

Growing in Grace

*Newsletter of Grace Presbyterian Church
of New Zealand*

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Bold Faith Rewarded

Editors often have to beg and scrape to get enough material for their publications. This was not the case, however, with this issue of *Growing in Grace*. We had so much available that we had to make this a larger edition.

One factor that made this necessary was the death of a number of members and friends of GPCNZ. Valued members of the Cat-

lins congregation Eunice Capon and Jean Landreth died within weeks of each other in September-October. Earlier in the year, Stan Scarlet, a long-time friend of many in GPCNZ, died at his home in Amberly. Then, just as this issue was going to press we learned of the sudden death of the much loved and respected Wallace Hall from the Tokomairiro Grace Bible Church. We have included tributes to Eunice, Jean and Stan in this issue, and will have one for

Wallace in the next. It is important that we honour the memory of faithful brothers and sisters and celebrate God's grace and goodness to them.

We have also devoted considerable space to photographs of the Invercargill church's new building. What a wonderful provision from God! And what an encouragement to us all. It shows what the Lord can do when his people take bold steps of faith in dependence upon him.

◇ Andrew Young
Editor

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Grace Presbyterian Church, Invercargill's new building - formerly Georgetown Baptist Church,

and worshippers at the first service held in the new building

For more pictures see p 11.



A Kenyan Experience by Matthew van Rij

In mid-August of this year I boarded a plane and flew into the unknown – Kenya. I was off to a small hospital in a place called Kapsowar for some overseas experience to finish my medical training.

Working in Kapsowar was a very encouraging experience. Although there were many times when there were potential issues, it really felt like my path had been prepared before me. I only had one episode of ill health while in Kenya, my travel arrangements went well, and people that I treated at the hospital (usually) got better. This is not to say that bad things didn't happen. They did. But through them, and everything else that happened, I think I gained maturity – particularly in my practise of medicine as I learned to deal with failure, death and disease.

Being in a situation like Kapsowar helped me grow spiritually. I was able to see the way Kenyan Christians live out their faith and was encouraged and able to encourage. I also gained quite a different perspective on how rich in material possessions we are. So many of my “necessities” were things these people had never had. It was interesting to note that due partly to the fact that they weren't focussed on “getting ahead”, Kenyan Christians had plenty of time for Bible studies and Church.

I would encourage anyone interested in heading to the mission field for a short-term mission to do so. God is a powerful God and He will protect you. But even more, He will look after you despite the tests and trials that come your way (and bad things do happen!!).

[Matthew van Rij is a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Christchurch].



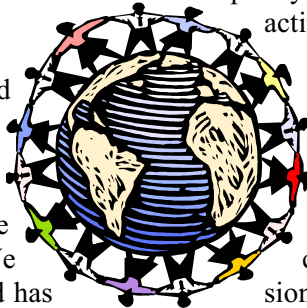
Brushing our teeth with sticks outside a mud hut.

Missions Week at Covenant by Louise Kennedy

Covenant Presbyterian Church has just held its annual Missions Week and it has been a week full of blessing for the many who attended. It ran from Sunday 31st October to Sunday 7th November, with meetings on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights as well as the two Sundays.

Peter Warner launched Missions Week this year on Reformation Sunday with a sermon on Acts 1:8 about “The Centrifugal God”. We were reminded that God has called some to serve right in their backyards while he has work for others to do further afield. Russell Cross, an AIM missionary in

Chad currently at home in New Zealand on furlough, brought a presentation on Africa that same Sunday evening. It was an eye-opener to learn the percentage of Christians in different areas in Africa. At the same time it was sobering and gave us plenty of encouragement to be active in prayer for that land.



