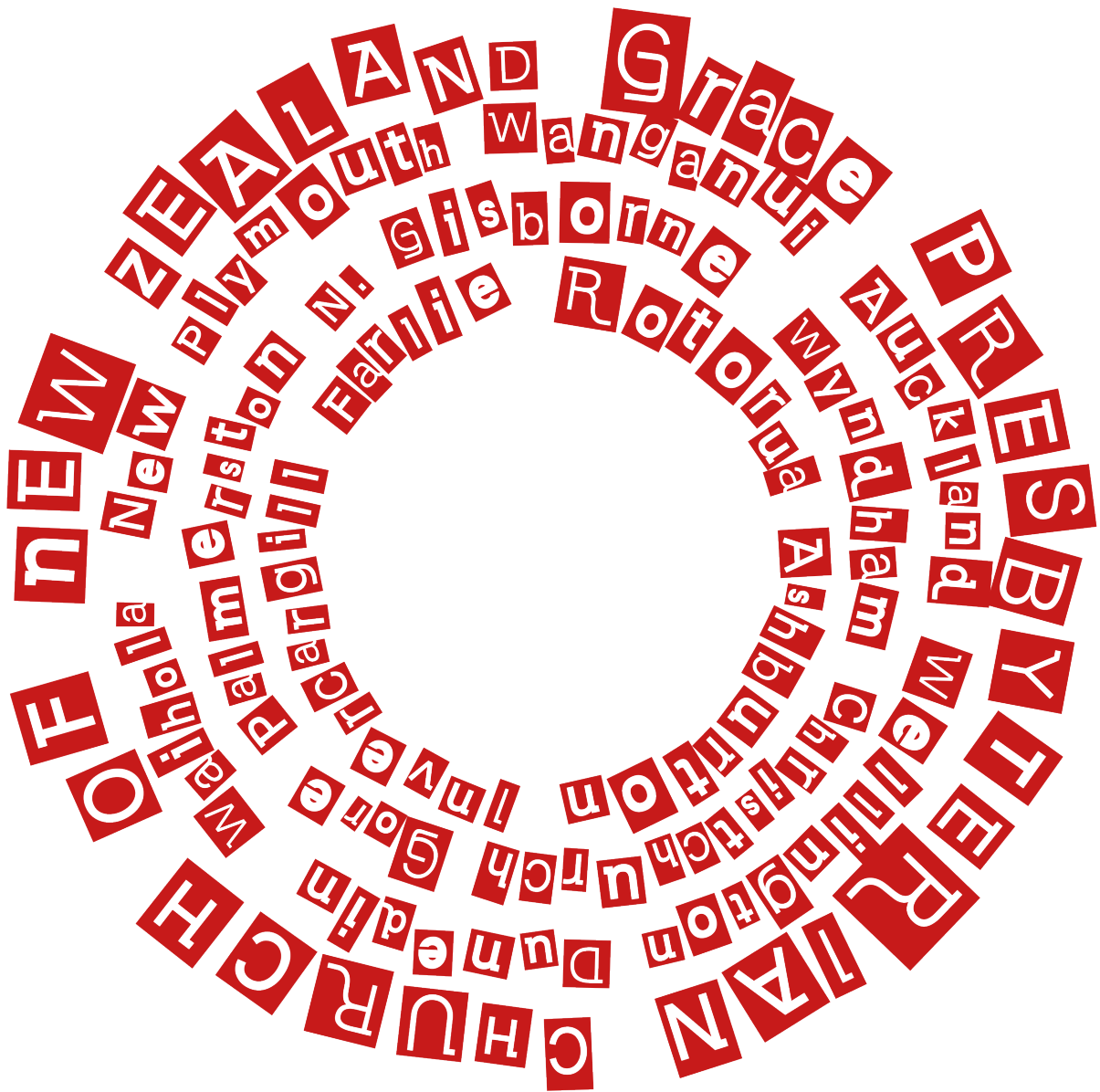


Growing — in — *Grace*



Spring Issue, 2015

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Nick Allen

Andrew
Macpherson

Editorial

Andrew Macpherson

Dear Reader, welcome to this spring 2015 edition of Growing in Grace.

I note in my opening words to the last issue of Growing in Grace (GIG) I apologised for its lateness, and, suggested that we might publish two editions in 2015. Unfortunately, I have been unable to produce 2 editions in 2015, so, I feel it is proper to open with another apology!

My own failings (which are many) remind me just how much our fallen nature gets in the way of the progress and enjoyment of our lives. Good intentions are neglected, or, often slip away into failure. As a result, disappointment and sorrow is often our experience.

This has been brought home to me this year as I have been close to Grace Presbyterian New Zealand Churches (GPCNZ) that have experienced failure, disappointment, sometimes resulting in deep pain. Some individuals in our GPCNZ congregations have also experienced personal loss and deep disappointment resulting in grief and real pain. We should not be surprised by troubles, for they seem to be a constant experience of God's people. It is times like these that we are cast our hope on to the riches of God's saving grace. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.* (Psalm 34:19)

A time of failure is when we learn to appreciate and treasure being a 'family' church. That is, we are scattered around New Zealand, yet, we are able to come together once a year, and share our joys and successes, and also our struggle and pain. This was evidenced at the 2015 General Assembly when leaders were able to share in some detail the life of their own congregations, and most importantly be heard by others, and then helped, and encouraged in word and prayer. What a blessing that time of 'reporting' was to us all!

For the first time at a General Assembly, we had leaders within the GPCNZ congregations as the keynote speakers. The subject was "Urgent Need for

Leadership in the church". We have included these talks in written form in this edition of GIG. We hope you will be encouraged, and maybe challenged as you read. Pastor Andrew Young writes about the vital need of church leadership. Elder Trevor Webb reminds us of the qualities required for eldership. Elder Peter van Rij writes passionately about the challenges facing a modern church, and finally, Pastor Mark Smith urges us to action concerning training and deploying leaders into ministry in the church. It is a privilege to hear the thoughtful ideas of these respected men.

