

Newsletter May 2007

Welcome to the May 2007 Edition of the HTC Newsletter. We hope you will find it informative. Please contact us if you require more copies, or feel free to photocopy this one to pass on to others you think may be interested in our work.

Principal's Letter

The Highland Theological College has just passed another milestone in its development. Our BA Honours Degree in Theological Studies has been revalidated for a further five years. At the same time, UHI carried out its internal Subject Review of Theology and we passed with flying colours. It is always a difficult and tense period leading up to these events and there is a huge amount of paperwork which has to be generated, running into several thousand pages. Nevertheless, the work was completed on time and the event was successful. We are deeply indebted to Hector Morrison, the Vice-Principal and Subject Network Leader, who led the team and who prepared most of the documentation but everyone on the team performed well and once again HTC's high academic standards have been recognised externally. This was the culmination of what has been a very good year for the college, not only in academic terms but also in business and financial terms.



Another exciting development will be the launch of our new MTh in Reformed Theology which we expect to begin in October. This was the gap in our portfolio of degree offerings and should be attractive to ministers who will take the degree part-time, as well as full-time students from home and overseas.

It has also been good to see the staff team develop. We said farewell to Glenda Medhurst from the Academic Office but have just welcomed Rosita Joseph-Mondesir, who comes to us from UHI. She will be our new Academic Officer and will assist the Registrar, Ruth Craigie, in developing the work of that office, which is the nerve centre of the college! It has also been good to see Marina MacKenzie, our Development Officer, settle into the task and to the team. She is already making a significant contribution to our work, for which we are very grateful.

All in all then, we have a great deal for which to be thankful and are very much encouraged in the work. We do not however take any of this for granted. We are totally dependant upon God's gracious providence and we rely upon the prayers of his people. I would urge you to partner with us in the work by your prayer, by your giving and by encouraging people to come and study with us. Remember, we are not simply offering degree courses for ministers in training. For example, we have an Access Course suitable for anyone who wants know more about the Christian Faith. This course assumes nothing and has no entry requirements. In addition, it is possible for people to take modules of our degree for interest, without intending to complete the whole course. Whatever your needs are, from the Access Course to a PhD, HTC can help.

Professor Andrew McGowan, Principal

Student News

We are delighted to be able to celebrate with Paul Yeulett, who makes HTC history as our first student to complete the BA Theological Studies solely by Open Learning. Paul has studied by a combination of web-based materials and video-conferencing, with the occasional visit to Dingwall. We are delighted to learn that Paul has been called as minister to Crowmoor Baptist Church, Shrewsbury. His Ordination and Induction took place on 14th April and we wish him well in his ministry there.

Congratulations also go to Dr John Robertson as he makes HTC history as our oldest student to graduate. John was a sprightly 83 years of age when he graduated last October, and he just goes to show that 'you're never too old to learn'! John is also our first student to complete the BA by part-time study. We congratulate him on his tremendous achievement.

We are deeply encouraged by the achievements of all our students, but these in particular are great examples of just how suitable HTC courses are for anyone! We hope you will be encouraged too, and may even realise that *you* could also sign up for one of our courses. There really is something for everyone! Contact us to find out more.

World Reformed Fellowship

The World Reformed Fellowship is an organisation which links together individuals, institutions, congregations and denominations in the Reformed tradition of Christian theology (website: www.wrfnet.org). The organisation was created in the year 2000 when two older organisations joined together, one of which was working in America & Asia and the other of which was working in North & South America. The new organisation is a world-wide organisation, with regional groups in Europe, Asia, Australia, North America, South America and Africa. Professor McGowan was invited to the inaugural meeting of the WRF in 2000 and was elected as Vice-Chairman of the organisation. He recently attended the Executive Committee meeting held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, which he chaired in the absence of Dr. Rick Perrin, who has been ill. The organisation is in its early stages but had a most successful General Assembly in South Africa last year. The good news for us is that the WRF has agreed to hold its next General Assembly in Scotland in 2010, the 450th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation. We look forward to welcoming Reformed Christians from all over the world.

Professor McGowan also chairs the Theological Commission of WRF and this commission has been set the task of preparing a new Reformed Statement of Faith for the 21st Century, the work to be completed by 2010. All of our existing reformed confessions were written in Western Europe in response to medieval Catholicism. It is interesting and exciting to think of what might emerge from this international effort, including as it does scholars from Scotland, England, Ireland, France, Italy, Australia, the USA, South Africa, Kenya, Brazil, Hong Kong, Korea & Indonesia.

