

Growing in **GRACE**



**YOUNG
PEOPLE
ENGAGING
GLOBES
WORLD**

Serving our Youth

The theme of this issue revolves around young members of Grace Presbyterian Church who are engaged in service. We chose to highlight this area of the church's life to draw your attention to the great work being done by our young people.

We are excited to tell some of their stories because we believe they are inspiring. Our wish is that this might provoke Generation X-Z's to take up service in our churches.

This does, however, pose a challenge to the wider body of Christ: Are we serving our young people as best we can to facilitate their ministry gifts?

I remember an eager young man complaining to me that the elders in his church were like 'a bottle-neck stopping anything from happening.' He felt that the process of pastoral oversight was inhibitive. What he meant was that, when an idea is suggested, the elders will sit on it until their next session meeting, talk about it at length, and then pour cold water on it without coming up with an alternative.

It is too easy to forget that young people are not old people! Too often some well-meaning older saint will complain about a risky youth group activity, a loud drummer in the worship band, or the dress-code of a youth leader. Too often such complaints come as pot-shots from the sideline rather than an arm around the shoulder and offer to help. Church isn't a spectator sport.

So, how can we serve our youth better?

Firstly, we need to be clear in our covenantal theology. The children of believers are 'holy' (Isa. 59:20-21; 1 Cor. 7:14) in that they are 'federally' a part of the church. We cannot afford to have them growing up as spectators, waiting for a time when they can get involved in the mission field. Jesus deliberately said, 'Let the little children come to me...' Moses instructed the Israelites to teach their children as they serve God (Deut. 6:4-9).

Secondly, we need to cultivate a *missional* mindset. I know that 'missional' is a buzzword, but it does capture the truth that we are *all* witnesses or missionaries in our respective places. Our youth need to grow up understanding that they are in a mission field now – the world. They will learn this when they see the adults in their churches active in gospel ministry.

Thirdly, we should support and encourage the work of the *National Youth Committee*. Most of us are aware of the annual

Youth Bible Conferences (YBC) that they organise. Yet, their mandate is much wider than that, and they are currently working on a philosophy of youth ministry that will involve youth leadership training.

Oh, and by the way, make it your goal to get as many youth in your church to the YBC in Christchurch this year. It usually fires them up to serve Jesus 'like, full-on'!

Fourthly, there may be young men or women who could benefit from a one or two year ministry apprenticeship program or college gap year. The *Christian Education and Publications Committee* (CEP) is currently developing such a program. You could email the convenor of CEP asking when their program will be available! (To make your harassment easier, here is his email: gmacpherson@ihug.co.nz.)

Finally, discuss with your pastor or elders which 'young-un's' in your church you can take under your wing to train up to take over your role in the church. As well as looking at existing opportunities, try thinking up new stuff for them to do.

Some say, 'Youth are the future of the church.' I don't agree. The future of the church lies with the Holy Spirit. *However*, God normally uses ordinary means (that is you and I) and we need to keep those ordinary means coming for the future.

On a different note, we have included an interview with Dr. Harry Reeder when he was here speaking at the Revitalisation Conferences. Harry's insights are invaluable for all to read.

In His Service,

- Geoff Macpherson
for the editorial team.



Geoff and Marie Macpherson with son Nikau

Contents

2. Editorial

Editorial by Geoff Macpherson

4. Interview

Geoff Macpherson Interviews Harry Reeder

7. Revitalisation Conferences 2009

8. Young People in Service

13. Church News

14. Overseas Mission

15. Church Directory

16. Photos

Serving Around The World

Growing in Grace is the national magazine of the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand published by the national Christian Education and Publications Committee.

All enquiries: Andrew Macpherson
P: (09) 267 2847 E: trinitychurch@orcon.net.nz



Reviving the Church

Pastor Geoff Macpherson Interviews Harry Reeder



Dr. Harry Reeder is the senior pastor of the 4,200 member Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. He has served in local churches as a pastor/teacher for the past 36 years. His ministry passion is to see congregations restored to spiritual vitality and ministry effectiveness through visionary leadership. Pastor Reeder is the author of two books, 'From Embers to a Flame: How God Can Revitalise Your Church' and more recently 'The Leadership Dynamic'.

Harry is married to Cindy, and they have three children and five grandchildren. In his spare time, he enjoys golf and American Civil War history.

Pastor Reeder was in Christchurch and Auckland in August to conduct two mini church revitalisation seminars. In Auckland he sat down with Geoff Macpherson to talk about the local church, preaching and revitalisation.

Thanks for giving up your time to chat. Maybe we can begin with you sharing about your background and how you came to faith in Christ?

I grew up in a Christian home; I tell people that I was saved out of a 'drug problem' because my mum and dad 'drugged' me to church every Sunday morning and every Sunday night! My grandfather and grandmother were believers. My grand-

father was actually on the original Billy Graham team from 1948-52. He functioned with him on numerous occasions, particularly the crusades out of California in the late forties.

I was raised in a denomination called the Christian Missionary Alliance, but I was not a believer. I went away to college and I was a very ungodly and immoral person. I was highly self-absorbed and sport was pretty much my life. But I came to the end of myself quite quickly because my life wasn't going anywhere.

