

1994 – 2014

*Celebrating 20 years of
Faith and Scholarship*



University of the
Highlands and Islands
Highland Theological
College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Colaiste Dhiadhachd
na Gàidhealtachd

Newsletter Summer 2014
Special 20th anniversary edition

Dry Bones OF a **Vast Army?**

**And he said to me, “Son of
man, can these bones live?”**

As you survey the Church scene in Scotland today, which do you see: ‘dry bones’ - even ‘very dry bones’ - or ‘a vast army’? In his day the prophet Ezekiel saw both, one followed immediately by the other. And who or what made the difference? Primarily, the God who opened Ezekiel’s eyes to see and experience the clearest signs of death in the first place. But the amazing thing is that the prophet was also given his own role in bringing about that wonderful resurrection to new life in the Valley of Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37), through his prophetic ministry of proclaiming ‘the word of the Lord’ – yes, through the utter foolishness of speaking out the word of the Lord. He was asked by God to stand in the middle of this vast necropolis and speak ‘to the dry bones’.

Many years ago many of us smiled to ourselves as we heard Prince Charles advise us to speak kindly to plants in order to encourage their growth – but at least plants are living organisms. But to address dry bones that did not even constitute whole skeletons, and that were certainly without the

**And I answered, “O Lord
GOD, you know.”**

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organs to enable them to hear what was being spoken? It all seemed rather futile, didn't it? But that's the foolish task to which Ezekiel was called, and it is equally the foolish task to which we are called in the spiritual necropolis that is Scotland today.

But there was another aspect to Ezekiel's prophetic ministry. He was to 'prophesy to the breath' (v 9) to 'come from the four winds ... and breathe into these slain, that they may live.' When we realise that, in the symbolism of this passage, the breath represents the Spirit of God (v 14), is this not a call to the ministry of prayer and supplication which was always an element of the prophetic ministry at least as far back as the time of Abraham (Gen 20:7)?

It would appear from church history that times of revival have always been preceded by a greater emphasis on the ministry of prayer, and that seems to be confirmed in this passage, for without the Breath of God there can be no spiritual life (nor, for that matter, any natural life). There came a moment when preaching to the dry bones was not in itself enough and Ezekiel had to call on the Breath of God's Spirit to give life to the bones that had begun, amazingly, to respond to his word. Has such a time not come in at least some parts of Scotland, for a new focus on this very specific aspect of the church's prophetic ministry? 'Come, O Holy Spirit, come!'

May we hear the dry bones dancing as they rise from desert floor.

May they come together quickly and be fleshed with skin once more.

May Your breath be breathed within them, may they stand and live in You.

May they rise a mighty army, one for whom all things are new.

I can hear the dry bones dancing all around, from shore to shore.

Shaking off the dust of death now, they're alive for ever more.

Can You hear this sound of dancing? Sweeter sound could scarcely be:

Yet another generation from the pow'r of sin set free.

Hector Morrison, Principal

Staff News

There have been staff changes in the **Academic Office**. We welcome back **Emily Hamilton** (registry officer) after her maternity leave and have sadly said farewell to **Percy Macinnes** who had been covering her position while she was off. **Andrew Ross** is a new and welcome addition to the team. Andrew works two days per week in the Academic Office but is also the minute-taker for Board of Governors meetings. Another welcome addition to the team is **Katie Morrison** who joins us on a full-time basis. Katie comes from a customer service background and brings many skills to the role. Katie replaces **Ruth Craigie** who left the team at the start of May, having given 15 years of committed service to HTC covering a number of roles and developing a lot of experience of HTC and UHI systems. We wish Ruth God's rich blessing for the future. Ecc.3v1.

Two other colleagues also moved on from HTC. **Georgie Miller** provided accountancy services on a part-time basis since 2002 but left to take up a full-time position with New Start Highland. **Anna Enos**, one of our UHI colleagues whose office was at the HTC campus, moved from UHI to another organisation.

It is lovely to welcome a new volunteer to the HTC team. **Susan Drew** has recently started offering her time and skills for one day a week and will help in the Development Office. Susan was introduced to HTC by her friend Margaret Butteriss who has been a volunteer in the College Library for many years.

New Module – Evangelism

A new module in Evangelism has been added to the options available to BA students. Sixteen students took this module the first time it ran and already other students are keen to register for it the next time it runs.

