



Newsletter Autumn/Winter 2012

Do you ever find yourself wondering whether God has given up on the Church in Scotland; or, perhaps even just on your own local congregation, or maybe just on you and your family? Some of you who read this belong to vibrant, growing fellowships of God's people and you may wonder how anyone could ever ask such a question. But others of us may find ourselves struggling away in churches that have seen few if any conversions in many years. Little, if anything, appears to be happening to encourage us in the faith, while, on every hand, both in church and in society, there seems to be so much to discourage as the forces of secular humanism become more rampant in society and as the authority of God's word is often undermined within the churches. At such times it is easy to become despondent, and perhaps even to find ourselves echoing Israel's complaint in Isaiah 40:27: 'My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God.'

What pastoral support can we offer to the despondent? We could do worse than emulate the prophet (Isaiah 40) who reminded the people of some of the great truths about their God that had been passed down through all generations (v 21), in particular his omniscience and omnipotence. The Lord's omniscience is highlighted in verses 13-14. In contrast to every human being, and, indeed, to every other claimant of the title 'god,' the Lord has required no instruction, counselling, consultation or enlightenment; he has needed no teacher, guru or guide. His every thought and plan has always been suffused with infinite wisdom; every step he has taken on every path he has trodden has been – and continues to be – right and perfect, even when we have not been able to fathom the way he has taken with us at particular points. 'His understanding no-one can fathom' (v 28).

The Lord's sovereign omnipotence is highlighted wonderfully in most of the rest of the passage where we see him holding the world's oceans in his palm, weighing Everest on his kitchen scales (v 12), and carefully shepherding every individual star and galaxy across the night sky so that none is lost (v 26). Before such an immensely impressive and caring God the nations and their rulers, gods and ideologies are as nothing (vv 16-20; 22-24) – like chaff to be swept away by a little puff of the Almighty's breath. Today rampant secular humanism is no more a problem to this God than Egypt, Babylon, communism or any other '-ism' has ever been. The Almighty Father will use it to accomplish his will and then brush it off his garments and out of his creation when he has finished with it.

Meanwhile, let us 'hope in the Lord' (v 31): waiting with expectant longing for him to act, and trusting him to fulfil his purposes perfectly and timeously.

As we do so, we will find – as others before us have – that our strength is renewed, and that we too will 'soar on wings like eagles ... run and not grow weary ... walk and not be faint' (v 31), even in the midst of the pretentious posturing of the apparently powerful 'Babylonian Empires' of our own day.



Staff movements

Rev Jonathan Fraser, Youth Pastor at Hilton Church, Inverness, has joined the team on a part-time basis to teach the *new Youth Ministry module* on the BA programme.

Rev Trevor Hunt has joined the teaching team on a part-time basis to help with the Scottish Church History module on the BA programme.

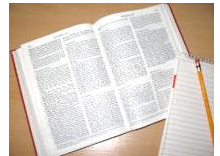
Bob Mackenzie has joined us on a temporary basis as IT Technician to replace Fraser Jackson. Bob and his wife Sally worship at Culduthel Christian Centre, Inverness. Fraser, Dawn and the family are adjusting to life in Africa where Fraser is Librarian at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria in Jos.

Our new Receptionist is **Anne Rodgers**. Anne started at the College following the retirement of Kay Munro. Anne is married to Dougie and they have two daughters and a grandson. Anne enjoys leading Sunday School at Killearnan Church of Scotland.

Studying at HTC

Bursaries may be available to assist students with course fees. Contact us for details.

Access Course An introductory level course in Christian theology, covering Old & New Testament, Pastoral Theology, Systematic Theology and Church History. Study 'for interest only' or as an entry qualification on to the BA Theological Studies programme. Available by **distance learning**: study at home, at your own pace; tutor support provided as and when you need it; convenient and flexible to fit around your own commitments; start date – any time you like. Also available by **full-time, on-campus study**: study in class with other students; start date – Sept'13. Bursaries may be available.



BA Theological Studies Study by **distance learning** or **on-campus**. Contact the Academic Office *now* if you are interested in starting in Semester 2 (Feb'13). Opportunity to take individual modules if there is a specific module that interests you. See website for full module list.