That is when I met Cindy and she was a believer. I went to church so that I could date her: she wouldn't go out with me otherwise. That was when I heard the gospel afresh and anew, saw what it was doing in her life, and knew that that was what I wanted done in my life. I committed my life to Christ when I was 21; Cindy and I were married, and when we had finished putting her through school we went back to East Carolina.

Then the Lord called me into the ministry. I was helping with the youth group in our church and it kept growing and growing. People kept saying that God might be calling me into the ministry – and I was sensing that that might be the case. But what was confusing for me was that this had also been said to me on many occasions even before I came to Christ!

So I left Carolina and went to Covenant College - which I often say was the third best decision I had made in my life! My first best decision was coming to Christ, my second best decision was to marry Cindy, and my third one was to go to Covenant College where they taught me a Christian world and life view. From there I went to Westminster Seminary and came into the Presbyterian Church of America in 1980.

My first church was Pinelands Presbyterian Church in Miami. It had once been a healthy congregation of 1,000, but was now down to 55 people with an average age of 70 and with no children. But God really turned that church around and it was there that I really developed a heart for church revitalisation.

So, it was out of Pinelands Presbyterian Church that you were captured by the idea of church revitalisation?

It was at Pinelands that I was challenged to study the Scriptures about this matter. God was very gracious to us by giving us a church that came alive. Fifty percent of our growth were new believers. It was a multi-ethnic church, very enjoyable to pastor and very exciting. It was also very difficult for me to leave there!

But God called me to do it again at Christ Covenant Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. This church used to have about 175 people but was now down to just four families. So, we replanted and revitalised that ministry and God brought it back from four families to 3,000 people. We were actually able to plant a whole presbytery of churches out of that church.

How is church revitalisation different from church planting?

I've always loved church planting and am very grateful for it, but have always felt that we don't do a good job of reflecting what Paul always did when he went back to strengthen the existing churches. It is what Jesus does in the Book of Revelation with the seven churches – five of which needed revitalisation. He doesn't write them off but calls them to repentance. As we teach in the Embers to a Flame Conferences - 'remember from where you have fallen, to repent of your sins, and recover the basics and apply them in your life and ministry'.

I can see why on his second missionary journey the Apostle Paul just didn't plant new churches, he also strengthened, or revitalised the existing churches. I don't think that in today's Western Christian dynamics that we can plant churches faster than they're dying. I think that we need to plant churches and lead other churches to health and vitality.

Do you hold to the typical bell-curve that charts the birth and inevitable death of a church used by some church-planting advocates?

No. I think that is unnecessarily fatalistic. You see the church at Ephesus was revitalised by Timothy, and then called to revitalisation by John. Titus was sent to Crete by the Apostle Paul to revitalise those churches. I agree that there is an inevitable decline or plateau in the growth of a church, but I disagree with those who say you just let such a church die.

I believe that you can lead a church back to health and vitality. I do not believe, however, in focusing on church growth because then you may do things that merely put cultural steroids into the body of Christ which then kill it. I believe in focusing on church health, because a healthy church will grow. The increasing numbers are the consequence, not the objective.

“I believe in focusing on church health, because a healthy church will grow. The increasing numbers are the consequence, not the objective.”

This certainly makes sense in terms of the resources that are available.

Yes. Every time I drive past a church that has been turned into a shopping centre, an apartment, or funeral parlour, I am reminded that this is not what the people who sacrificed to build that church had in mind. It loathes me to close down churches because there is a building, there is a parking lot, and all the resources already in place. If there are people around, then get the resources and make use of them to reach the people. With church planting you have to go and buy land and build a building, but with church revitalisation you have got it all there – just go and get the people!

In some situations smaller churches are deliberately closed by denominations and the membership 'consolidated' to form what are called 'mega-churches.' Do you think that there is tension between the mega-church phenomena and church revitalisation?

I believe that there is a place for big churches and small churches. I don't think that the objective should ever be a big church or a small church. What our objective ought to be is a faithful and healthy church.

Some churches are in certain locations and under certain leadership such that God seems to build a DNA into that church to be larger. But even those churches need to keep planting other churches. And the same is true with some smaller churches in certain communities. There are all kinds of factors that determine what ultimate size a church will be.

I was with a pastor who was upset that his church membership had declined from 200 people to 175. But that community had gone through a recession and the population had dropped from 8,000 people to 2,000. So I reminded him that his church was doing better because he had a bigger portion of the 2,000 people than he used to have of the 8,000.

What we want to focus on instead is what I call a 'W.E.L.L.' church: a church that reaches up in *Worship*, reaches out to the world in *Evangelism*, reaches in to *Love* one another, and reaches down to

Learn. That is a healthy church, and God takes care of the size factor.

Interview (cont.)

Why is it that you think people need to hear about church health? What is it that they are concerned with instead?

Most of the time people are preoccupied with church growth. This is shown in two ways: some say; “Big is good, small is bad”, and others who say, “Small is good, big is bad.” In both cases there is an imbalance, just as with a physical body that is concerned with bigness may introduce death, or person concerned with being small develops eating disorders. So churches that focus on being big do so at the expense of health and ultimately break down. And, in the same way, churches that are focused on smallness eventually turn and eat themselves alive.

