
5. Practice misquoting and misrepresenting positions and ideas you don't agree with. Be lazy and don't attempt to understand opposing views; instead, nurse your prejudices and exalt your opinions by superficial reading and listening.
6. Let your study of divine things become dull, boring, lifeless and mundane.
7. Save major papers [and sermon preparation] for the last possible moment so that you can ensure that you don't really learn anything by writing them.
8. Don't waste your time forming friendships with your professors [or colleagues] and those older and wiser than you.
9. Spend more time blogging than studying.
10. Gain knowledge in order to merely teach others. Don't expend the effort it takes to deal with your own heart.
11. Set your hopes on an easy, cushy pastorate for when you graduate [or take your next call]. Determine now not to obey God when he calls you to serve in a difficult church.
12. Don't serve the poor, visit the sick or care for widows and orphans – save that for the uneducated, non-seminary trained, lay Christians.
13. Resent behind-the-scenes, unrecognized service. Only serve in areas where you are sure you will receive praise and accolades.
14. Don't *really* try to learn [or use] the languages – let Bible Works do all the work for you.