Taught Masters degree MTh modules are delivered in face-to-face week long block teaching sessions. Excellent 'continuing professional development' for those already in positions of ministry. Contact us for more information. Start date: Sept'13.

PhD Ongoing recruitment of full-time and part-time students. Start date to suit student/supervisor. Successful students will be awarded a University of Aberdeen PhD.

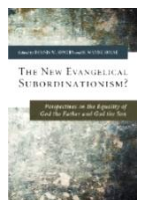
Staff Publications and Conferences

Jamie Grant: Paper given at Tyndale Fellowship Conference, Cambridge, in July on 'Creation and Kingship: Environment and Witness in the *Yhwh mālak* Psalms'.

Jamie Grant: Paper given at Society of Biblical Literature Conference, Chicago, in November on "'When the friendship of God was upon my tent": Covenant as Essential Background to Lament in the Wisdom Literature'.

Jason Maston: 'The Nature of Salvation History in Galatians'. *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters* 2.2 (2012): 25–40.

Michael F Bird and **Robert Shillaker**: 'Subordination in the Trinity and Gender Roles: a response to recent discussion' in Dennis Jowers and H Wayne House (eds), *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son* (Wipf & Stock, 2012).



2012 Graduation and Awards Ceremony



The Graduation and Awards Ceremony was held on Thursday 20th September in Dingwall Free Church. Following the presentation of awards the Reverend Dominic Smart preached.



Access Certificate in Christian Theology

Carol Burgis completed the Access Course by distance learning from her home in the Ness area of Lewis. During her studies she attended the twice-yearly Conference Days for distance learning students and found them helpful.

Mirjam Murphy lives in Glasgow and completed the Access Course by distance learning. She enrolled on the BA course last year and studied on a part-time basis but is now studying full-time, accessing classes by video-conference from Perth College UHI.

Eleanor Price completed the Access Course by distance learning from her home in Romford, Essex.

Certificate of Higher Education in Theological Studies

David Ferguson lives in Invergordon. He completed the CertHE on a part-time basis by distance learning.

Birgit Frantz is from Germany but now lives in Inverness and worships at Inverness Christian Fellowship. She has been actively involved in mission and voluntary work all her Christian life and currently volunteers with Blythswood. Birgit studied the Access Course full-time on-campus and went on to complete the CertHE by attending classes for a year.

Diploma in Higher Education in Theological Studies

Catherine Steed is from Wales but has been in Glasgow for several years. She and her husband Phil run the Scottish office of OMF. Cathy studied part-time by distance learning but was able to attend classes on-campus occasionally. She also contributed to the 'Exploring Other Faiths' module through her experience of overseas mission.



Bachelor of Arts in Theological Studies

Angela Brydson undertook her studies full-time by distance learning from her home in Lockerbie in order to enter the Church of Scotland diaconate.



Jennifer Burns is from Ardrossan. She first enrolled in the 2003/4 session and incorporated a break part-way through the course for a visit to India then completed her studies on a part-time basis on her return.

Colin Campbell is from Belfast. He studied on a part-time basis by distance learning, working steadily to complete the degree. Colin is the manager of the Evangelical Bookshop in Belfast.

Janet Davidson lives in Inverness and was able to study full-time on-campus at HTC. She was a great encourager of both students and staff. A chaplaincy placement during her studies confirmed to Janet that this is the type of work that she feels called to. Her son Christopher started as a full-time on-campus student on the Access Course in September.



Gregor Ferry is from Comrie. He comes from a missionary family serving in Asia. Gregor studied full-time on-campus at HTC and his next aim is to complete a TEFL course.

Nathan Owens completed most of his studies by distance learning from his home in Glasgow but in his final year was able to make more frequent visits to campus. Nathan trained for ministry in the United Free Church of Scotland, following in the footsteps of his dad who is a UF minister in Glasgow. Nathan was the pianist at the Graduation ceremony.



Michael Robertson lives in Inverness with his wife and young family. Being a local lad, Mike was able to attend classes on campus. He studied as a Church of Scotland candidate and is now serving as probationary minister at the Barn Church, Culloden.

Gary Torbet undertook most of his studies from his home in Brought Ferry but also made regular visits to campus to catch up with lecturers and fellow students. Gary is passionate about the plight of disabled and very poor people in Romania and set up the charity Carpathian Aid to provide support and tackle discrimination.