Another aspect of this year's assembly was the introduction of panel discussions. At the conclusion of each talk, the speaker would be joined by two other members of assembly. This impromptu panel would help clarify points made in the talk, and take questions from commissioners. This model proved to be both stimulating and edifying. Discussion was free flowing and always conducted in a gracious spirit.

On the first day of General Assembly, some of the 'women of Grace' met for a seminar. This seminar proved to be of real benefit to those who attended. A summary of this seminar is also included in this edition. It is hoped that the ministry of Grace women, ministering to women, will develop and grow for the blessing of many women within GPCNZ. On a sadder note, we grieve over the loss of one of our senior sisters in Christ – Nola Young – who recently went to be with the Lord. Our sincere love and encouragement go to Andrew and the family.

Finally, we conclude GIG with the usual section of Church News. This section is for all to read about significant events that have been celebrated in churches, and opportunities for ministry. If there is one way you could help GIG, it might be recording and sending information to GIG. That would be most appreciated!

Finally I wish every reader a blessed Christmas time and a peace-filled New Year. May God's grace fill you and encourage you in all things.



Leadership

An Urgent Need

The matter of leadership is a growing concern in the Grace Churches of New Zealand. The General Assembly addressed the issue in a series of talks. These seminar presentations are summarised below.

Spiritual Leadership in the Life of the Church

Andrew Young, Pastor-Elder, Redeemer Presbyterian Church

Whenever I think of the need for leadership in the church today, an Old Testament incident springs readily to mind – Moses’ plea to God to provide a successor to lead Israel after he dies. Told of his approaching death, Moses turned to the LORD and said,

“Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.” (Numbers 27:16, 17)

Any one of the above factors is reason enough to have spiritual leaders in the church today. Together, they make that an urgent and imperative requirement.

Three concerns appear to drive Moses’ request: the identity of God’s people, the need of God’s people, and the tendency of God’s people. It is these same things that make spiritual leadership a pressing need for the church in all ages – ours especially.

1. The Identity of God’s People

Moses refers to the people he has led through the wilderness as “the congregation of the Lord.” The term “congregation” is equivalent to the New Testament term “synagogue,” and refers to a gathering or assembly of people. Here it refers to the gathering of “the Lord’s people.”

This expression has its roots in Israel’s election to be God’s “treasured possession” (Ex. 19:5, 6; Deut. 7:6). As such, they were set apart from the nations to be “holy to the Lord” (Lev. 20:26), the object of his special, loving covenant care. They were to stand before the world as God’s “glory-bearers.” His name and honour was tied up with them.

The same is true today. The church is Jesus’ blood-bought treasured possession (Titus 2:14). It is his body, the household of his Father, the temple of the Holy Spirit. His honour is inseparably connected with it, and calls for it to be well led.

3. The Need of God’s People

Moses speaks of the congregation needing a man to “go out... and come in before them... to lead them out and bring them in.” He has the image of an Eastern shepherd in mind, one who leads his flock out to pasture and water, guards it against wild animals, and brings it home again. That’s what Israel needed. The people individually weren’t able to know the mind of God; they needed someone to show them the way.

The same need exists in the church today. Not all believers are equally gifted in discerning the mind of the Lord in his Word and workings; not all are equally able to lead. They need men who can “go out and come in” before them, men filled with the Spirit of Christ who know the Word of Christ.

3. The Tendency of God’s People

Moses saw a third need for a leader to replace him in the tendency of God’s people to stray. Left to themselves, they would become just like sheep “without a shepherd.” He knew only too well, both from his experience as a shepherd and as the leader of Israel for forty years, what that meant.

No less today than then, God’s people are prone to wander. The desires of the heart, the temptations of the world, and the snares of Satan, all constantly pluck at and entice Christians to stray from the way of their Master. They need courageous, loving, watchful shepherds to guide, heal and restore them.

Conclusion

Any one of the above factors is reason enough to have spiritual leaders in the church today. Together, they make that an urgent and imperative requirement.

The Mission of Elders

Trevor Webb, Elder, Grace Presbyterian Christchurch

The primary text for elder's ministry is Acts 20:28 (shepherding the flock) and their Magna Carta is Matthew 28:20 (outreach and discipleship).

1. Provide a vision of building the Kingdom of God

The elders are to be leaders in the church. They are to generate and maintain a vision of the glory of our calling as children of God. 'God's people struggle as aliens in a hostile world and without good leaders are subject to being led astray' (McNair). We need elders who see the big picture and are not bogged down in the detail. The people of God need to be continually refreshed in this vision of the work of the Kingdom– to know the privilege we have to serve in God's kingdom (Mark 6:34, Col. 3:1-2).

Elders also need to be managers who help the saints to see the path that leads to the goal, to see how the vision is fulfilled through bite-sized goals. People need to feel that the church is making progress and need to see how they can contribute to the ministry of the gospel.

We see the value of the collegiate wisdom of elders in the planning and organisation of the mission of the church. It is important that all contribute to discussion/decision making. Contribution to Session, Presbytery, GA is largely devoted to planning and it is a very important component of the elder's calling but not the most important work.

2. Support of pastor

Support for the pastor is an essential part of an elder's calling. Pastoral leadership is one of the most stressful and lonely of all callings. Even Paul craved fellowship of the saints and valued all support in prayer and practical aid. Very important that our pastors know that we value them and support them (Phil: 4:10; Rom. 15:30). Guard the pastor and his family life – he needs a haven from stress and he needs holidays. One or more of the elders needs to touch base personally with the pastor and his wife once a year.

The elders have prime responsibility in recommending a pastor to the congregation. It is vital that they get to know the man as a 'man of God', a husband, a friend, a biblical scholar, as well as their ability to teach and lead, before they recommend him. There will always be deficiencies in his ministry – the elders need to be willing and able to augment these.