The first six weeks of classes on 'Evangelism through the local church' were taught by the Reverend Tommy MacNeil, minister of Martin's Memorial Church, Stornoway, which is considered to be one of the fastest growing congregations of the Church of Scotland. Using the facilities at Lews Castle College UHI, Tommy delivered some of his classes by video-conferencing. This was the first time that theology classes were delivered from a location other than the Dingwall campus but it is technology that the majority of HTC's students use frequently so everybody took it in their stride. The second six weeks of classes on 'The place of apologetics in evangelism: responding to the new atheists' were taught by Hector Morrison.

Ordinations and Installations



Ross Collins [BA (Hons) 2010]. Ross completed his honours degree at HTC then undertook further studies at Union Theological College, Belfast, the training college for ordained ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland (PCI). Ross has accepted the call to become minister of Ballywatt Presbyterian Church, near Port Rush on the beautiful north coast. His installation and ordination take place on 30th May.

Two students have recently been set apart as Readers in the Church of Scotland, **Jonathan Appleby** [CertHE] by the Presbytery of Inverness and **Margaret Grant** by the Presbytery of Buchan.

There is an increasing interest in the Access and BA courses from people who are taking on leadership responsibilities in their congregations, particularly during periods of vacancy. The Access course is popular amongst those who wish to increase their confidence in leading, or participating in, bible studies. The 'pastoral care' module has been found to be particularly helpful. For those taking on preaching responsibilities, Lay Readership generally requires the qualification of CertHE which is equivalent to six modules (one year if studied full-time) of the BA programme. The number of students training for the role of Ordained Local Ministry has also increased recently. Sadly, the number of congregations seeking a minister still far exceeds the number of students in training. Are you being called to take on responsibilities for preaching or leading bible studies?

Master of Theology



Of the four MTh modules held over the past six months, two were led by Professor Paul Helm, one by Professor Gerald Bray and one by Dr Nick Needham.

The MTh programme is structured in such a way as to make it convenient for people already in

ministry to take individual modules on a part-time basis as 'continuing professional development'. Of course, for those who can commit to full-time study, this option is available too (one year of study).



PhD Success and Opportunities

Congratulations to **Ros Clarke** on the successful defence of her PhD thesis on 'Canonical Interpretations of the Song of Songs'. Ros made a bit of HTC history by being the first female PhD student at HTC. In fact, Ros is the only lady to undertake PhD studies at HTC so far. We do have some female students on the Masters programme as well as an increasing number on the BA and Access courses. Many have a passion for mission work and ministry amongst women and children.



Research carried out by PhD graduates ranges widely. These titles include:

- 'Herman Hoeksema's Theological Method'
- 'Matthew 1:1-17 as a Summary of Israel's Story: The Messiah, his Brothers and the Nations'
- 'A Biblical and Theological Study of the Contemporary Relevance of Christ's Role in the Heavenly Session'
- 'Anthony Burgess and the Westminster Doctrine of Assurance'
- 'Time and Eternity: A Study of the 'Accidental Temporalist' View'

See our website www.htc.uhi.ac.uk/courses/research-degree-mphil-phd for more theses titles. Two thirds of all the PhD graduates of HTC are professors, deans and lecturers in seminaries and theological institutes, mostly in the USA. We are pleased to hear that PhD graduate Dr Michael McKelvey has recently been appointed as assistant professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi.

PhD part-scholarships available

HTC is pleased to offer two part-scholarships for applicants from outwith the EU applying for full-time, residential PhD studies at the College. These scholarships offer a 50% reduction in fees over the three years of full-time PhD studies.

We are particularly seeking proposals in the area of **theological anthropology** and we would favour applications that cross the theological disciplines to combine, for example, biblical and systematic theology or systematic and practical theology (etc.).

Questions or inquiries should be addressed for the attention of the Registry Officer to htcadmissions@uhi.ac.uk or telephone +44(0)1349 780000.

Applications should be submitted electronically, sending:

- A full CV/résumé, including details of your qualifications with grades (or grades to date);
- A 1000 word research proposal;
- An indicative bibliography;
- The names and contact details of three academic referees.

Applications should be sent for the attention of the Registry Officer to htcadmissions@uhi.ac.uk as soon as possible for a 1 October 2014 start date.

Skype interviews will follow for candidates who are short-listed.