(From left: Professor Pierre Berthoud, Professor Andrew McGowan, Dr. Wilson Chow and Dr. Victor Cole.)



\$10,000 Challenge Fund

In the last newsletter we reported that a generous American supporter of the College had offered to donate \$10,000 to HTC, provided we could raise the same in donations. The 'matched funding' idea generated a lot of excitement, and we are delighted to let you know that your generous support has indeed raised a matching sum. Thank you for your generosity.

Academic Officer



We are delighted to welcome to the HTC staff Miss Rosita Joseph-Mondesir. Rosita has been appointed as Academic Officer and will work closely with Ruth Craigie, Academic Registrar.

Rosita's main areas of responsibility will include general administration, handling course enquiries, processing applications, managing student databases, tracking student assignments, servicing committees, and making exam arrangements. She joins us from UHI Executive Office and brings with her a wealth of experience, having previously worked as Research Degrees Administrative Assistant, Student Development Officer, Student Support Services Assistant and latterly Academic Administrator (Faculties and Subject Network). Prior to that Rosita worked in South West London for Wandsworth Youth Inclusion Project.

We are very pleased and excited to have Rosita in the HTC team. Welcome Rosita!

Development Officer

Regular readers of the HTC newsletter will already be aware that a new Development Officer has been appointed. That's me! I started at HTC on 1st February and have been given a very warm welcome. It's a privilege to be part of the HTC team and to be involved in God's work here. I've been getting to know a lot about what goes on behind the scenes and I'm getting to grips with where my job fits in around everyone else's. Already I can see that there's lots to do and I'm going to be kept very busy! Please let me know if there is anything I can do to keep you informed of what is going on at the College. You can contact me on 01349 780223 or email me at marina.mackenzie@htc.uhi.ac.uk I look forward to hearing from you!

Marina MacKenzie, Development Officer

Finance Officer

HTC requires a Finance Officer to begin in July. For further information please contact Fiona Cameron on 01349 780208 or by email at Fiona.Cameron@htc.uhi.ac.uk

Charles Falconer BSc, M.Phil, BA

On 19th March, some of the staff of HTC joined with a very large congregation in the East Church, Inverness, for the funeral of Charles Falconer, a former HTC student and colleague who died of a brain tumour at the age of 51. Charles was an exceptionally talented individual who never boasted of any of his multiple giftings or achievements, but always esteemed others better than himself.

When HTC moved to Dingwall, Charles came to the college, firstly as a student, but soon took over as our ICT technician while still continuing theological studies part-time. Of a gentle and generous disposition, Charles was a wonderfully obliging individual who always put others first and went out of his way to be helpful in any way possible. His life exuded the grace and love of his Redeemer.

While, in recent years, Charles had moved on to teaching, he returned to studying theology part-time at honours level, at HTC, having previously gained the BA. We miss him deeply but are assured that he is 'with Christ' which is 'better by far'. We commend his father, two sisters and the wider family circle to the God of all comfort.

Teaching Theology in Beijing

When a friend from St. Andrew's University asked if I would be interested in teaching a course at the University of Beijing, it seemed too good an opportunity to pass up. (And that first impression proved to be more true than I could imagine!) So, in January-February of this year, I ended up in Beijing for eight days teaching a group of around 50 Chinese students an introduction and overview of the Old Testament.

Beijing University is China's largest and most prestigious university. It was founded in 1898 and occupies a beautiful campus in the North-West of the almost unbelievably massive city of Beijing. As part of their on-going development programme it was decided a few years ago that Beijing University (Beida, as it is called locally) should teach a course in Christian Theology and I was invited to teach one of the OT modules that is part of this course.



Most of the students taking part in the course were involved in Christian ministry of one sort or another. Some were pastors, others workers on church staff teams and the rest were lay people who had a strong personal interest in studying theology. The students had come to Beijing from all over China to take part in the course—some from as far afield as Hong Kong and Taiwan in the far south and others from Inner Mongolia in the far north. The teaching was fairly intensive with a three-hour block of teaching morning and afternoon each day over five days. One of the PhD students at the Philosophy Department did a valiant job of translating my 'Scottish English' into Mandarin.



The students were very interested and engaged in the classes with lots of questions and interaction. Academic teaching of theology at an official university is not something that Chinese Christians have had access to in the past, so those taking part are understandably keen to make the most of the opportunity that this programme offers. Also, as is often the case in the West, Christians in China sometimes struggle with the issue of how to make use of the Old Testament in their Christian lives and teaching. So it was good to be able to offer some insight into questions of Christian interpretation and appropriation of the OT.