3. Guarding the flock

If you are not having problems in your congregation, they are coming (Acts 20:29-31).

In guarding the flock we need to be fathers for the

Elders also need to be managers who help the saints to see the path that leads to the goal, to see how the vision is fulfilled through bite-sized goals.

good of the children (1Thes 2:11, Gal. 1:11). Guarding will only be done well with tears (Acts 20:31).

4. Shepherd families and individuals

Here we experience the greatest blessings and the greatest griefs (Heb. 13:17, Titus 1:9). An elder must be prepared for the long haul of pastoral care. Patience and love – bearing with the weak (Acts 20:17-20). It is in the ministry as shepherds that an elder gains great respect and trust from the people of God. This is a ministry of the word – need to know how to apply the word to individual circumstances (Acts 20:32).

Leadership can be stressful – we are called to make difficult decisions. It is essential that we learn to do our best and leave results to the Lord.

5. Equip members for works of ministry

For church members to believe that they indeed are the church, they must be involved in making some meaningful decisions about the life of the church. There is a need for delegation of decisions and functions. The Old Testament congregation was led by leaders of tens up to leaders of thousands. The

elders may find it easier to do everything themselves, but this is not good for the ultimate strength and life of the church (Eph. 4:16). Delegation of responsibility/authority is best done through committees (education, youth, worship, deaconal, home groups, evangelism). By delegating responsibility, we are developing leadership within the congregation.

The elders should provide clear parameters for the committee to function in a manner that meets the doctrine/govt principles/ church vision/God's glory and where possible to provide practical guidelines – personnel policies, accounting, budget, communication, evaluation. This may require training and encouragement of members in ministry (especially the chairman).

▼ *BELOW: General Assembly speakers and seminar*



Particular Challenges of being in Leadership

Peter van Rij, Elder Grace Presbyterian Christchurch

It was in or about 1978 when I was asked to become a deacon, and after that an elder. In those days we were called the OPC – Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The name described the reason for starting up a new church. We were to be a true church faithful to orthodox teaching.

We were Baby Boomers. Life was predictable for us. Get a free education, get married, have children, pay off the mortgage, retire with superannuation. We could put up fences around our church and our families to protect them and that's what we did.

In the 80's the culture we knew began to change rapidly. Communications began to flatten our fences, starting with TV, the internet, cell phones and now social media. Our children- Gen Y (1980-2000) obtained unfiltered visibility of the world. They saw Politicians and leaders lose their credibility (This included with equal prominence church leaders); Parents divorced, redefining relationships and sexuality and populism replaced principle.

Today many in the community have become disillusioned and cynical about truth claims and view the Church as judgemental.

In that context there are amongst others 5 challenges for church leadership.

First Challenge: Credibility.

Modern culture rejects absolute truth. It is suspicious of facts and cynical of authorities who they blame for the failures of the world, political, economic and ecological. With pluralism and inclusivism, our culture is deeply cynical of anyone who says there is only one way.

As elders we believe in absolute truth, in one way, right and wrong and in sheep and goats. These truths

are deeply offensive to the inclusive modern person. It is very hard to engage a person who challenges you with questions like "How do you know you are right?" or "How can you prove the Bible is true?"

2 Corinthians 4 gives us confidence in a culture of belief in unbelief. "We do not lose heart. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ... But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us... For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh".

Cynicism is a belief in unbelief. It looks through everything and sees nothing. We cannot argue a person into the kingdom of heaven. Only the glory of Christ can shine through. That glory is acquired through the suffering of Christ in our lives. The dying of our flesh.

Yet the world craves for authenticity – reality TV. The challenge for us today is to be authentic. Not our authenticity but the authenticity of Jesus shining through our lives. People have to be able to see past our inconsistencies, our inability to answer the hard questions completely, to our love for Jesus and His love in us.

To be credible we have to be relevant.

Second Challenge Be Relevant.

We have to be relevant, not mysterious, not otherworldly, not puritans, not traditional and not doctrinaire. To be clear on issues.

Martin Luther said "If I profess, with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition, every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the

*“For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified”
1 Cor 2:2*

world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christianity.”

But we need to discern what the real issues are and to do that we need to listen

Third Challenge: Learning To Listen – Discernment

The influence of orthodoxy generated within us a fear of the We developed a fear of anything that wasn't traditional or orthodox. We lost the ability to listen to others as we fought for orthodoxy.

If we don't listen well, we talk past the person and fail to communicate. We leave with them a sense that we don't understand or don't want to understand. You don't have to agree with the person to hear what he thinks. When people know that you are listening,

When we look back in another 20 years' time, what will we stand for? Will it be Presbyterianism, or something very different. Hopefully more than that.

they are prepared to listen to you. Listening takes time but saves time.

Imagine how much better we could serve our congregations if we listened better to their real issues.

Fourth - Communication – Edification

In the early days of our Church we started off by listening to long sermons on tape. They were boring and we feared falling to sleep because that would be unspiritual.

People including children had to learn to listen. We thought it was good for them. But instead we trained our children to turn off, mentally and spiritually.

The fact is that more so now than back then, we live in a world of ten second sound bites and limited attention spans. We should ask ourselves how can we continuously improve communication? Not just in teaching but in worship, church bulletin, web page and all aspects.

Fifth “Opportunity” Law & Grace: Mercy & Truth Have Kissed Each Other

Judgementalism: A Judgemental person alienates and offends people more than we realise. Being judgemental poisons a relationship. I don't think that judgementalism is or was a big issue in the Grace churches, but even a little bit of judgementalism does a lot of damage and drives seekers away.

In the early days of the OPC we were passionate to be doctrinally right. We had a high view of the scriptures and faithful teaching. This was driven by a respect for the teaching and experience of the Puritans. But we lived in fear of being incorrect and “unspiritual”. Consequently it was a sense of duty which was our passion and culture of fellowship. While that appealed to us, it drove others away. We distanced ourselves from the world. Isolation wasn't what we wanted, but it was what happened. The message we left to our children was, “to be right was right”. Our children saw a relationship with truth and rightness and we made it hard for them to see the all important relationship with Jesus.

