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## **Newsletter Spring 2009**

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### **A Quick, Painless Labour and then...**

Some fifteen years ago at the beginning of 1994, the small group of Christian ministers and businessmen who had been prayerfully considering the setting up of a theological college as part of the proposed University of the Highlands and Islands were issued a challenge by Dr Robert Chalmers, the then Principal of Moray College of Further Education in Elgin. His challenge was that we take the window of opportunity being offered and actually begin the theological college in August of that year. To a man, our immediate response was 'That's not possible!' However, as we took the matter to the Lord both individually and corporately, the message that kept coming back to us from the Lord and his word was 'No! It's not impossible!'

The particular scripture that was burned into my own heart and mind by the living Spirit of God, and that gave me the confidence to leave behind the regular salary that went with life as a Church of Scotland minister, was from Isaiah 66:7-8: 'Before she goes into labour she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment.' This seemed to fit so well with the seeming impossibility and yet immediacy of the 'new thing' we were being called into back in 1994: 'Can a theological college be born in a day?' Yes, if it's God's idea and God's time. And so it proved to be with the Highland Theological College.

As we persevered with the work through its many early challenges and difficulties, there were many occasions when the following verse from Isaiah (v 9) became my stay and the only thing that I had to fall back on: 'Do I bring to the moment of birth and not give delivery?' says the Lord. 'Do I close up the womb when I bring to delivery?' says your God.' The answer expected to these rhetorical questions is 'No! God does not abort his work, his "babies."' He sees them all through not only to birth, but also to maturity in Christ.

(continued overleaf)

## **A Quick, Painless Labour and then... (continued)**

Through the intervening years, with all their joys and trials, we have seen the truth of these words being outworked, as - in the midst of much exhausting labour on our part - we have often had to stand back and just witness God doing what again and again seemed so impossible. And it is this action of God that is so important, as it has been from the very beginning of creation. All of what we have witnessed of the Lord in action has strengthened our belief that He will continue what he is about in and through HTC until that work is complete.

So, now, even though the Lord has called our founding Director and first Principal, the Rev Professor Andrew T.B. McGowan, back into the preaching and pastoral ministry, we await, with great expectancy, the fulfilment of the following verses again from Isaiah (10ff): 'Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance...' These verses seem to speak of days of renewal, refreshing and abundance in the future, and we in HTC certainly long earnestly for such times of spiritual renewal in Scotland and beyond. Whether we see it in our generation or not is not the most important matter, but that the Lord will do this in His time and for His glory. But, how amazing and exciting to be involved in this great adventure with God!

I would encourage you to pray much for HTC in these coming weeks that the Lord might place over us the leader of His choosing to bring us into the next important stage of His purpose and work for the college.



Rev Hector Morrison, Acting Principal

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### **Thanks from Andrew**

Having just completed my work with HTC after fourteen years, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the cards, e-mails, gifts and kind words which June and I have received in these past two weeks. It was not easy to leave HTC after having been 'in with the bricks' since the beginning but we are absolutely sure that my move to be Minister of Inverness East Church is God's call.

This is not a complete departure, since I will continue to supervise my PhD students and teach the occasional module, but it does mark a major change in our lives and one for which we would appreciate your prayers.

Each day in my study at the manse, as I sit on the lovely leather chair given to me by the staff of HTC, in front of the beautiful oak desk given to me by the Board of HTC, I shall remember HTC in my prayers. I look forward to hearing good things as the College goes from strength to strength under the new management team.

Thanks again for fourteen very happy years!

The Rev. Professor Andrew McGowan



## Interim Arrangements

At its December meeting the Board of Governors appointed Hector Morrison to the position of Acting Principal and Dr Jamie Grant to the position of Acting Vice-Principal, both appointments being temporary until the search process for a new Principal has been completed successfully. The Principal's post has been advertised with a closing date for applications of 27th February, 2009, after which the Search Panel will move to interviews and appointment.

## MTh Modules

The next **MTh** modules are as follows:

### February 2nd – 6th 2009

Method in Theology & Dissertation  
Colloquium

Dr Jamie Grant; Dr Michael Bird.