On Tuesday and Thursday nights Warren Payne from OMF talked about Islam and Buddhism. One thing that came out clearly in these discussions was the importance of being a good listener. Often we are afraid to approach people of different religions because we are not sure about what they believe. This

ought not stop us however. What we need to do is ask them questions about their faith and this can be a good basis for introducing Christianity and what our beliefs are. It was definitely enlightening to get a better understanding of the way people holding to these religions think and to be stimulated to discover ways to combat such thinking with the truth of God's Word.

Saturday night was a family night put on by some of the young people of the church. They ran a game that involved sending “missionaries” from their group to find out information on various countries on display around the church. It was a game that helped show how everyone, both young and old, can be in-

volved in missions and it was great to see everyone getting involved and having fun together.

Peter Boyd brought the week to an end with an exhortation to be a missions-minded church, seeing people as Christ sees them – lost and in need of the Saviour. This was a fitting way to finish a week of learning and reflecting on ways that we as a church can reach out to those

around us who don't know Christ. I personally found it both challenging and encouraging. I hope and pray that Missions Week will become an annual event not just at Covenant but also in other churches of our denomination. More than that, I hope that a mission focus will not just be a one-off week once a year, but rather a way of thinking for our churches. May we better serve the Lord both in our community or

wherever He may call us.

[Louise Kennedy is a member and youth leader in Covenant Presbyterian Church, Manurewa. She is preparing to travel to Japan where she will spend the next year teaching English as a second language and assisting Martin and Ruth Ghent in their church planting work in the Aomori Prefecture.]

Kindred Spirits Across the Tasman by David Bayne

Report on the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia

It was my great privilege to take up the invitation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia to attend their triennial General Assembly in September. The Assembly met from Monday 13th through to Friday 17th of September, but I was only able to remain there until the Wednesday afternoon.

It was a very different Assembly from ours in size and procedure. The bigger you are, the more structured you must be to accomplish the task at hand. And the Australian Church is big in comparison to GPCNZ – it has several hundred congregations.

We met in the Chinese Presbyterian Church in Surry Hills, Sydney. This congregation is the oldest Chinese work in Australia (it has been established for over a hundred years), and their current building is their 5th church home.

I was welcomed on opening night of the Assembly as a guest of the Moderator, along with representatives from a number of

other churches. More importantly perhaps, I was associated with the Assembly at the beginning of business on the Tuesday. This enabled me to attend all the business sessions of the Assembly, including private matters such as the hearing of appeals.

Although pressed for time with the amount of business on their agenda, the Assembly graciously gave me opportunity to address them on the Wednesday morning. During this time I was able to present a brief picture of what GPCNZ is, how we came into being, and what we are doing in the way of establishing new church planting works.

The members of Assembly received both me personally and what I had to report, very warmly. Numbers of people approached me with personal expressions of encouragement. There is clearly a desire in the Australian Church to help us wherever opportunity to do so arises. I came away with the definite impression that here was a large and welcoming body where we have access to men and materials of like mind to ourselves.

An extract from the Minutes of the Assembly reads as follows:

Relations With Other Churches:

(5) (a) Note with gratitude to God the formation of the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand on 28 February 2003 as a church which upholds the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God and the only rule of faith and practice, and the Westminster Confession of Faith as its subordinate standard and the sense in which it understands the Holy Scriptures.

(b) Commend our brothers and sisters in Christ who constitute the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand for taking their stand upon the Word of God and the historic faith of Presbyterianism, and assure them of our deep interest.

(c) Acknowledge Grace Presbyterian Church as a church with close doctrinal similarity to ours and in geographical proximity, and offer whatever assistance can be provided to assist it in its witness for the Gospel.

(d) Assure the ministers and members of Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand of a warm welcome into the fellowship of the Presbyterian Church of Australia whenever they visit us.

(Note: This was a significant part of their report on relations with other churches and indicates their keen interest and support for us)



The Potential Menace of “Hate Speech” Legislation by Trevor Webb

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Isaiah 5:20

It seems to me that New Zealand is rapidly becoming a pagan nation, a nation where good is condemned and evil is commended. The current government seems committed to changing the moral fabric of our society by removing righteousness from our laws. One of the most recent issues that illustrate this is the investigation into developing what is called ‘hate speech’ legislation. This area of law-making holds potential problems for the free proclamation of the gospel.