What I tell people is to be faithful, reach up in worship, reach out in evangelism, reach in to love, reach down in learning, and I believe God gives the increase. For example, within 11 miles of Briarwood Presbyterian church there are ten PCA churches. Some of these have 100 people, some have 500, some have 1,000, and some have 2,000 – and then there is Briarwood with 4,000. God has built a different DNA in each one of us, and we are all different.

As you will know, the Grace Presbyterian Church of NZ is a young denomination made up of churches that are mostly new church-plants. Do you think that your teaching about revitalisation has anything to say to us?

All I know is that when Paul planted churches and left them, in four years he had to go back and revitalise them. We have found that after churches have been planted, after about 3-5 years they need help to recapture the vision, the vitality and health. Sometimes they don’t need help for 15, 20 or 25 years, but almost always within a generation you will need to look at revitalisation as you move to the next generation.

Secondly, your denomination is old enough that some of your churches will need revitalisation. And, thirdly, outside of your denomination there will be churches that are dying and are looking for help. If Grace Presbyterian Church had a revitalisation ministry in place, you might experience growth by attracting churches who appreciate your love and concern to help them grow. But whether they join you or not, you should be thankful that you can be a part of extending the gospel.

You have also indicated in your talks that you see the ministry of the word as being central to the life of a healthy church. Why is that?

When I went to Miami, I went around to the effective churches, and I asked them what it was that they did. And

while each had their own little pet ministry, what I observed about the churches that were honouring Christ theologically in their mission and message, was that they were praying churches and that there was a better than average communication of Christ from the pulpits. Now, each had a different style, but God’s Word was preached effectively. It is what the Scriptures say; prayer and the Word. But, if the pulpit ministry goes downward, then those churches usually go down. Charles Spurgeon said that the pulpit ministry is the ‘Thermopylae of the ministry’ – that is where we either win or lose the battle.

Now, this is not all that needs to happen, but it is essential. There are instances where churches think they are preaching, but are merely lecturing the people. Preaching is something else; it is life-changing communication. Sometimes we have people in the church who are faithful to the Bible, but they are not preachers.

Another thing that needs to be understood is that ministry is more than preaching. Yes, preaching is the primary means of grace, but it is not the exclusive means. There are things that people need to build on to have a more balanced ministry.

How, then, does the preacher grapple with the post-modern context? Should we be employing more video clips in our services or giving people lumps of clay to make things out of while listening to the message?

There isn’t anything new under the sun. Preaching has been despised since the start. But the Bible says that ‘through the foolishness of the message preached that we are being saved.’ The world thinks it is foolish, but if God owns it, I’m going to keep doing it!

That doesn’t mean that we don’t need to work on our craft, to do it well and to do it in the context of the generation in which we are living. Good preaching assumes the questions that are being asked by people as well as generating questions that they should be asking. Good expository preaching starts with the text and knowing how to land the text in the lives of people.

Preaching is passion; you believe that God’s Word is true. It is pleading; you want to see change in the lives of people. And, it is persuasion; you use illustration and anecdote. As Spurgeon said; “I load my gospel gun all week, and if people are not moved I fire myself at them from the pulpit!”

I have no problem with using video clips in teaching situations, but I don’t think that they belong in preaching. The problem is that the screen and the camera belong to the entertainment industry. A certain mindset comes upon people

when you use those things. When I go to the video clips, I have automatically moved the entertainment genre into the act of preaching. You can take it or leave it, which is what you cannot do with the demands of the preached Word. Also, you cannot put the gospel on a screen.

The same is true of drama. Instead of using drama in preaching, I believe that the preaching ought to be dramatic. This is God's Word taking hold of you, there is drama in that. Again, read Spurgeon and note the word images that he used. Read his use of adjectives and adverbs to awaken the imaginations of people.

People are riding through the storms of life and they need ballast in the soul to ride out the waves and not sink. You don't get ballast from a movie or a drama. You get ballast from one hundred percent biblical proclamation of truth to the heart and soul. This is what puts steel in the soul and ballast in the belly.

In our desire to connect to the culture today, do you think that there are errors that we may be unwittingly falling into?

Sure there are. We are conforming to the culture while Christianity is supposed to be counter-cultural. We need to listen to the culture, but biblical Christianity changes the culture.

As an example, when I was a kid we never played sports on Sunday because Christians wouldn't show up. Now all the Christians show up because they see sport is being more important than the Sabbath. We have been conformed to the culture, and are worse off for it. This is the challenge of how we can be 'in the world, but not of the world.'

In closing, is there anything else that you would want to mention?

I believe that today we are in a battle again for the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture. We are much more concerned with methodology than confidence in the power of God's Word. It means also that we go out and make decisions about our Christian life or our ministry and our church based on what works, instead of going to God's Word and coming up with a theology of the issue. I think we have got too many pastors buying into the contextual model of some particular pastor instead of going to the Bible and finding out the theology of the church and then finding out what that means for where God has put them. This demonstrates a lack of faith in the sufficiency of God's Word.

That is excellent, and I'm sure that your thoughts will be much appreciated. Thank you very much.

Revitalisation Conferences 2009

For four days, (9th - 13th August) around 25 men and women in Christchurch and 30 - 35 in Auckland enjoyed the teaching of the Briarwood Church Revitalisation ministry team. The team (Pastors Harry Reeder, Tom Cheely and Lyn Downing) all shared their knowledge and experiences on the necessity of church revitalisation.