### March 2nd – 6th 2009

Reformed Theological Method  
Professor Paul Helm

### May 25th – 29th 2009

Zwingli and the Swiss Reformation  
Dr Nick Needham

### June 15th – 19th 2009

History of Reformed Theology  
Dr Gerald Bray

Further information can be found on our website at

<http://www.htc.uhi.ac.uk/mthcontml.htm>



Photo: Some of the 2008/09 MTh Students



## Banker's Order Form

**A Community of Faith and Scholarship**

If you would like to make donations to Highland Theological College by Standing Order, please complete and sign this statement and return it to **Highland Theological College, High Street, Dingwall, Ross-shire IV15 9HA**

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Charitable Status in USA**

HTC is a designated Scottish charity and UK taxpayers can contribute to the College using the Gift Aid scheme. HTC also has charitable status in the United States. This means that tax payers in the USA also can make tax deductible donations to HTC. We are grateful to Mr Kirk Susong, a lawyer based in Atlanta, Georgia, who helped set up the 501(c)(3) charitable foundation 'Friends of Highland Theological College, Inc.' to enable this to happen. All donations given to 'Friends of Highland Theological College, Inc.' are channelled directly to Highland Theological College here in Scotland.

Any US taxpayer wishing to make a tax deductible donation to HTC should make a cheque payable to: 'Friends of Highland Theological College, Inc.' and send it to Mr Susong at the following address: 1327 Peachtree Street, Apt. 903, Atlanta, GA 30309. Thank you. Your support is greatly appreciated.

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## **History Modules**

HTC welcomed our first group of BA (Hons) Scottish History students in September 2008. The students are progressing well and have just completed their first exams for semester one. Scottish History is taught from North Highland College UHI and by hosting the degree at HTC students may access this course without needing to leave home. Classes are delivered by Video Conference to HTC and library and student support services are available on site at HTC.

Of course not everyone wishes to sign up for a degree so a range of other options is available including a Certificate and a Diploma in Higher Education. Also on offer are short courses in history by taking individual modules. These courses involve only one class per week and last for 15 weeks. Modules available include: Scottish History, 1066-1603; The Atlantic World; and Themes in Modern British History, 1815-1939.

In addition to History, HTC continues to offer BA (Hons) Culture Studies and other UHI network degrees. Call us on 01349 780000 to find out more.

## **Kenneth MacSween**

Towards the end of last year, we were sorry to get news of the death of Mr Kenny MacSween, one of our main volunteers from the early years of the college, when we were based in Moray College, Elgin. Ken, with his wife Flo, came to help us in the very early days of building up our library in Elgin. They thought they would have sorted and catalogued the books within a few months! But, as the donations of books grew, the MacSweens stayed on to help sift and sort it all, and were with us until we moved to Dingwall in the summer of 1999.

Kenny died in mid November, only a few months after having been diagnosed with cancer. We remember his winsome lifestyle and permanent smile with great fondness and affection, and are deeply grateful for the massive amount of work that both he and Flo did for the college in these formative years.

Kenny is now at home and at rest with the Father. Our prayers follow Flo and the wider family circle.

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## **Mission Lunches**

17 Feb – Michael Cook, Mission Africa

30 Apr – Malcolm MacLeod, Persecuted Church

Visitors welcome, no fee. Bring your lunch along. 1pm, HTC Conference Room.

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## **BA/Access Conference Day and Open Day**

Saturday 7th March 2009. Come along and join the students for worship and lectures for a day. See around the College, browse in the library and meet the tutors. Whole-day programme starting 10.30am. Visitors welcome, no fee.



## Volunteers

We are very grateful to the dedicated team of volunteers who help out in so many ways. Without them our jobs would be even busier! Maybe you would like to join that team? Do you have a few hours now and again that you could spare, maybe to help with administrative tasks, hospitality, etc? Examples are (this list is not exhaustive!):

- Mission Lunches – collect lunch, set up urn etc, clear away crockery afterwards – approximately 6 times per semester, for about 2 hours.
- Morning Worship – set up urn etc, clear away crockery afterwards – Wednesdays during semester, for about 1 hour.
- Newsletter – label and stuff envelopes and prepare for posting – 4 times per year, for up to 1 week.
- Course materials – printing and binding Open Learning packs – September and February for up to 1 week.
- Exam invigilation – as required, for about 2 hours. Mostly January & June.
- Or maybe you could provide B&B for the occasional visitor?

If you feel called to help in some way, however small or infrequent, we'd love to hear from you. Phone us or pop in for a chat.