Today we find it easy to judge the past for legalism and celebrate “Grace” but has the pendulum swung too far? Are we uncomfortable with teaching law because we may offend seekers? Are we scared of teaching right from wrong? If we neglect to teach law we will lose the gospel because law was given to drive us to Christ. We will have a generation which will not know how to live before God.

Law and Grace or Grace and Law are always in tension. Parents struggle to balance rules and kindness. Some parents are law like –legalist who set clear moral rules for their children. Others are mercy types - liberal parents who insist their children have to find their own way. The same dynamic is true in politics and across churches. Fortunately the scriptures identify the tension of law verses grace. Its not grace verses law. They teach us God holds law and grace together and that its only through Jesus that the two come together.

John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth*

Psalm 85:10 (AV) puts it beautifully: *Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

When our culture looks at the church it sees two kinds of churches. Liberal churches who major in kindness but lack definition, and conservative churches which concentrate on rules but lack compassion. The opportunity for us is to uphold grace and mercy, truth and compassion in harmony not tension. So that our culture can see Christ in us, not legalism or pietism, nor license (lawlessness).

GPC Christchurch has been going for 40 years. These have been times of growth, based on a passion to do what was right. Sure we may have unwittingly fallen into errors and a bit of legalism along the way. Yet by God's grace, we have been blessed with a love for truth, the authority of the Bible, and the grace of the gospel as the culture has changed around us.

When we look back in another 20 years' time, what will we stand for? Will it be Presbyterianism, or something very different. Hopefully more than that. I've knocked orthodoxy in this talk. But one of my favourite quotes from GK Chesterton who puts orthodoxy into its right context: "I am the man with the utmost daring discovered what had been discovered before. I did try to find the heresy of my own; and when I had put the last touches to it, I discovered that it was orthodoxy".

That orthodoxy which we have always had and which we keep on discovering is as simple as Paul put it 1 Cor 2:2 *For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

As we continue to Listen and strive for Credibility, Relevance, clear Communication and maintaining the beauty of law & grace we can only do it through Christ and Him crucified.



▲ ABOVE: Trevor Webb and a group of panelists at General Assembly

Identifying, Developing and Deploying Leaders

Mark Smith, Pastor, Grace Bible Church Dunedin

When pondering the subject of leadership in the church, especially identifying and equipping leaders, we must remember that Jesus is the principal leader. He is the One who ultimately guides, gifts and appoints leaders within his church for his purposes. Ephesians 4:11-13.

And the amazing truth is that Jesus also invites us to participate in his work. During His earthly ministry He demonstrates identifying, equipping and deploying leaders when He called trained and sent the apostles. We see other biblical examples of this in Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Timothy.

Things That Hinder Leadership

There are several things that I find hinder the identification, development and deploying of leaders.

First, it is a big time investment and this doesn't always guarantee future leaders. Secondly, there is our Kiwi culture tends to resist reasonability and commitment. This is either through avoidance due to our 'Tall Poppy Syndrome' or, a reluctance due to our laid back, free and easy life style.

Another factor is Pastors who desire to overly micro-manage or control ministries in the church. This micromanagement may point to a fear of delegation. However identifying and equipping leaders is essential for the furtherance of the kingdom, building up of the church, and helping each people reach his or her potential in Christ.

The objective in identifying and equipping leaders is to see a Christ like, servant heart people using their gifts to influence others for the sake of the gospel/kingdom.

As Harry Reeder says in his book *The Leadership Dynamic*, "Churches should be leadership factories. Raising people of influence in the church and in the world for the glory of God and the furtherance of his kingdom."

Recognize areas of leadership within the church

First, every area of ministry requires leadership so that it might reach its God given potential. i.e. elders, deacons, small group ministry leaders, youth & kids ministry, pastoral care, hospitality coordinators, music team, mercy ministry, and evangelism.

Each of these will require leadership i.e. vision, organization, inspiration, direction and development to reach their God given potential. It is helpful to spend time recognizing the areas of leadership that presently exist. It is also helpful to prayerfully consider future ministries that Christ would have his church do.

We must pray

Secondly, it is vital that we are prayerfully seeking out potential leaders. Because of business or distraction, we don't always see what we need to see in potential leaders, so, grace is needed. As we pray we need to ask:

1. Do they have a relationship with God that is growing and deepening or one that static and stagnant?
2. Are they demonstrating godly character in general life? When Paul writes to Timothy regarding the requirements for eldership, attention is given character and less emphasis upon gifting. We need to consider especially virtues like humility and genuine love for people.
3. What areas of ministry do they have an enthusiasm for? Leadership in its very nature requires someone who is proactive and takes initiative. 1 Peter 5:2 speaks about person who is serving not under obligation but willingly.
4. What spiritual gifts does Christ seem to have bestowed upon them? i.e. teaching, leading, serving etc.

Training and Developing

Third, we must be pro-active in training and developing of these potential leaders. Jesus himself did this through life on life investment.

He performed his ministry, as a part of life with his future leaders. We observe this also in other Biblical situations Moses & Joshua, Elijah & Elisha, and Paul & Timothy.

Potential leaders will also need to be growing in their theological maturity, depth, and insight. Many approach ministry from a purely pragmatic attitude. But, for clarity, depth and perspective, ministry does need to be shaped around

The amazing truth is that Jesus also invites us to participate in his work.

biblical conviction and a God centred perspective.

Potential leaders have God given gifts that need to be exercised to become robust. On the job training is vital to gift development and assessment. For

example, Timothy had extensive on the job training before being sent out

Finally, It is important to remember people don't need a title to serve. But through service comes recognition. We allow people to develop slowly serving under leaders more experienced.

For example, a future Children Church leader can serve as a helper before taking the class.