Some of the topics covered by the conference were: Gospel driven and Christ centered (churches), the importance of mission and vision, the leadership dynamic, personal spiritual formation, and the great commitment/commission. Pastor Reeder also gave a helpful talk on worship.

Some comments that attendees offered after the conferences were:

"It was a chance to plan and think about how to serve better, not to be happy with an ordinary life"

"It showed the importance of personal faith in context of Body of Christ"

"This gave me a fresh perspective on the meaning of repentance"

"It challenged my most comfortable presuppositions"

"Most of us need a wake-up call and I felt privileged to be able to attend"

The organisers of the conference wish to thank to the team from Briarwood for making these conferences available in NZ.

Auckland Conference - Harry Reeder & Tom Cheely



Young People in Service

My Trip to Cambodia

By Holly Sterne

Ephesians 4:4 “There is one body and one Spirit just as you were called to one hope ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” Paul continues to write about the different callings of individual members of that body, for the ultimate goal of building up of the body of Christ until we reach unity in the faith.

I have been to Cambodia twice with these verses in mind. Chomno-Im the director of Cambodia Hope Organization had come to speak to GPC Christchurch a couple of years ago and I was deeply moved by what he shared. As a member of GPC, I felt that visiting a ministry our church already supported would be valuable.

I have learned a lot from my trips to Cambodia, especially the six week trip I went on earlier this year. By interacting with the Khmer people I have seen what child-like faith and trust in God is like. I learnt that meeting humanitarian needs without the message of salvation can be empty and



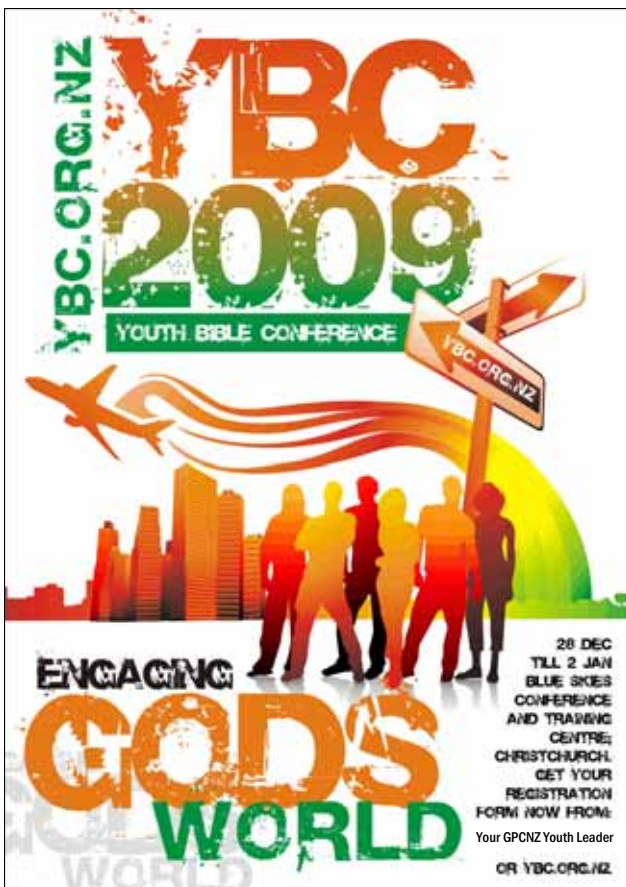
disheartening. For the first time ever, after walking all afternoon in a dusty, then muddy track; I realized what it meant for Jesus wash His disciples feet.

For me, future ministry with CHO is uncertain. I trust I will hear God’s clear calling one way or another as I continue to look for ways to prepare myself for the possibility of long term work with CHO.

Writing this stirs up so many images and memories, one I cannot forget is going to a small, rundown village where a children’s group was run. When I asked the children what they wanted me to tell them about, one girl about 10 years old came to me, her eyes shining brightly and said: “Jesu, I want to learn about Jesu.”

“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.” (Matthew 9:37-38)

Holly Sterne is a member of Grace Presbyterian Church, Christchurch. Other GPCNZ members Sue van Rij, Robert Foster, Eddie & Joyce Hogg, and Trevor & Mary Webb were in Poipet at the same time as Holly.



“These are a few of my favourite things...!”

By Katherine Young

Two of my favourite things are children and music. Much of my involvement in church ministry has involved God turning these passions into opportunities to serve. He has been gracious though and started me off in easier settings with lots of support and encouragement before gradually stretching me out of my comfort zone.

While in high school, I heard that *Girls Brigade* needed help in their junior section. I started helping and soon was involved in leading it. I learned how to plan and run children’s activities, with the bonus that they were mainly lovely girls from Christian homes.

When Redeemer Church started I was involved in starting a Sunday school with community children. There I had to learn how to teach lessons to children who did not know anything about God and who had major behavioural issues. Since moving to Gisborne I have been involved in working with similar kinds of children.

During high school I also started playing piano at church. I was very nervous about this, but I gradually gained confidence and skills. God took me from playing with someone else at Covenant, to playing alternate weeks at Redeemer, to being the regular pianist at Gisborne.