## Keyboard Request

Each morning during semester, there is a short service of worship held in HTC, led by members of staff or visiting ministers from several different denominations. Praise consists of either unaccompanied psalms, or hymns accompanied by a keyboard. We have been kindly lent a keyboard for some years but it is likely that we will not have this for much longer. If any churches or individuals have a keyboard suitable for accompaniment which is no longer needed, we would be very grateful if you would consider donating it to the College. Thank you.



## Gift Aid

### Form

*giftaid it*

Using this form, you can increase the value of any gifts you make to HTC by about a third. If you are a tax payer and are happy for us to reclaim the tax paid to add it to your donation, from £1 up, please complete and sign this Declaration:

I declare that I, \_\_\_\_\_  
(please enter full name in BLOCK CAPITALS)

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wish all my donations to Highland Theological College (unless I specify in writing) to be treated as Gift Aid donations. This applies to all donations made by me from April 2001 until I give notice in writing.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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Notes:

- You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that HTC reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for every £1 you give).
- You can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying HTC.
- If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that HTC reclaims, you can cancel your declaration.
- If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment Tax Return.
- If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid Tax Relief ask the Finance Officer at HTC, or ask your local tax office for Leaflet IR65.
- Please notify HTC if you change your name or address.

**Please return this completed form to:**

**Highland Theological College,  
High Street, Dingwall IV15 9HA**

Phone: 01349 780000

Fax: 01349 780001

e-mail: [htc@htc.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:htc@htc.uhi.ac.uk)

web: [www.htc.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.htc.uhi.ac.uk)

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## Staff and Student News

Congratulations to **Mike and Naomi Bird** on the birth of their son **Markus Xavier** on 24<sup>th</sup> January. Mother and baby are both well. Mike and Naomi have two daughters, Alexis and Alyssa. Mike lectures in New Testament at HTC.



**Derek Morrison**, an elder in Inverness East Church, completed his Level 1 modules of the BA programme last year. Derek was recently set aside as a Reader by Inverness presbytery.

**Annie MacKinnon**, BA student, recently got engaged to Mark Boag.

**Ian Maddock**, PhD student, and his wife Pam have a new baby son, Lachlan John, born on 7th January.

**Robert Cleland**, BA 2007, is nearing completion of his probationary period with the Church of Scotland. He will be preaching for vacant congregations in coming weeks and would appreciate your prayers.



Marriage of **Merran** (daughter of Noel and Bev Due) to Hadyn. Noel taught Pastoral Theology at HTC from 1996 to 2004. We remember the family in prayer at this time as Bev's cancer has recurred.

**Stewart Mackay**, BA 2003, recently passed the selection board for Army chaplaincy. Stewart served in the Queen's Own Highlanders for five years after leaving school. It was after reflecting on his experiences in the forces that he came to faith. After graduating from HTC in 2003 Stewart went on to train for Church of Scotland ministry. Over the last two years or so he increasingly sensed a call to serve in the army. Stewart feels very much for the soldiers serving on operational tours and now has the experience and skills necessary to serve as a minister to them. He also wishes to develop a better understanding of war and conflict from a Christian perspective. Stewart says, "My time studying at HTC was foundational in preparing me for ministry, and indeed, it has helped shape my sense of call." We wish Stewart well in his career in the Army.

Photos: Stewart and his wife Maggie in Yulin, China.



**Sam Oluoch**, BA 2007, sends us regular prayer letters and news of his ministry in Kenya.

## Semester 2 Enrolment

Semester 2 commences on 9<sup>th</sup> February. New students wishing to enrol on Semester 2 BA modules should contact the Academic Office for more information (Access and postgraduate students can enrol at any time). Details of modules available can be found on the website: [www.htc.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.htc.uhi.ac.uk)

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### Old Testament Evening Classes

Covering some of key themes of the Old Testament, set in their historical and cultural context, these classes will help you to understand the links between the Old Testament story of God's people and the New Testament story of God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

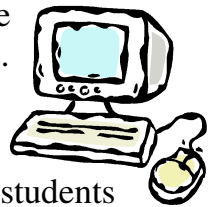
*Currently running:* HTC Dingwall, Wednesday evenings, end January until mid April. Plenty space for more people to join the group. Please phone for further details.

We are very grateful to **Len Cazaly** for taking the Old Testament Evening Classes which were held in Inverness before Christmas. A small group attended and found the classes enjoyable and very beneficial. We are also very grateful to the Rev Dr Malcolm MacInnes (minister) and the congregation of the **Kingsview Christian Centre**, Inverness, for the use of their premises to run the classes.