What Has Happened to Date?

The ‘Government Administration Committee’ is conducting an inquiry into whether or not further legislation is warranted in New Zealand to prohibit or restrain hate speech. The Committee Chair, Dianne Yates, says the inquiry is a chance to evaluate New Zealand’s balance between freedom of speech and vilification of certain groups, which can lead to their victimisation. She says the section of our Human Rights Act relevant to this matter covers race, but it does not cover religion, body size, sexual orientation or a range of other issues.

To understand the kind of legislation being considered you need to know what Section 61 of the Human Rights Act contains. It reads as follows:

Racial disharmony---(1) It shall be unlawful for any person -

- (a) To publish or distribute written matter which is threatening, abusive, or insulting, or to broadcast by means of radio or television

words which are threatening, abusive, or insulting; or

- (b) To use in any public place as defined in section 2 (1) of the Summary Offences Act 1981, or within the hearing of persons in any such public place, or at any meeting to which the public are invited or have access, words which are threatening, abusive, or insulting; or
- (c) To use in any place words which are threatening, abusive, or insulting if the person using the words knew or ought to have known that the words were reasonably likely to be published in a newspaper, magazine, or periodical or broadcast by means of radio or television,--- being matter or words likely to excite hostility against or bring into contempt any group of persons in or who may be coming to New Zealand on the ground of the colour, race, or ethnic or national origins of that group of persons.

Some groups are advocating the extension of the section underlined above to include religion, sexual orientation and disability.

Problems With the Suggested Amendments

Similar legislation in Australia, Sweden and Canada has resulted in Christians being tried on criminal charges for exposing what they believed to be false teaching or sinful lifestyles.

The case in Australia is particularly important. The State of Victoria passed a law that says people cannot “engage in conduct that incites hatred against, serious contempt for, or revulsion or severe ridicule” against someone on the basis of their race or religion’. An exception has been made for religious discussion ‘done



reasonably and in good faith’. According to an internet report,

Just two months after the enactment of the legislation, Catch the Fire Ministries (CTFM), headed by Pastor Danny Nalliah, ran a seminar on 9 March 2002, to help Christians understand Islam and the events of September 11, and assist them to minister and reach out, in love, to the growing Muslim community in Melbourne. Pastor Daniel Scot was the speaker at the seminar. Three Australian Muslim converts attended the seminar and, with the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) backing them, lodged the complaint about statements made at the seminar, comments made in a Catch the Fire newsletter and an article about Islam on their website.

The hearing for this case has finished and we are waiting for the declaration of the Tribunal.

This case illustrates the potential effect hate-speech legislation could have on Christian witness and proclamation. It could suppress efforts to expose and protest against moral vices, and to debate the merits and weaknesses of religious codes. Yet these very things are required of us as faithful witnesses to the gospel of grace. What is more, our freedom to do them was purchased at great cost by our forebears. ‘Hate speech’ legislation could have the effect of making criminals of earnest Christians and honest, conscientious citizens. We need to watch and pray! [Trevor Webb is an elder in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Christchurch. The above article is based on a submission he prepared on hate-speech issue.]

The Need of the Hour by Andrew Young

Recently I had the privilege of addressing a group of 70 men belonging to the Reformed Churches of New Zealand on the subject of revitalizing the Church. The first of my three addresses was called “The Need of the Hour.”

To speak on such a topic would be over-ambitious – even arrogant – if the Bible hadn’t provided a clear indication of the permanent primary need of the church. When Paul, writing to Christians in Ephesus, describes the function of apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors-teachers in the church as “preparing God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be build up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:12,13), he is surely pinpointing the deepest need of the church in every age – the spiritual maturity of its members. Christians who have become “mature” and attained to the “whole measure of the fullness of Christ,” won’t be tossed around by every wind of teaching (v. 14), but will speak the truth in love and cause the body to grow in love as each part performs its work (vv. 15, 16).