▲ ABOVE: Mark and Jessica Smith



▶ RIGHT: Mark leading a service at Grace Bible Church Dunedin.

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A Day of *Encouragement*

A Day of Encouragement 2015 was a day seminar, held in conjunction with the GPCNZ Assembly, was aimed at encouraging women married to church leaders, women who head up ministries in their church, and local women who wanted to share in a time of meeting and fellowship with the wider GPCNZ church. We were pleased at the large turnout of ladies, especially ladies from the local Auckland churches.

We spent the morning listening to reports from each of the Grace churches. We heard what the women were involved in, plus other events and ministries being done in their church. We were amazed at the variety and creativity of experiences amongst us, and very thankful to God for the way He is using GPCNZ throughout NZ.

After each report we had a time of prayer for that particular congregation. We all felt that this Report Time was very valuable in terms of reinforcing that we, and our congregation, are part of a whole- that God has a large family scattered through NZ. Next year we plan to spend more time with the Reports as we were quite rushed to complete them all in the time we had allocated.

During the afternoon we had four speakers share with us their life experiences in various roles. Firstly we heard from Brooke Scott telling us about being involved in a Church Plant situation (Central Auckland). We appreciated Brooke's honesty and openness regarding the challenges in this situation and we are much more aware of how to pray for her, and others like her, now.

Secondly, Eva Panapa spoke about being a Pastor's wife and also living and dealing with a different cultural lifestyle. Similarly to Brooke, Eva 'told it like it is' which was very helpful in terms of prayer and ways to encourage others. NZ is becoming so much

more multi-cultural that Eva's story was extremely important and helpful.

Third speaker was Mary Webb who spoke on some of the challenges, and blessings, of being married to an Elder! We appreciated the Biblical 'antidotes' which Mary gave for these challenges and were encouraged to go away and spend time finding our own Biblical responses for our particular challenges.

Our final speaker was Margaret Reynolds who helped us understand the differences between being 'concerned' and 'responsible' for people or situations which we encounter in our different roles. Again, we found Margaret very helpful in showing us how to differentiate these two responses.

The mothers amongst us were very grateful for the excellent childcare which Margaret had organized, and we all very much enjoyed the catering. Also thanks to Grace Theological College for their very suitable venue.

We are planning another "Day" during Assembly 2016 somewhere in Southern Presbytery. We would love lots of women to come and share the day and be encouraged by experiencing great fellowship and being part of a bigger team. For information, email Karen Bradfield gkbrad@yrless.co.nz

(Mary Webb and Karen Bradfield)



◀ LEFT: Women attending the Woman in Grace: a Day of Encouragement session at General Assembly

Valuing Wives' Ministries in Grace

Trevor Webb

Sometimes women married to pastors and elders are reluctant to take up a ministry in the church. Many confine their role to helping their husband in his calling, but do not see that God may be calling *them* to use their gifts beyond the ministry of their husband. Perhaps it might be helpful to look at some biblical principles to guide us in the use of women's gifting and ministries.

First, it is vital to note that at Pentecost the Spirit was poured out equally on men and women.

Acts 2:17-18 *"And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy."*

Later Paul applies this pouring out of the Spirit in terms of gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 *"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*

This passage, verse 7 in particular, says that God has given gifts to all His children. So then, all women have been given gifts by the Spirit of God. And for what purpose? It is for the common good or the edification of the church. We only need to ask what a church community would be like without women. So much vitality, warmth, and loving service would be lost.

This is emphasised in Ephesians, where we learn that every member of the body of Christ must give of themselves to help the church to grow and prosper.

Ephesians 4:15-16 *"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body,*

joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."

However, the temptation is to remain in an Old Testament mentality. We are now in the New Covenant where the Spirit is poured out on all God's people.

We know that in the church God has provided an order as to how we live and work together. God has required that men be called as shepherds to lead and care for the flock that God has brought to them. But under this ordained order both men *and* women are

We only need to ask what a church community would be like without women. So much vitality, warmth and loving service would be lost.

to function, using their gifts and graces for the growth of the church and the proclamation of the gospel.

While we do not see a great deal of evidence of women in ministry in the New Testament, it is important to note that at that time society was built around educated men and limited opportunity was provided for women outside of the home. However, there is sufficient evidence in the New Testament to show that the gifts of women were important and were valued. And there are examples where women's gifts were exercised beyond the confines of the home.

A great example of this is that of Aquila and Priscilla. They were a team who worked in ministry and in Paul's writings, Priscilla is given as much commendation as Aquila.

Acts 18:26 *"He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately."*

Romans 16:1-4 *"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have laid down their own necks for my life; to whom not only I give thanks, but also the churches of the nations."*

1Cor 16:19 *"The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord."*

We also see Paul's endorsement of the spiritual service of Phoebe:

Romans 16:1-4 *"I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you receive her in the Lord, as becomes saints, and that you may assist her in whatever business she has need of you. For she has been a helper of many, and of myself also."*

It is correct that women who are married to men in the leadership of the church become partners in the ministry that God calls the husband to undertake. It is in that context, the wife needs to apply her gifts, to be a helper and encourager of her husband. In busy households and all-consuming ministries, that may limit a wife's involvement (at least for a time) in other ministries for which God has gifted her.

However, we, the leadership of the Grace Churches, are eager to encourage, equip, and provide opportunity to experience the gifts and graces that many of our woman bring to our churches.