Being involved in these ministries has been a learning curve. I have not always done what I should and at times it has been

a bit of trial and error. I am grateful for the trust of older adults, who let me be involved and gave me responsibility so that I could grow. I am also grateful for the biblical teaching I have received, including a gap year at Grace Theological College in 2004. This gave me a clearer grasp of the gospel so I can better serve and share with others.

I do not know how God would have me serve Him in the future, but I do know that He does not waste the skills and talents that He has given.

In 2008 Katherine Young, who is 23, moved to Gisborne to help with the new work there. In 2010 she plans to move back to Auckland as part of preparing for future service.



Sport for Christ

By Andrew Young

Ask Gareth Jones who the best rugby players in the world are and then brace yourself for a surprise. He’s not likely to say Dan Carter but a Welshman like Shane Williams. That is because Gareth and his wife Alison hail from the United Kingdom (UK). They arrived in Auckland in January this year to bolster Redeemer Grace Presbyterian Church’s community ministry to kids and young people.

Most significantly, for seven years he served as a volunteer worker for a UK organisation called Christians in Sport (www.christiansinsport.org.uk). This parachurch ministry helps sport-loving Christians see their sports world as an arena for missions. It equips them to become “pray-play-sayers” – Christians who pray for their team mates, who glorify Christ in the way they play their sport, and who share the gospel whenever they get a chance.

One of the major reasons behind Gareth and Alison coming

to New Zealand was to transplant this ministry in NZ under the name “Sport4Christ.” (www.sport4Christ.com) Its emphasis will be to help churches disciple their Christ-loving, sport-loving members to live for Jesus on the sporting field and in the sports club. This takes place as Christians understand how their love of Christ and love of sport fit together rather than belong in separate worlds.

Sport4Christ encourages local churches in a region to get their sportspeople to form “pray, play, say” (PPS) groups, where there is an opportunity for discipleship and training in how to PPS, as well as opportunities to host sporting outreach events (sports quizzes, sports dinners, and sports camps) that are accessible to their non-Christian sport-loving friends. These events are aimed at giving non-Christians opportunity to hear the gospel in a non-threatening and familiar environment (the world of sport).

To help with the work they have a number of resources available, both for young and old alike. If you are a sports lover or know others who are, connect with Gareth at:

garethandali@xtra.co.nz. He is eager to hear from Christians who are actively involved in the sporting culture that plays such a big part in our country.

Young People in Service

2:17am

By Carl Muir

2:17a.m. Saturday night (morning!); my phone keeps receiving texts; ‘Carl, come pick us up’, ‘Carl, r u awake?’ and ‘can u give us a ride home?’. I try to ignore those texts - I mean, it is 2:17a.m.! I’ve got prayer meeting in five hours! So I just turned my phone off and rolled over. I should have done that before I went to bed.

Then, ‘Tap, tap, tap’ And, ‘Knock, knock,’ And then, ‘Carl, Carl!’

So I finally roll out of bed and open the curtain. What do I see? I see three of my youth group boys standing on my front lawn. ‘Yo, gimme a minute bro.’ I put on some clothes and go unlock the front door - ‘Wassup boys?’

“Oh Carl, can you give us a ride home? We just came from the clubrooms so can u give us a ride home?” “John almost got jumped” “Will’s as drunk as!”

“Okay fullas. I’ll just get my keys. Did you win?”, I ask.

‘Nah! But Will played mean. He was mean!’”, the two straighter ones agree.

That’s all the dialogue I can remember, but I consider that situation one of the biggest blessings of being in ministry for the last 6 years.

You might ask, “Carl, please explain when being woken up and misused by 3 semi-drunk teenagers becomes a blessing?”

If you have read this far you will have realized that even I could not see the blessing at the beginning. But I thank God for being thrust into this situation without a choice on my behalf. If God didn’t bring those boys to my house, I would have quite happily gone back to bed – but not anymore.

Those that know me will know that I’m not much of a talker. Therefore I enjoy opportunities where actions can speak louder than words; and I believe this was one of those opportunities.

This was an opportunity to show God’s tremendous love and grace poured out for us, not because we were worthy or deserved it, but because God in His great mercy reached down and chose us when we were far from Him. With re-

gard to these boys, I hope I responded to their faith in me, and showed them love and grace as a reflection of Christ. The part that made me happiest was that they knew I would care, no matter what the time. They also knew I wouldn’t judge them for their actions, and they trusted me enough to ask. The opportunities this situation brought to speak grace into their lives at a later date were also a blessing.

There is a saying that sums this up nicely, ‘People don’t want to know how much you know, until they see how much you care.’

The thing that excites me and scares me at the same time is that God chooses us to take His message of grace and salvation to the people. Us! Scary, eh? It used to freak me out and still does on occasion, but it is an amazing opportunity. Especially when I look at all these young men, and ask; “Who is gonna take Jesus to them? Who is gonna put up with their lying, arrogant mouths, their thieving hands, blocked ears, their offensive lifestyles and empty stomachs?”

After six years of ministry, when I look at these boys, I don’t see those attributes anymore, I see friends and bro’s, men who I love, living in rebellion towards God. The only difference between them and me is that they haven’t yet surrendered their lives to Christ.

So if God can lead them to that position using my words, actions and love, then I feel extremely blessed to be woken by three semi-drunk youth group boys at 2:17a.m. on a Saturday night.