New PPE degree for UHI

A new BA honours degree in Philosophy, Politics & Economics (PPE) has been developed and classes will commence in September this year. The programme leader for the PPE degree is the Rev Dr Innes Visagie who, in addition to his degree in Theology, holds a degree in Philosophy & Psychology as well as a PhD in Counselling. Innes lectures in practical and pastoral theology on the Theological Studies degree and will teach on the philosophy strand of the PPE programme. The PPE degree will be led by HTC and taught across the UHI network with classes being delivered in 'blended learning' mode.

www.uhi.ac.uk/en/courses/ba-hons-philosophy-politics-and-economics

UHI Principal

UHI has appointed Professor Clive Mulholland as its new Principal and Vice-Chancellor. Professor Mulholland, from Bangor, Northern Ireland, joined the former University of Glamorgan in 2007 from the University of Ulster where he was Director of Lifelong Learning. He takes up his appointment in UHI on 1st June. Professor Mulholland succeeds James Fraser who retired at the end of December. Dr Crichton Lang has been Acting Principal and Vice-Chancellor in the interim.

HTC Students Elected as UHISA Representatives

Students at HTC are playing important roles in the UHI Student Association (UHISA), representing all higher education students across UHI which extends from Perth to Shetland and from the Western Isles to Morayshire. In the latest round of UHISA elections Ailsa Fyfe (2nd year BA student) was chosen as UHISA Student Disabilities Officer and Heidi Hercus (1st year BA student) was chosen as UHISA Vice President. Claire Ireland (4th year BA student) was the UHISA representative for HTC for 2013/14. HTC is the smallest college in the UHI network and it is good that our students are so actively involved in the wider university.

Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology



The Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology (SBET) is produced by HTC in association with the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society (SETS). It is available to anybody interested in reading theology articles relevant to the life of the church and can be purchased as one-off individual copies or by annual subscription. Some old (2010 and earlier) back-issues are available at a substantially reduced price. Contact us for more details.

Publications and Conferences

Martin Cameron

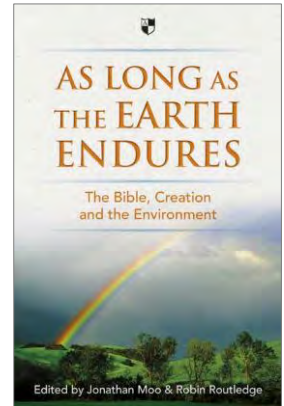
- Spring Conference of the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries, Salisbury, 3-5 April.
- Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly, Houston, Texas, 16-20 June.

John Ferguson

- 'The Word as Lamp: a study in revelation' at the Annual Conference of the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society (SETS).

Jamie Grant

- 'Creation and Kingship: Environment and Witness in the Yahweh *Mālāk* Psalms', in Jonathan Moo and Robin Routledge, eds., *As Long as Earth Endures: The Bible, Creation and the Environment* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2014), pp. 92–106pp. 92–106.
- 'A Biblical Theology of Nationhood: Some Light on the Scottish Independence Question', *SBET* 31/2 (Autumn 2013) 115–26.
- 'The Word as Sceptre: a study in authority and worldview' at the Annual Conference of the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society (SETS).
- Teaching a Masters course on the Psalms at the Bible College of South Australia, July.
- Speaking at the family camp at Coromandel Valley Baptist Church, South Australia, July.



Jason Maston

- 'How Wrong were the Disciples about the Kingdom? Thoughts on Acts 1:6' presented at the Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting has been accepted for publication in *Expository Times*.

Hector Morrison

- Speaking at the WEST 2014 Revival Conference, Bridgend, Wales, 21-28 June.
- Speaking at the Argyll Convention, Oban, 5-7 August. 'Christ: redeeming, rising, and reigning.'

Bruce Ritchie

- 'Questions raised by Torrance's concept of the relationship between Incarnation and Atonement' at the T.F. Torrance Conference, Firthush, Loch Tay.
- 'World War 1 and the response of the Scottish Churches' at the HTC Conference Day.

Celebrating 20 years of 1994 - 2014 Faith and Scholarship

1992: The UHI project (UHIp) was established. Rev Andrew McGowan drew up a proposal to establish a theological college as part of the UHIp. He discussed this with Rev Alex Murray, APC minister in Lairg, following which they called together a number of ministers and Christian businessmen for initial discussions. They felt the proposal was *'of substance and worth pursuing'* but, with no resources, had a middle term view of being able to get something off the ground in 5-10 years.