Bachelor of Arts with Upper Second Class Honours in Theological Studies

John Murray is an auxiliary minister in the Church of Scotland presbytery of Lochcarron and Skye. From his home in Portree John studied mostly by video-conferencing but also made occasional visits to Dingwall to join classes on campus.



PhD

Kevin Chiarot is minister of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Tennessee. His thesis, which was supervised by Andrew MacGowan, was on the human nature of Christ in the theology of T F Torrance.

Adam Copenhaver is from the USA. He spent the last six months of his studies here in Scotland and preached in some of the local churches while he was here. His thesis, supervised by Jason Maston and Mike Bird, examined the identity of Paul's opponents in the letter to the Colossians. Adam is now investigating the possibility of setting up an HTC-type theological college in his area of Washington State.

Michael Gurney is from Oregon and is Professor of Theology at Multnomah University. He wrote his PhD thesis, which was supervised by Andrew MacGowan and Paul Helm, on the influence of Scottish common-sense realism on the theology of Charles Hodge.

Jonathan Master teaches theology at Cairn University in Philadelphia. His thesis, supervised by Nick Needham and Rob Shillaker, was on the historical figure Anthony Burgess, with special reference to his teachings on the doctrine of assurance.

Todd Smedley is part of the ministry team at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Washington DC. Todd's research was supervised by Andrew MacGowan. His thesis focussed on the covenant theology of Zacharias Ursinus.

Doctor of Ministry

Kenneth Barnes previously headed up the Oxford American Mission but has recently taken up a job at Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia. Ken's DMin dissertation reflected on the work of the Oxford American Mission at the University of Oxford.

Michael McQueen is from the Urbana area of Illinois where he is Academic Dean at Urbana Theological Seminary. Mike's DMin thesis focussed on leadership development in the Chinese Christian community in the States.

James Mills is from the States but he and his wife Anne live and work in Belgium where they are involved in a ministry focussing on the creative arts. Jim's DMin thesis focussed on Christian worldview perspectives regarding creativity and the arts.



Additional Awards

Claire Ireland is now in her third year as a full-time on-campus BA student. She works very hard to keep on top of her studies and is a great encourager of her fellow students. She serves as class rep and has been instrumental in bringing together students from HTC and UHI partner colleges into a UHI Christian Union. Claire is a worthy winner of the **HTC Endeavour Award**.

Michael Robertson produced excellent academic work and showed great determination to succeed despite the challenges of having a severe visual impairment. As well as university work, training to become a Church of Scotland minister and being dad to three young children, he found time to volunteer with Carpathian Aid alongside fellow student Gary Torbet. Together Mike and Gary organised a summer mission trip to Romania in July to attend a camp to help disabled and disadvantaged children. Mike was presented with the **HTC Student of the Year award**.

UHI Awards

Video-conferencing is used extensively throughout UHI for learning, teaching and administration. In fact, UHI is one of the biggest users of video-conferencing in the UK! It allows students to attend their local UHI campus to access classes delivered by another UHI campus. Theology students can dial in to classes delivered by HTC. Conversely, students living in the Ross-shire area can come to the HTC campus to access classes delivered by other UHI partner colleges. This year three students on other UHI courses chose to graduate at the HTC ceremony alongside our theology students.

Higher National Diploma in Accounting

Esther Mackinnon was born and brought up in Harris but now lives in Alness. Esther studied Accounting part-time at Inverness College UHI and is seeking work in an accounts office.

Bachelor of Arts in Scottish Cultural Studies

Kerry Macartney, from Beauly, accessed UHI's Scottish Cultural Studies programme (delivered by Orkney College UHI) by video-conference at the HTC campus. Kerry's husband David is a theology student on the BA programme.

Bachelor of Arts in Scottish History

Jennifer Ross lives in Maryburgh and is married with two children. She accessed her studies through UHI's History Centre in Dornoch and at the HTC campus. Jennifer is now completing her teacher training and hopes to teach history.

Ordinations and Inductions



Scott McRoberts (MTh 2011) was ordained and inducted as the first minister of St Columba's New Charge in Inverness on 2nd November. This recently formed congregation of the Church of Scotland is based in a rapidly growing residential area of the city.