Spiritual maturity, then, is and always will be, a pressing need in the church. But what does spiritual maturity look like? Interestingly, in the passage referred to above, Paul associates it with “unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God” (v. 13). In other words, it is connected with knowing Christ. We need to know what the Scriptures reveal about the Lord Jesus Christ-what Paul here refers to as “the faith” of the Son of God - if we are to be mature. But there is something more. In addition to knowing about

Christ, we actually need to know him in a vital and personal way.

The late Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was a champion of this vital, experiential knowledge of Christ. He often said that he spent the earlier years of his ministry helping people know the doctrine of Christ, and his latter years helping them know the Saviour himself. In one of his sermons on Ephesians 3 he said, “While doctrines and theology are absolutely vital to the Christian, it is always wrong to stop at these alone. We must go beyond them and realize that the purpose of all knowledge of doctrine is to bring us to the knowledge of the Person of Christ... Without knowledge of doctrine we may be victims of a false mysticism, or simply remain babes in Christ. In order to be strong, and to grow, and become virile and powerful, an understanding of truth is essential to us. But that should lead us to seek a knowledge of the Person Himself” (*The Unsearchable Riches of Christ*, p. 259).

Spiritual maturity, then, is more than simply knowing what the Bible teaches about Christ, it is knowing the Person himself. It is about growing to the point of attaining to “the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” – that is, to the point of being filled with his fullness in the measure that God has planned for us. It is to be like Christ, it is to be alive to Christ, it is to be filled with the life of Christ.

What an awesome and exciting possibility this is. Without question this is the key to the church’s effectiveness in the world. There is a great deal of emphasis on church leadership dynamics and on “purpose-driven” living in our day. As important as these things are, they are not

the most important. Indeed, they are potentially dangerous if they take us away from Christ the source of our life. Lloyd-Jones is surely right when he says, “Life is the one thing that matters; and the life is in him. Our first concern, therefore, should be to know that we are vitally connected to him, and that the channels, the bands of supply, are open, and that his power, strength, life and sustenance are flowing into us” (*Christian Unity*, p. 273).

As a young and humanly speaking very small and weak church, we need to learn and practice this principle well. The one thing that really matters is that we have the life of Christ in us. If we have, then nothing will be impossible. Our size won’t matter, nor our feeble resources. But if we haven’t, all our efforts will come to nothing. We may have the outward appearance of a church, be sound in our theology



and orthodox in our practice, but we will be little more than a lifeless shell. Life is what counts – the life of the Head filling, leading, and empowering the body to perform its function in the world. Let’s make that our number one priority in Grace Presbyterian Church.

[Andrew Young is a Teaching Elder in GPCNZ serving as the Principal of Grace Theological College in Auckland]

Obituaries



A MATRIARCH GOES HOME: Margaret Jean Landreth

by Steve Panapa

At 2 p.m. on the 16 October one of the matriarchs of our fellowship in the Catlins Evangelical Church went home to glory after 50 years of unstinting service to Christ.

Margaret Jean Landreth (nee Miller) was born in Gore on 10th December 1928, the only girl in a family of five. Like many others of her generation, her schooling was cut short (at the end of Form 2) by the need to assist in the home and on the farm during the difficult years of World War 2. But this didn't stop her becoming an accomplished musician and an able farm accountant.

Jean had a deep love for music. She was blessed with natural musical talent, and became skilled in playing the piano and the piano accordion. Her music teacher in early years believed she had a future as a concert pianist but she chose instead to devote herself to being a wife and mother. She did gain, however, L.T.C.L and A.T.C.L. qualifications, and spent many years teaching music. She continued to both play and teach the piano right up until a few days before her death – including playing in church on the Sunday immediately before she died.