► *BELOW and OPPOSITE: Woman in Grace, from around the country*



Dunedin



Rotorua



Rotorua



Palmerston North



Rotorua



Palmerston North



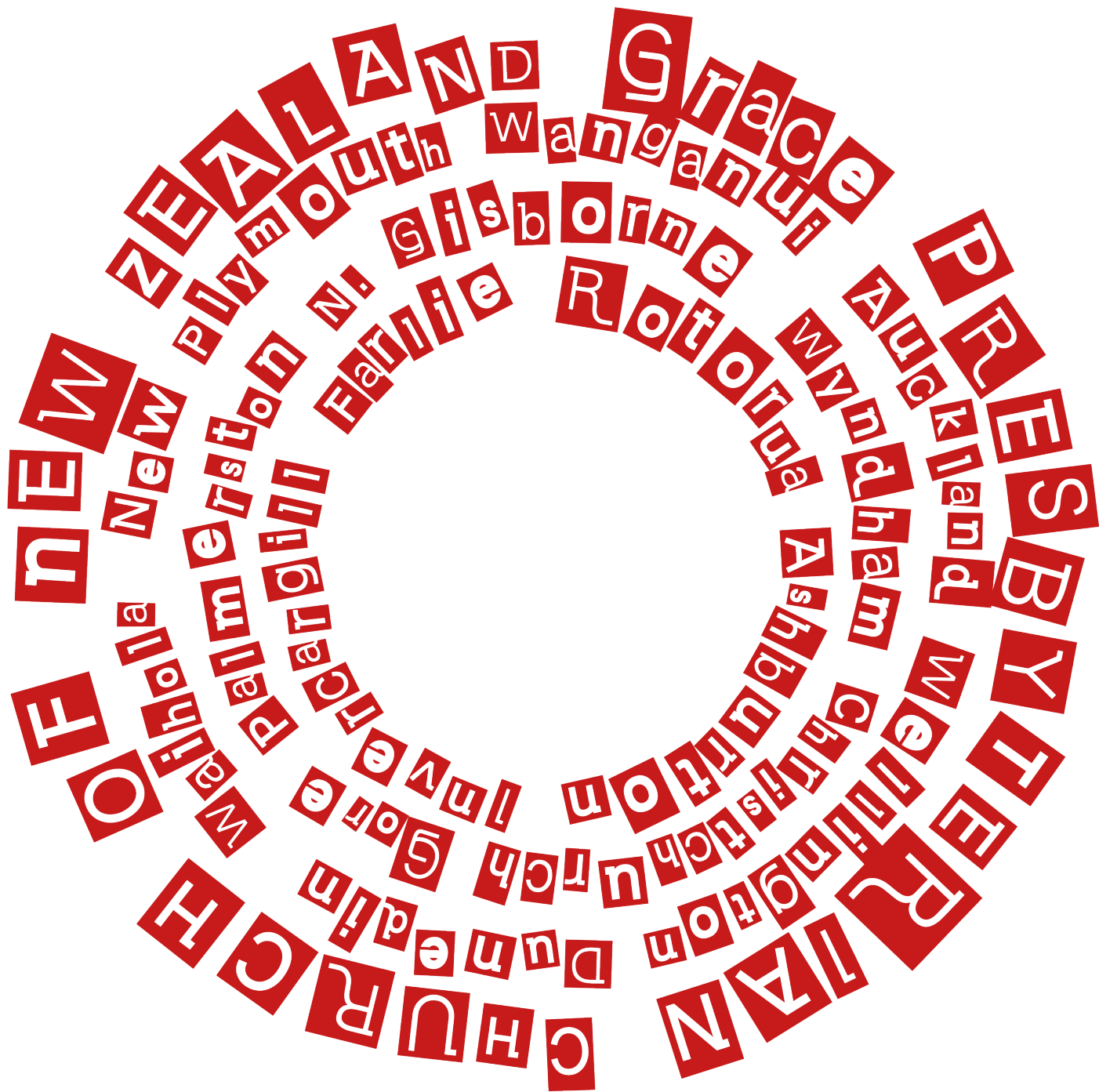
Palmerston North



Manurewa



Dunedin



News

— *of the* —

Church

Global Missions: Teaching Mission in Myanmar

Trevor Webb

Over the last two years GPCNZ has been asked to develop a theological curriculum to teach rural pastors at the Reformed Bible Institute in Yangon, Myanmar. The pastors are mainly ministering in the hilly land of the Chin Province (western Myanmar) and are members of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Myanmar. This is a wonderful opportunity to support our brethren in a land that is not endowed with the rich history of theological knowledge which we tend to take for granted.

Our main contact in Myanmar is Rev Thang Bwee who was instrumental in establishing the church and the Bible Institute. Thang Bwee was trained in the Asia Center for Theological Studies and Mission in Seoul in 1989-1990. In 1993 he began to teach basic theology in Yangon. By 1999 he had provided basic training for

20 pastors. Since then Dr Bwee has continued to train young men for the ministry.

He has always been conscious of the limited teaching that he has been able to offer the earlier graduates and, with the help of teachers from overseas, has provided some additional training. The curriculum that has now been developed will provide a more comprehensive grounding for the rural pastors.

GPCNZ has undertaken to teach for two weeks for the next four years and to cover Systematic and Biblical theology. The remaining courses will be taught by teachers the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Presbyterian Church of America.

This year we are planning for Rev Richard Flinn to begin the curriculum with teaching the first half of the systematic theology unit.

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◀ LEFT and ABOVE: Reformed Bible Institute in Yangon Myanmar

Church News

Shore Presbyterian, Auckland

Shore Presbyterian continues to experience God's goodness. Our Sunday morning gatherings are times of happiness together in the Lord's presence and we witness Him growing a community of genuine Christian love. In the past we had asked for prayer for musicians to strengthen our worship and a number of folk have put up their hands to serve in this wonderful way. We had also asked for prayer for some young men that we have been working with to turn to the Lord. Just recently, one of them, from another country, has clearly professed saving faith. When asked why he would be able to go to heaven he answered, in simple English, with the profound and wonderful words, "because Jesus saves me." We continue to wait upon the Lord to work in the hearts of others. The area in which we live and worship is growing rapidly with thousands of new homes being built. We worship in the Long Bay Primary School right on the edge of that growth and we look to the Lord to bring us into fruitful contact with our new neighbours. There is one Sunday in the year where we need to vacate our building for the local "mud rush". This year on that weekend in September

we held a Retreat Weekend at Long Bay Beach and looked at the subject of Church Membership together which proved helpful and encouraging to many. We also took the opportunity on the Sunday morning to celebrate and give thanks for two years of life together. As we move into the third year we pray for God to move mightily among us, to deepen our faith, to grow our love for those who don't know Him and to continue to create a Church home that is a place that gives safety and time for people to find Christ or to be restored and healed in their walk with Him. (Peter Boyd)

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Manurewa

We were blessed to have a great opportunity at Halloween to invite neighbourhood, school and preschool children to a Light Party at Covenant Church. There was a turnout of about 250 people, with great fun to be had on the bouncy castles, horizontal bungee and various other games, with sausages, tea and coffee thrown in for good measure. A great time was had by all, with a lot of positive comments from visitors and plenty of Covenant people on hand to speak to anyone who had questions.