Carl Muir is 27 years old and comes from Owaka in the Catlins. He has studied Graphic Design and currently works for NZ Post. He is a youth leader at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Takanini.



Trinity Boys Group with Carl (at front pointing)

Call to the Campus

By Josh Eyre

Growing up as a pastor's kid there was always a shroud of magical mystery around 'the call to ministry'. I never quite knew what led my father into the ministry. Maybe he had had a divine encounter like Paul on the road to Damascus, or the finger writing on the wall to Belshazzar?

In my second year of university in Christchurch, I was faced with the question; 'What am I going to give my life to?' I had a burden to reach and disciple university students but was still completely stumped. I started to pray for God to show me and started asking people about 'the call'. I continued to pray for the next two years while finishing my Physics degree. I had to discern the will of God as I was graduating at the end of the year!

For seven humbling months I prayed and looked blindly for signs, during this time I was searching the Scriptures for guidance and had begun to meditate on Psalm 37:4 'Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart'. The more I chewed on this verse the more I began to see that as we delight ourselves in Jesus, then our hearts are progressively shaped like His and take on His desires.

It was an incredibly freeing moment when God showed me that the call to ministry is the deep unshakable burden He lays on our hearts when we delight ourselves in Him with the faith to step out and trust that this burden is from Him. From that moment I knew that my call was to reach and disciple New Zealand university students.

Now knowing my call, I realised that I knew little about reaching and discipling generation Y's. I started to investigate the fruit of the existing ministry's on our campuses and was quite discouraged. I then knew I needed to go and gain the skills and experience needed overseas. In 2006 I went to serve with University Impact (Campus Outreach) in Brisbane. My training was predominantly on the job with University Impact at the University of Queensland. We were on the campus and in the college rooms from day one.

This was a huge jump as no amount of theoretical study can prepare you to engage people on the gospel. Over the three years I was not so much taught how to do ministry but how to think in ministry. This is vitally important as our university campuses are the fastest changing environments where one ministry model will have a very limited life span. One must constantly get back to the first principles to deduce the most effective way of engaging the rising generations.



Josh & Kirsten Eyre

It is now six years since God first laid the burden to reach and disciple New Zealand University students and we have completed our first whole year on the University of Otago campus! This year has been what we are calling the 'Big Hole Year' because we have been digging the hole to pour in the foundations of the ministry. This year we have been praying for two things; that God would open our eyes to see where He wants us to focus our energy, and that He would open key strategic doors into the campus.

God has done way more than we imagined: we now have 35 students meeting regularly for Bible study, fellowship and prayer. One of the major things we have been shown is that we are to focus our energy on the Colleges and Halls of Residence. God has given us an open door into four already! Please pray for the students on the University of Otago campus. Pray that they would encounter the living Jesus in the Scriptures and become lifelong labourers in His harvest.

Josh & Kirsten Eyre are spearheading the Ignite Student Ministry at Otago University under Grace Bible Church, Dunedin. Josh is also originally from Owaka. Kirsten is from Auckland.



Young People in Service

Looking to the Future

By Matt & Rosalind van Rij

Having found ourselves married in May 2007, we were keen to spend the first year of our lives together studying God's Word fulltime. Matt had been planning a year at Bible College for some time and we both had an interest in overseas mission. It seemed wise to prepare ourselves and gather tools and skills in case we did find ourselves on the mission field.

One evening we were talking to our pastor and he suggested the Diploma in Bible and Missions at Moore Theological College in Sydney. Before we knew it we had been accepted and were heading to Australia with a couple of bags and some boxes.

We arranged our first night's accommodation the day before we flew out. Bruce & Pat Christian (aptly named!) of Rose Bay took us in for our first weeks. Our first days in Sydney were a trial as we struggled to make ourselves understood and walked the streets in the rain trying to find a flat.

It was a relief, therefore, to start College and be surrounded by brothers and sisters with whom we had so much in common. It was a meaningful start to College life to attend the opening chapel service and sing alongside hundreds of other, mainly young, Christians.

Our diploma class had around 30 students, but we spent the majority of our time with the 110 people commencing the three and four year degree courses. It was challenging and rewarding and it definitely prompted a greater appreciation for God's Word. It was also good to re-evaluate our own thoughts and ideas in the light of the Bible.

We appreciated the practical commitment of the college to evangelism in the community. We found the door-knocking was a great challenge for us. It turned out to be an encouraging exercise; not only for our faith but also because of the conversations we were able to have with people.



Matt & Rosalind van Rij

We have returned to New Zealand now but we continue to look back on our time at Moore College with much fondness. We particularly enjoyed developing deep friendships with some of the other individuals and young couples at College. We recommend Moore's healthy theology: a clear focus on submission to the Word of God. There was stuff we disagreed with, but you will find that anywhere.

Looking back, we see that we learned as much about God outside of College as we had through our lectures. We learned how weak and fickle our faith is when we faced struggles with money and accommodation. We learned to trust God too as we hankered for the quiet life of New Zealand.

Despite the challenges we faced, we are overwhelmed with God's kindness and His provision for us through both friends and strangers. We continue to ponder overseas mission and are praying that God would use our year of study irrespective of our location. Meanwhile we are enjoying our involvement at Grace At Wellington, and the view of the snowy mountains of the Mainland in the distance.