1994: Andrew McGowan and Hector Morrison met in February with Dr Robert Cormack, Principal of Moray College and, for that year, Chair of the UHIp, with a view to sharing their vision. He challenged them to start their college in premises rented from Moray College that August! Responding, 'That's impossible!' he threw down the gauntlet saying, 'I thought you were men of faith!' After much prayer and through many verses of scripture the clear conclusion was that this is what the Lord wanted. The following month Highland Theological Company Limited was incorporated as a private limited company with Andrew and Hector as Director and Depute Director, respectively. On 1st August Highland Theological Institute (HTI) started operating in 'The Hut' on the periphery of the carpark of Moray College, Elgin. In the first year there were full-time classes on campus for the Cambridge Certificate/Diploma and evening classes in Inverness College and Moray College.

1995: Began delivery of the BA (Hons) Theological Studies degree, franchised from the University of Glamorgan/Evangelical Theological College of Wales (ETCW), while continuing with evening classes in Inverness and Elgin.

1996: The Academic Council of UHIp admitted Highland Theological Institute as a full member of the UHI project. Delivery of the open learning Access Course (in partnership with Moray College) began.

1997: By this stage there were 5 full-time and 10 part-time staff, a library of 10,000 volumes, and students from Japan, Korea, USA, Canada,

Romania, Poland. The on-campus Access Course started and the Doctor of Ministry (DMin), developed jointly with Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, was launched.

Newsletter 4 (Dec 1997) *'We have seen so many miraculous answers to prayer in these past few years that we are absolutely convinced the Lord is with us. To start a College from scratch, without a penny of public funding, and, within 3 years, to have everything from an Access Course to a PhD, with five full-time and ten part-time staff, students from ten countries and, in the same period, to become part of an exciting new university and have a partnership with one of the largest theological colleges in the USA – Without the Lord this could not have been done. Ask any College Principal!'*

..... The newsletter continues: *'But this has not come easy. It has been costly and has involved real sacrifice. The financial position within HTI remains very serious. Indeed, for four out of the last seven months staff have not received full salary. Despite this, all staff remain fully committed to the Institute and are convinced that the Lord will supply all our needs.'*

1998: The Church of Scotland General Assembly passed the motion: *'The General Assembly applauds the establishment of the University of the Highlands and Islands project and commends the Highland Theological Institute as part thereof.'* The DMin was approved by the Church of Scotland for the new sabbatical leave scheme for ministers. There were 12 PhD students. The BA Theological Studies degree was one of the first of the new UHI degrees, validated by the OUVS.

Newsletter quote: *'Hector Morrison, the course team leader, is to be particularly congratulated on this achievement – even if the effort almost killed him! He is now fully recovered, has lost 1.5 stone (much needed) and is running around 8 miles per week. Watch out for him on the streets of Inverness.'*

Evening classes started in Stornoway. The Annual Awards ceremony took place at which HTI's first three BA graduates were recognised: Iain Macaskill, Robert Shillaker and Sebastian Smolarz. Stuart Mackinnon and Isobel Middleton received CertHE. There were also successes at Access and Cambridge levels.

Newsletter 5: Summer 1998: *'At the end of May ... The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department had turned down HTI's bid for funding and it was unclear if HTI could survive.'*

Following an appeal for help there was a staggering response from supporters of over £40k.

The rental contract with Moray College was due to run out in June 1998. With a view to extending the UHI network, there was a desire to relocate to a site in the Highlands not too close to other UHI colleges. A prayer letter was posted indicating interest in a property in Dingwall. The following morning a good friend of HTI came into the office with a cheque for £10,000. The accompanying note said that the money was to help HTI purchase a new building. It wasn't until the morning after that that the prayer letter arrived at his home! *'We gave the cheque when we did because we believed the Lord was telling us to give you the money for a new building – we had no idea that you had found one!'*

1999: Premises in Dingwall were purchased and their refurbishment started. The name was changed from HTI to HTC and the college was recognised by the Inland Revenue as a charity. The official opening of the new campus was on 10th September. In December the first PhD viva was held; the student was Derek Thomas (now Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta, and Minister of Preaching and Teaching at First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, South Carolina).