◀ *LEFT: Fun times at the Halloween Light Party in Manurewa*

Richard Eyre

“Go retire near your grandchildren in a cottage with a picket fence and grow some roses” friends and family suggested.

We will get there, but in the meantime we came to rose city (Palmerston North) to be an encouragement to those working to build a gospel centred church in the largest city in the lower North Island outside of Wellington. By joining in the activities, inviting students from Massey University back to our home, helping out with the rest home service, leading a home group with new families looking at gospel centred church, meeting folk for coffee in the local eateries and hanging out in various ways we try to be supportive.

We also have a concern for the other churches in the lower North Island and particularly for their pastors and families. We are working towards meeting with

each of them monthly to be a listening ear and a praying support in the work they are involved in. Because there is a shortage of elders in the region and no church has a local session Richard is looking to offer a “kitchen cabinet” role to pastors who want a sounding board and someone to talk ‘out’ session type matters with on a regular basis.

King’s Grace Church, Palmerston North

This year has been a ‘big’, busy and blessed year for Palmerston North. First, the church moved premises again, this time to a building it has purchased. The address is 116-120 King Street, located in the centre of the city. To join with a new location, the church members decided on a new name for the church. The new name is King’s Grace Church and comes with a new logo too!

The location has proven to be very beneficial as witnessed by the increased numbers now attending. King’s Grace began 2015 with a core attendance of 25-28, and now there is often over 50 attending. The most wonderful part is that the people seem very keen to hear and learn more of the gospel.

Another satisfying development is the two mid-week growth groups. These are thriving and enjoying good study and fellowship time. During most of the year a student/young adults group was also meeting, bringing blessing to those attending.

The new building has also allowed the church run monthly fellowship lunches. The food has been outstanding, and the lunches have been very well organised and run.



◀ LEFT: Richard and Diane with the members of their homegroup.

▶ OPPOSITE: King’s Grace Church, Palmerston North, and the service opening the new building.

Kings Grace has gladly welcomed Richard and Dianne Eyre who have come for Lower Hutt to help with leading at Kings Grace. They will also be travelling in the central presbytery offering support and help to other churches.

Grace Gore

We continue to welcome 'new' little lives into the congregation in Gore. James and Tanya Goodwin welcomed Hunter into their family in September, and in May Sam and Karyn Duthie welcomed new daughter Emma and there are two more babies to be born this year!. On 1st Nov we were blessed to have Andrew MacPherson come from Palmerston North to baptise Emma.

Although one or two have drifted away, on the whole Grace Gore continues to grow with ones and twos arriving regularly.

Our monthly Sunday evening Praise and Prayer nights continue to be well attended and Sunday mornings are usually around 40 people at present.

This coming January we will again be running our annual holiday programme with the help of a team our teenagers from Redeemer. Please pray for this programme to go well and, for new contacts to be made with the community.



Trinity Church, Takanini

Trinity's community, Takanini in South Auckland, has evolved over the last ten years and is continuing to rapidly change. It has changed from a semi-rural area, home to trotting tracks and racing stables, to a growing sprawl of medium density 'affordable' housing. This is a place where house sprout like mushrooms!

Currently, the area has one of the highest proportions of families with an income of less than \$50,000 pa, in the Auckland region. Takanini Primary School is a decile one school, reflecting the large number of its pupils living in families with a very low income.

A high percentage of residents live in rented accommodation, some spending over 65% of their income on rent alone. High rents and low income lead to health complications, social problems, and educational under-achievement. In order to survive many families take out high-interest loans that ultimately leave them financially worse off. A recurring theme with those with big loans is that the debt servicing takes priority over food and health, places stress on relationships, and is a cause of kids being moved frequently between schools.

In order to provide Christian help to those in need, Trinity has joined Christians Against Poverty in opening a Debt Help Centre. Funded by donations, the Trinity Debt Centre is staffed by volunteers, all under the professional guidance of our own Debt Centre Manager, Michelle Willis. A busy mum with three boys, Michelle gives her time to visiting CAP clients, gaining help with paying off their debts, but most importantly, sharing the good news about Jesus Christ.

The population of Takanini in 2006 was slightly over 10,000. This is predicted to more than double to 22,000 by 2020, with an expected increase of over 4,000 school age children. Ours is an ethnically diverse population, with a high proportion of Maori and Pacifica families Takanini is also our home and the area in which Trinity Church has been called to witness to God's love for the last fifteen years.



▲ ABOVE: A group photo with Trinity Church

Church News: Grace Church Rotorua

This has been a great year for Grace Rotorua! Not only have we been blessed with growth of the church, but we enjoyed celebrating our 5th year of witness here in Rotorua. On May 17th we celebrated with a service where Andrew Macpherson from Palmerston North preached, and with a big feed and, we really enjoyed the fellowship of few visitors, and some of our friends from Grace Gisborne. It was great day to remember the amazing grace of God and how he has worked so clearly through Pastor Steve and Eva and their keen helpers. Please pray for renewed strength and growth for 2016 and beyond.