Matt & Rosalind live in Lower Hutt and attend Grace@Wellington. Matt hails from Christchurch and Ros from Hastings.

"We all want progress, but if you're on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive."

C S Lewis

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Jim Elliot
(martyred at age 29)

Tairawhiti Outreach Day



Grace Church Gisborne knows that we are all missionaries all the time, but each year we engage in a focused weekend of outreach. On Saturday 8th November, we put on a roast dinner for 120 people and games for children at the local school grounds.

'We' included an awesome team of helpers from Trinity &

Redeemer churches who travelled from Auckland on Friday night and stayed in the church building. They organised a great 'Top Town' style event at the local school grounds, which the kids loved. The winning team got to shave off Carl Muir's regal beard (and some hair!). The children were very attentive to Kevin's 'Good Person Test' evangelistic message.

Saturday night saw our dinner guests arrive to be entertained by the Trinity Band, the 'Carl & Henry Rap Duo', Clara & Zelita's Japan talk, and some Sunday School children performing impromptu songs. After dinner Geoff took the guests through a presentation of the '2 Ways To Live' gospel presentation. Lots of people took gospel literature and New Testament's home with them. One family was in church the next day for the first time.

A big 'tena koutou' to the Auckland helpers. Pray that the seed sown would fall into good soil.

(See the back page for more photos.)

Good-bye to a Loyal Friend

By Sabina Huber

It is a privilege to be asked to write a tribute to our beloved Jenny (Jean) Thompson (long-standing member of Covenant Presbyterian Church) who passed away on 22nd August 2009, aged 90. I was with her in her last hours, and I hope that my thoughts and words will express something of what Jenny has meant to so many of us.

I am in my present spiritual place today because of Jenny. She led me to the Lord in a Bible study some twenty-five years ago. She helped me understand the liberating truth that I am saved by grace, not by good works (Eph. 2:8).

For many years, with a warm welcoming smile, Jenny and her husband Hugh, greeted our family and every single person entering the church door every Sunday without fail. She had just the right word of caring and encouragement for everyone.

Jenny was my spiritual mother, my friend, my wise counsellor. We would have lunch together and talk for hours like close friends. We teased each other too – I'll miss her hearty laugh! It didn't matter that she was almost forty years older than me – she was young-at-heart. She listened and

never judged people but she always encouraged them. Jenny always gave wise advice. When we were at a crossroads in our lives, she would say: *"Take a step, and see what God does. He can only steer a moving vessel. He will open or close doors for you. Then you take the next step."* This has become our guideline ever since. Jenny was a true woman of faith and humility who took every opportunity to witness, to serve, to show love and hospitality, to point people to Christ. She was a living example of 'Christianity in action'. Yes, Jenny was a sinner, but she lived forgiven and she died forgiven.

Even in her suffering in her last days and hours, I was still learning from Jenny. I was learning about life and death, about suffering, and fighting that last battle with faith and courage. A sunset on earth - a sunrise in heaven.

Another close friend of Jenny's put it well when he said: *"Blessed indeed is the fellowship that has even one such servant in its ranks. We cannot express personal sorrow at Jenny's exchange of earthly duties for duties above. Let us all rejoice that our beloved Jenny is united now with Hugh, and together they are with the Lord. Praise be to the Lord, and may God bless His church with many more Jennies in the days to come."*

Jenny's favourite verse was: *'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.'* (Ephesians 3:20-21)



Jenny Thompson with her two sons on her 90th birthday

Overseas Mission

Baby-Sitting in Thailand



By Alison Ure

“Hi Alison, I’m just sending through some information for childcare workers for our Spring Conference in January.” This was the start of a great adventure for six of us from Southland who went to the conference in north Thailand in January this year. The conference is held annually for a large voluntary agency working in Asia where all the workers meet in Thailand for spiritual renewal and refreshment.

The conference centre is at Suan-Bua – about one hour north of Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. The childcare component of the conference was a vital part. Many of the families attending the conference live in quite isolated places so it was very important that we provide an environment for the children where they felt happy and secure. The team provided programmes for children from many different countries and

with many different languages. They were divided into groups and we ran programs based on the Old Testament kings culminating in the King of Kings - Jesus.

It was challenging keeping the children happy and busy while attempting to gain their trust. The parents were grateful and enjoyed being able to fully engage in the conference program. It was also important for them to make connections with people they rarely see or have never met.

Each day we took the children swimming at the beautiful pool complex. They had left behind sub-zero temperatures, so the pool was very popular.

For me a special part of the trip was the opportunity to see our family again and spend some time with them. Another highlight of the conference was being able to meet some of their friends and to hear many wonderful stories of ways the Lord is working; opening closed doors to the Gospel and bringing hungry souls with many questions across the paths of these folk.

There are great opportunities for people with a heart for English teaching in Asia. One young teacher has 180 students wanting to know more about Christianity as a result of her Christmas parties last year. There seems to be a real openness amongst the students and those that are working with them have boundless opportunities to answer questions about Christ.

Alison and her husband Murray live in Southland and belong to Wyndham Evangelical Church. This article is deliberately vague in some areas to protect workers in countries hostile to Christians.