2000: There were students from Japan, Korea, Australia, Poland, USA, Canada and Switzerland. 24 were enrolled on the DMin. *'HTC intends to be not only a seminary in the classical sense but also a focus for the reformation, renewal and revitalisation of the church in Scotland.'* In a UHI Institutional Review HTC was approved with significant commendations: *'Both in the report and in private, the members of the visiting Panel expressed their high estimate of HTC as an academic institution.'*

2001: UHI was designated as an Institute of Higher Education (HEI), bringing the possibility of funding being received for students. The quality of the honours degree was commended by UHI colleagues. *'Out of around 25 degrees validated through UHI, only HTC's BA in Theological Studies is being put forward at this time for Honours Validation.'* The BA in Theological Studies was the first degree in UHI for which a whole level was supported for web-based delivery.

2002: HTC was the first UHI college to undergo Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Review whereupon it *'attained the highest grade in each category reviewed'*.

2003-2005: Significant increases in student and staff numbers, growth of the library and further development of courses.

2006: On the same day as Aberdeen University validated the MTh degree, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland approved HTC as a place of education and training for ministers of the Kirk. Stuart Farmes began as the first Church of Scotland Ministry candidate (Stuart is now minister of Kirkmabreck and Monigaff Parish Churches, having recently moved there from Pulteneytown Parish Church, Wick).

2007-2008: Staff numbers had increased to 16 full-time and 5 part-time.

2009: Andrew McGowan returned to parish ministry, Hector Morrison became Principal and Jamie Grant Vice-Principal.

2011: University status was granted and the name was changed from UHI Millennium Institute to University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). After many years of committed service to HTC, Rev Alexander Murray stood down as chairman of the Board of Governors (though he continues to take an active interest in all that goes on). He was succeeded as chairman by Mr R Murray McCheyne.

2012: HRH Princess Anne was installed as Chancellor of UHI. Academic Council noted that of the 16 successful PhD completions in UHI in the past academic session 6 were from HTC.

2013: HTC entered into partnership with the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society (SETS) for the publication and distribution of their biannual journal *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology (SBET)*. Mr Murray McCheyne stood down as chairman of the

Board of Governors and was succeeded by Rev Dr Bruce Ritchie. Dr Ian Bryden was appointed by UHI as the new Vice-Principal for Research and Associate Principal for Specialist Colleges. Mr James Fraser, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of UHI retired.

2014 and ahead: We look forward to what God has in store for HTC for the years ahead and prayerfully commit all our plans to him. We have been keen to offer a 'local study centre' for students in the Scottish Central Belt but until now were shying away from the Glasgow area due to the provision there by International Christian College (ICC). Recently ICC announced its decision to cease its current educational operations. Some ICC students will transfer to HTC to complete their studies, others who may previously have considered ICC will now opt to study at HTC. With a growing cohort of students in the Central Belt, HTC is now seriously looking at the possibility of opening a satellite campus in Glasgow. **We urge you to pray with us for guidance on this matter.** The biggest hurdle to this venture is the financial challenge. We believe that if it is God's will for HTC to expand in this way the finances will be met. We expect that within two - three years such a campus would cover its costs, but the *start-up funding* is what we need to secure. Your prayerful consideration of this situation is appreciated. Thank you.

20th Anniversary Events

March: A good number attended the Teaching Day at Kyleakin. The 'Mission' theme tied in well with the special commissioning service held the following day for Morag MacLeod before she headed overseas.

May: Seven students spoke very warmly about their personal experiences at HTC. Rev Dr Sinclair Ferguson spoke about the place of theology in the universities, showing that in all spheres of academia God is central and foremost. His reference to Jesus as the ultimate Alpha Point is worth listening to: <http://www.htc.uhi.ac.uk/community-resources/audio-resources>

Forthcoming events:

August 15th 7.30pm, Martin's Memorial Church, Stornoway: Commemorative Service.

August 28th 7.30pm, Moray College, Elgin. Public Lecture by Rev Dr Tim Grass on the work of Elgin-born theologian FF Bruce and being a believer in a secular university environment.

Autumn Inverness (details to be confirmed): Public Lecture by author and journalist Harry Reid on the relationship between Scottish literature and Christianity.

Further details will be publicised as they are available. Please refer to our website or facebook page for more information. Please encourage as many as possible to join us at these events.

Open Learning Conference Day

These twice-yearly events give distance learning students (many of whom are working on weekdays) an opportunity to attend the campus, meet lecturers and fellow students, hear a lecture and use the library. Visitors also attend, some just to get to know more about the college, others with a view to commencing studies. The date of the next Conference Day is **Saturday 25th October 2014**.

- 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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