On the last weekend of October, Grace Rotorua and Grace Gisborne combined for a camp in a beautiful part of New Zealand- Ohope Beach. The camp enjoyed great weather, great food, great fellowship, and great teaching. Ian Grant, Academic Dean of Grace Theological College Auckland, spoke on the Drama of Scripture, and, in 6 hours covered the whole bible 'story'. It was an introduction to Biblical Theology that we all appreciated very much. We are privileged above all to worship such a purposeful, long suffering God, and to be able to call Him our Father.



▲ ABOVE: Grace Church Rotorua's Fifth Year Celebrations (Photos: Jake Saathof)

Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand

Church Directory

Northern Presbytery

NORTH SHORE
Shore Presbyterian Church
Long Bay Primary School
Ralph Eagles Place
Long Bay, Auckland
Service Time: 10am
Pastor: Peter Boyd
P: (09) 473-9390 / (021) 036-7957
E: petethepastor@hotmail.com
W: www.shorepres.org.nz

CENTRAL AUCKLAND
City Presbyterian Church
283 Karangahape Road, Newton
Service Time: 10:30am
Pastor: Travis Scott
P: (09) 550-5415 / (021) 628-041
E: tscott@citypres.org.nz
W: www.citypres.org.nz

NEW PLYMOUTH
Grace Community Church
Fred Tucker Memorial Hall
132 Parkland Ave, Bell Block
Service Times: 10:00am & 6:30pm
Pastor: David Farr
P: (06) 759 9378
E: farrfamily@xtra.co.nz
W: www.gracenp.co.nz

PALMERSTON NORTH
Grace Presbyterian Church
157 Broadway Ave
Service Time: 10:30 a.m.
Pastor: Andrew Macpherson
P: (06) 358-0132 / (022) 060-8634
E: andrewmb2011@hotmail.com

WHANGANUI
Whanganui Grace Presbyterian Church
30 Drews Ave
Service Time: 10:30am & 6:30pm
Contact: Peter van den Brink
P: (06) 347-2924
E: rupee@clear.net.nz

DUNEDIN
Grace Bible Church
Leith Bowling Club
2 Duke Street
Service Time: 9:15am, 11am, 7:00pm
Pastor: Mark Smith
P: (03) 473-8100
E: admin@gracedunedin.org.nz
www.gracedunedin.org.nz

MANGERE EAST / PAPATOETOE
Providence Presbyterian Church
22 Rosella Road, Mangere
Service Time: 10:00am
Pastor: Bruce Levi
P: (021) 429-706

FLAT BUSH
Redeemer
30 Hilltop Road, Flat Bush
(entrance off Arrowsmith Drive)
Service Times: 10:45am and 6pm
Contact: Tony Bracefield
P: (09) 262-3463 / (021) 217-3837
E: tonybracefield@watchdog.net.nz
W: www.redeemer.org.nz

WELLINGTON
Grace@Wellington
Evans Bay Intermediate School
14 Kemp St, Kilbirnie
Service Times: 10:30am
Pastor: Ian Bayne
P: (04) 976-5093
E: info@racewellington.org.nz
W: www.gracewellington.org.nz

CHRISTCHURCH
Grace Presbyterian Church
Middleton Grange School,
50 Acacia Ave
Service Times: 10:30am
Pastor: Rusty Milton
P: (03) 354 4443
E: ewenki@hotmail.com
W: www.gracechristchurch.co.nz

MANUREWA
Covenant Presbyterian Church
77 Rogers Road, Manurewa
Service Times: 10:00am & 6:00pm
Pastors: Peter Reynolds & Nick Brennan
P: (09) 269-1046
E: covenantchurch@ihug.co.nz
W: www.covenantchurch.org.nz

TAKANINI
Trinity Presbyterian Church
Takanini School Hall, Old Park Place
Service Times: 10:00am
Pastor: Geoff MacPherson
P: (09) 296-8601 / (027) 727-6711

Lamp Presbyterian Church

GORE
Grace Church Gore
30 Hamilton Sreet, East Gore
Service Times: 10:30am
Pastor: Sam Duthie
P: (03) 208-6180 / (022) 086-1800
E: samtduthie@gmail.com

OWAKA
Catlins Evangelical Church
Gospel Hall
2 Campbell Street
Service Time: 11:00am
Contact: Gavin Landreth
P: (03) 415-8117
E: landrethgw@farmside.co.nz

E: geoffmacpherson@gmail.com
W: www.trinitychurch.org.nz

ROTORUA
Grace Church Rotorua
Lynmore Primary School
Illes Rd, Lynmore
Pastor: Steve Panapa
Service time: 10.00am
P: (07) 345-7881 / (022) 012-9615
E: stevenfuieva@gmail.com

GISBORNE
Grace Church Gisborne
481 Gladstone Road
(opposite Carpet Court)
Service Time: 10:30am
Pastor: Steve Panapa
P: (07) 345-7881 / (022) 012-9615
E: stevenfuieva@gmail.com
W: www.gracechurchnz.org

(Korean)
Riccanton Baptist Church,
cnr Rattray & Peverel St.
Service Time: 1:00pm
Pastor: John Oh
P: (03) 960-6879 / (021) 855-267

ASHBURTON
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
63 Princes Street, Ashburton
Service Time: 10:30am
Pastor: David Bayne
P: (03) 307-7355

FAIRLIE
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
McKenzie Centre, Fairlie
Service Time: 4:30pm
Contact: Andrew Johnson
P: (03) 685-8222

WYNDHAM
Wyndham Evangelical Church
Cnr. Balaclava and Redan Streets
Service Times: 10:30am & 6:30pm
Contact: Allan Winter
P: (03) 206-6756
www.wyndhamevangelical.org.nz

INVERCARGILL
Grace Presbyterian Church
Cnr. Centre and Morton Streets
Service Times: 10:30am & 6:30pm
Contact: Peter Farlow
P: (03) 216 7746
www.graceinvercargill.co.nz

Central Presbytery

Southern Presbytery