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### Other Courses Available at HTC

Computing classes available at all levels, from beginners ('Help! Which bit is the mouse?!') to advanced users. French, English and other classes also available. Contact Kevin Sinclair on 01349 780206 or [Kevin.Sinclair@htc.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Kevin.Sinclair@htc.uhi.ac.uk) for more information.



The HTC Learning Centre has facilities to accommodate full- or part-time students following networked UHI degree courses. Students receive tuition from other colleges within the UHI partnership, participating in lectures and seminars through a combination of video-conferencing and on-line resources. Examples of courses which can be followed through the HTC Learning Centre are: BA Cultural Studies (Orkney College UHI); BA Scottish History (North Highland College UHI); BSc Rural Development Studies (Lews Castle College UHI). See the UHI Millennium Institute Prospectus (available from any UHI college) or [www.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.uhi.ac.uk) to find out what's available.

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### Premiere Christian Radio Debate

Dr Mike Bird recently took part in a debate with James Crossley (a non-believing New Testament scholar) on Premiere Christian Radio. Topics covered include: how did Christianity begin?; did Jesus believe he was God?; does the resurrection explain the origins of Christianity?; Paul; Christology; and the Gospels. Click on <http://www.premier.org.uk/unbelievable> to listen.

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### Tracing Former Students

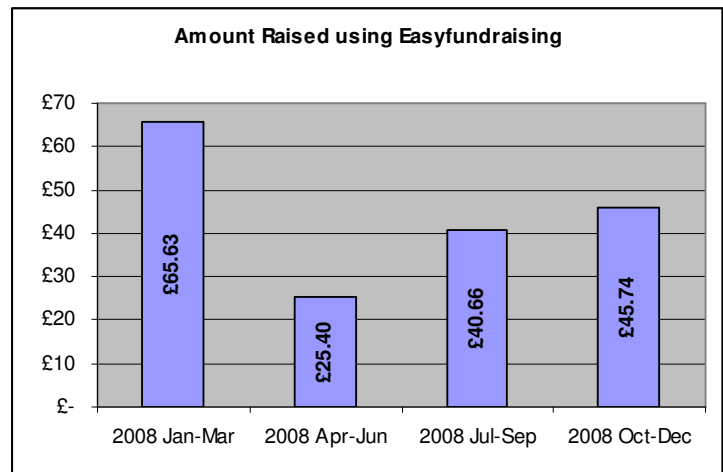
We'd love to hear from our former students and find out what they're up to now. Were you a student at HTC? Please get in touch and let us know how God is using you. Contact Marina on 01349 780000 or [Marina.MacKenzie@htc.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Marina.MacKenzie@htc.uhi.ac.uk)

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'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' Jeremiah 29:11

## Online Shopping

The easyfundraising system is a web-based system to help charities raise extra funds from online shopping. Anyone who does online shopping can support the charity of their choice by simply using the system. It's that easy! It takes seconds to register and costs you nothing. When you shop online a donation is given, by the retailer, to the chosen charity. HTC is registered on the system. Are you? All you need to do is log on to <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/highlandcoll> and follow the simple instructions there. So far a small number of HTC supporters have raised over £170. I'd like to encourage more HTC supporters to use the system. If you can help please do!



*Please help to support Highland Theological College. Raise much needed funds for FREE when shopping online with over 600 popular retailers including Amazon, Next, Argos, M&S, John Lewis, Comet, Currys, Vodafone, DELL and many more.*

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/highlandcoll>

- UP TO 15% FREE DONATION

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The best results in one simple search  
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## Room Hire

HTC has rooms (with excellent IT facilities) available for hire. Parking available and lift access to upper levels. If you would like more information please contact Kevin Sinclair on 01349 780206 or [Kevin.Sinclair@htc.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Kevin.Sinclair@htc.uhi.ac.uk)

- If your mailing details are incorrect please let us know.
- If you have an email address and would like to receive communications that way instead of by mail it could save us a lot of money. Email us with your email contact details.
- If you know of anyone else who would like to be kept informed of HTC's work please encourage them to send us their details so that we can mail or email them too.
- Do you run a Christian business? Would you like to sponsor the HTC Newsletter to help pay for printing, in exchange for a small advert? Please contact Marina for more information.

**Highland Theological College, High Street, Dingwall IV15 9HA**

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