(See the back page for more photos)

Japan Team 2009



Malcolm and Cathy Tasker are off again to Japan with their 5th team of helpers in tow. A team of 13 members from Covenant and Trinity Churches are heading to Japan on 4th December for three weeks of mission work, returning on 27th December. They will be working alongside missionaries such as Martin and Ruth Ghent.

The team have spent the past year fundraising and having weekly get-togethers to learn and practise songs and cultural dance items. Meanwhile the missionaries in Japan have been arranging outreach services and visits to schools and pre-schools where the Japan Team will perform.

Please pray for them as they travel and for open hearts of the Japanese people they meet.

Directory

NORTHERN PRESBYTERY

MANUREWA

Covenant Presbyterian Church

77 Rogers Road, Manurewa, Auckland
Service Times: 10:00am & 6:00pm
Pastors: Peter Boyd & Peter Reynolds
P: (09) 269-1046
E: covenantchurch@ihug.co.nz

TAKANINI

Trinity Presbyterian Church

Takanini School Hall, Old Park Place
Service Times: 10:00am
Pastors: Andrew Macpherson
P: (09) 267-2847
E: trinitychurch@orcon.net.nz
www.trinitychurch.org.nz

FLAT BUSH

Redeemer Grace Presbyterian Church

Chapel Downs School Hall, Flat Bush
Service Time: 10:30am
Pastor: Wally Rakete
P: (09) 262-3463
www.redeemergpc.com

MANGERE

Providence Presbyterian Church

22 Rosella Road, Mangere, Auckland
Service Time: 10:00am
Contact: Elder Uaita Levi
P: (09) 267-9440

CENTRAL AUCKLAND

City Presbyterian Church

Church Office:

214 K'Road, Shops 3&4
Newton, Auckland

Mailing Address:

PO Box 68211

Newton, Auckland 1145

Pastor: Travis Scott

P: (09) 550-5415 / 021 628 041

E: tscott@citypres.org.nz

GISBORNE

Grace Church Gisborne

481 Gladstone Road
(beside Teal Motel)

Service Time: 10:30am

Pastor: Geoff Macpherson

P: (06) 868-1411 / 027-7276711

www.gracechurchnz.org

ROTORUA

Pastor: Steve Panapa

P: 021-839499

E: stevenfuieva@gmail.com

CENTRAL PRESBYTERY

NEW PLYMOUTH

Grace Community Fellowship

Fred Tucker Memorial Hall, Bell Block
Service Times: 10:00am & 6:30pm
Pastor: David Farr
P: (06) 759 9378
www.gracenp.co.nz

WANGANUI

Grace Presbyterian Church

Presbytery Contact: Richard Eyre
P: (03) 359-5044
E: eyred@paradise.net.nz

WELLINGTON

Grace@Wellington

Thistle Hall Community Centre,
293 Cuba St, Wellington.
Service Times: 10:30am & 5:30pm
Pastor: Ian Bayne P: (04) 976-5093

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 (preaching station)
Service Time: 4:00pm
Contact: Andrew Johnson
P: (03) 685-8222

CHRISTCHURCH

Grace Presbyterian Church

Fendalton Community Centre,
170 Clyde Road, Fendalton
Service Times: 10:30am & 6:00pm
Interim Pastors: Richard Eyre /
Kris Morrison
P: (03) 359-5044
www.journey.org.nz

Lamp Presbyterian Church

(Korean Language Service)

Riccarton Baptist Church, cnr Rattray &
Peverel St.
Service Time: 1:00pm
Pastor: John Oh
P: (03) 960-6879 / 021-855267

Rock of Ages (Arabic Language)

Windermere School, Condell Ave
Service Time: 6:00pm
Contact: Botros Morgan
P: (03) 357-1059 / 021-1893886

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY

DUNEDIN

Grace Bible Church

Leith Bowling Club, Duke Street, Dunedin
Service Time: 10:00am
Pastor: Mark Smith
P: (03) 473-8100

WAIHOLA

Tokomairiro Grace Bible Church

Service Time: 10:00am
Contact: Grant Bullin
P: (03) 417-7120

OWAKA

Catlins Evangelical Church

Owaka Community Centre,
3 Ovenden Street, Owaka
Service Times: 10:30am & 6:30pm
Contact: Gavin Landreth
E: landrethgw@farmside.co.nz

GORE

Grace Presbyterian Church

Service Times: 10:30am & 6:30pm
Pastor: Bruce Lietze
P: (03) 931-7090

WYNDHAM

Wyndham Evangelical Church

Corner of Balaclava and Redan Streets
Service Times: 10:30am & 6:30pm
Pastor: Andrew Young
P: (03) 206 4147
www.wyndhamevangelical.org.nz

INVERCARGILL

Grace Presbyterian Church

Cnr. Centre and Morton Streets,
Georgetown, Invercargill
Service Times: 10:30am & 6:30pm
Pastors: Barry Swann & Peter van den Brink
P: (03) 217-7679

TUATAPERE

Tuatapere Fellowship

Scout & Guide Hall, Erskine St
Service Time: 10:30am (fortnightly)
Contact: Bruce Barney
P: (03) 225-5734

Photos: Serving Around the World

Baby-Sitting in Thailand (see details on page 14)



Redeemer Shine Party



Tairawhiti Outreach Day (see details on page 13)