I spoke to several students who are pastors of churches that number 4,000+ members, which hold multiple services each Sunday. It was immensely encouraging for me to learn something more about the Church in a part of the world that has seen massive gospel growth in recent years. Clearly, we in the West have much to learn from the Christian community in China, just as we also have much to offer. So, I look forward to perhaps being able to teach again at Beida and encourage us all to be active in our prayer for the Church in China.

Dr Jamie Grant

Praise the Lord, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Ps. 117

Moody Choir The Moody Men's Collegiate Choir will sing in Inverness East Church of Scotland on Monday 21st May at 7.30pm. All welcome. We urgently need help to find accommodation for the choir members. If you can offer any assistance in this matter, please contact Mrs Fiona Cameron on 01349 780208 or by email at fiona.cameron@htc.uhi.ac.uk

Land, Faith and the Crofting Community: The Church and the Clearances

A talk by Dr Allan W MacColl

The role of the church, particularly the presbyterian church, in the Highland Clearances has long been controversial. Ever since the clearances, ministers have been accused of doing little or nothing to help the thousands who fell victim to eviction. Worse, the clergy are sometimes said to have told people being turned out of their homes that their troubles were their own fault – a punishment for their sins.

Now Dr Allan MacColl, a young historian who is training for the ministry of the Free Presbyterian Church, has challenged this view in a book that is a powerful and important contribution to the history of nineteenth-century Scotland.

At the invitation of the UHI Centre for History and Highland Theological College, Dr MacColl will talk about his work and his findings at 7.30 on the evening of Wednesday 16 May in Croick Church, Strathcarron, near Ardgay. This is a most appropriate location – because, in 1845, the church's grounds became a refuge for families evicted by their laird. Famously, some of these families left inscriptions – which are still to be seen – on one of the church's windows.

Admission to Dr MacColl's talk, "Land, Faith and the Crofting Community: The Church and the Clearances", is free and no ticket is required. Please make the event known to everyone who may be interested.

Have you ever thought you would like to know more about the Bible or the Christian faith?

The Access to Theology course offers you the chance to explore key areas such as the Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Systematic Theology and Pastoral Theology.

Does the thought of study put you off?

The course includes a module on study skills, designed to help you with issues such as planning, reading, writing and even preparing for exams!

Access to Theology is great as a stand-alone course, studied just for interest or personal development, or you can use it to gain entry to the BA Theological Studies degree programme.

Only want to do one module? That's OK! You can select the module you want (from the Access or BA programme) and study at your leisure.....

For more information, contact the Academic Office:
Tel: 01349 780000 Email: htc@uhi.ac.uk

Investors in People

As a result of its 3 year Review on 1 May, HTC is delighted to announce that it continues to meet the Investor in People standard.



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

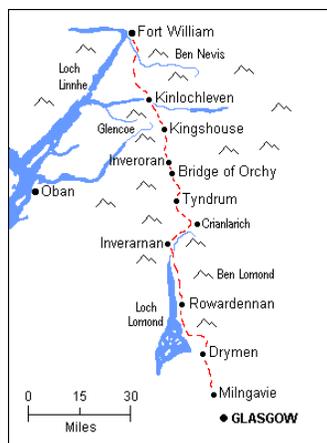
Sponsored Walk

Three HTC staff (Andrew McGowan, Hector Morrison and Fraser Jackson) intend to walk the West Highland Way in July to raise money for the Dumisani Theological Institute & Bible School in King William's town, South Africa and the Zomba Theological College in Malawi.

Dates for your diaries

The HTC Annual Meeting & Graduation will take place on **Friday 26th October**. We are delighted that Professor Ted Donnelly of the Reformed Presbyterian College in Belfast has agreed to be the guest preacher.

In addition, Professor Donnelly will give the fourth F.F. Bruce lecture earlier in the day.



Professor Alistair Wilson, former HTC lecturer in New Testament, is Principal of Dumisani Theological Institute. Dr Bruce Ritchie, minister of Castle Street Church in Dingwall, was formerly a lecturer at Zomba Theological College.

The West Highland Way links Milngavie to Fort William and covers a distance of approximately 96 miles. Our intrepid walkers aim to complete the trek in 6 days.

If you'd like to sponsor the team please contact us on 01349 780000 or email htc@htc.uhi.ac.uk

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