Alan Monk (BA student) was set apart as a Reader in Dunfermline Presbytery of the Church of Scotland on 23rd September. Alan studied the Access Course full-time on-campus and is now on the BA programme studying by distance learning and accessing classes from Perth College UHI.



James Ross (BA 2008) was inducted to the work of the Service to Overseas Students ministry at Glasgow City Free Church on 12th October.

Lunchtime Talks

This semester our Thursday speakers have included **Nabil Omeish** from the Iraqi Bible Society who spoke about how God is working in the Middle East and how the Bible Society is making a difference in people's lives. **Maryon Gardiner** spoke about Project Ecuador

<http://www.projectecuador.co.uk/>, a multi-faceted mission agency set up by her daughter

Andrea. Zimbabwean ex-international cricketer **Henry Olonga** (pictured) shared his story of how his stance against the Mugabe regime forced him to flee his country. He spoke of the importance of his faith and how God is using him now. The talks have all been inspirational, each in different ways.



40-4-40 Challenge

The 40-4-40 Challenge consists of three separate events which together cover a distance of 40 miles. The ambitious fundraising target of £40,000 was set. The significance of the '40' is that the idea originally came from Murray McCheyne (chairman of HTC's Board of Governors) when he celebrated his 40th birthday in the summer. The three events were:

Monster Swim in Loch Ness	1 mile
Applecross Duathlon	24 miles
Sponsored Walk	15 miles



Murray & Jamie after the Monster Swim



Murray McCheyne (chairman) and Jamie Grant (vice-principal) were delighted with their times. Jamie swam the mile in 29.31 minutes and Murray in 48.13 minutes. Well done to them both!

On a very windy day in September a team of four from HTC took part in the Applecross Duathlon. It was a very stormy weekend with quite a lot of trees down and other damage so the team did exceptionally well to cycle 15 miles into a strong headwind after a rugged 9 mile run.



From left, David, Robert, Barbara & Murray



David Kirk (PhD student) completed the 24 mile route in the very impressive time of 2 hours 44 minutes. Murray McCheyne and Robert Shillaker (lecturer) both completed in just over three hours and Barbara MacPhail (finance officer) in a fraction over four hours. It wasn't competitive but there was a lot of friendly rivalry on the day! Well done to them all!

The day of the sponsored walk was beautiful and sunny. Starting at the College, a small but cheery group of walkers enjoyed the walk through Brahan Wood and up past Loch Ussie and Knockfarrel before heading back to Dingwall. They were even back before the start of the football in the afternoon!



Some of the walkers

The efforts of all who took part in the 40-4-40 events have raised around £3000 – a long way short of the target but a boost to HTC funds nonetheless. If you haven't already done so and would like to make a donation you can do it online at <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/highlandtheologicalcollegeuhi> or by post (clearly marked 40-4-40) to the College address. Thank you!

Dates for your Diaries

Evening Classes 'The River of God'. Rev Hector Morrison, Principal. Monday evenings, from 4th February, 7.30pm.

Semester 2 teaching commences Tuesday 29th January. Contact us as soon as possible if you want to enrol on any Semester 2 modules.

Conference Day These days are held twice a year in March and October, always on Saturdays to allow distance learning students with work commitments to attend. All welcome. Provisional date Saturday 16th March. Please see the website or contact us nearer the time for confirmation of details.

Computing Classes (Beginners-Advanced) and ECDL at HTC Learning Centre. Next set of classes due to commence week beginning Monday 7th January. ILA funding may be available. Contact Jack Sutherland on 01349 780000 (office hours) or 07768 972226 (evenings) for more details and to enrol.

Online shopping

[easyfundraising](http://easyfundraising.org.uk) is the easiest way to raise money for Highland Theological College. Shop with any of over 3000 well known retailers listed on easyfundraising.org.uk and a percentage of what you spend is passed to HTC at no additional cost to you. Retailers include Amazon, M&S, Vodafone, eBay, Tesco, Viking and many more.

Since registering on easyfundraising.org.uk in 2007 we've persuaded 117 people to support HTC and you've helped us raise over £1500. We need more people to support us in this way. It's free and effortless! Please register to support us today - <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/highlandcoll>. Thank you.

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- If your mailing details are incorrect please let us know.
 - It is cheaper to send communications by email. If you are happy to receive communications by email instead of by post please let us know.
 - 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.

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