Jean married Brian Landreth on 7th March 1953 and together they settled on their Owaka farm. They were blessed with four boys, Chris, Gavin, Malcolm and Stephen. Motherhood didn't stop Jean taking an active interest in farm affairs. As mentioned, she became very skilled in managing the farm accounts. Accountants were continually amazed at the accuracy of her work and the books were always a delight for them to audit. She did these accounts right up to the time of her death.

Jean was also very community minded. She became involved and actively served in many community groups. Her organizational abilities were always appreciated, and she gave of herself willingly to help wherever help was wanted.

Love for Christ made Jean a very compassionate and hospitable person. She showed this recently when a young lady from the North Island who was working for a local shearing gang got into a "spot of bother" and had nowhere to stay. Jean and Brian opened their home to her and she lived with them until her problems were sorted out. This was typical of the love of Christ Jean showed both within the church and the community at large. She did not serve others to gain their favour, or God's, but because of God's love to her in Christ.

Jean's funeral service was a wonderful tribute to her and to her family. But even more importantly, it was a testimony to the grace and power of God in their lives. The singing of the Landreth family melted the hearts of everyone, and the eulogies and tributes to Jean spoke of her living faith in the Living God. Alf Bradfield's message was thought provoking and Christ-centred. Many have commented since the service on the amazing peace and comfort it gave them, and on the opportunity it provided to speak with others about things of eternity.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116:15). May the passing on of this saint into the eternal presence of the Saviour spur us on as a church to use every opportunity to tell others of the hope we have in Christ.

[Steve Panapa is a Candidate for Ministry in GPCNZ currently serving as supply pastor for the Catlins Evangelical Church].

A HEART OF GOLD: Eunice Capon

by Steve Panapa

The Owaka community lost a very active member when Eunice Capon died on Tuesday 28th September. Eunice had been a member of the Writing Club, the Flower/Gardening Club, and the Walking Club. She had also been instrumental in getting a public telephone put in when the Post Office closed down.

Eunice was a determined lady who held strong views on a number of things. And what is more, she had a way of getting what she thought was right done. She even managed to get a



local farmer to put a tunnel under a road because his cows were continually fouling it up – and she hated having a dirty car!

Her determined spirit showed itself during a downturn in farming in the 1980's. She decided she must go to work to help make ends meet on the farm and went and became a qualified social worker. For a number of years she worked for the Social Welfare Department, apparently often giving to needy people out of her own pocket when they couldn't get any assistance from the Department.

She had a heart of gold and was always helping other people. She would cook for them when they were sick, and clean their windows when they needed cleaning, and so on. But when it came time to receive help from others, she shrank from doing so. She always considered herself unworthy of being helped, and believed that there were needier people than her around.

When the Catlins Evangelical Church was formed in Owaka, Eunice was strongly convinced that it was the right thing to do. It cost her much heartbreak not to worship with people she had known all her life, but she held strongly to her position and remained a faithful member of the new church.

In her last days, as her body succumbed to cancer, she found it very difficult to walk. She never lost her sense of humour and faith, however. To the very end she was a gracious and giving lady, helping others even to her own detriment. We are sure that Christ will welcome her with the words, "Well done thou good and faithful servant... come and share your Master's happiness" (Matt. 25:21).

TRIBUTES TO A FATHER: Stan Scarlet

Many in GPCNZ have known Helen and Stan Scarlet and their family for several decades. Stan died of cancer on January 31st of this year.

One of the striking features of his funeral service was tribute the three Scarlet sons, Ian, Chris and Peter gave to their father. Seldom today do we hear Kiwi Christian men (from a rural background at that), speaking so deeply and appreciatively of the influence of a father on their lives. Those present felt the tributes were not only a fitting testimony to Stan but also an encouragement to Christian men everywhere to be inspirational fathers.



Ian spoke of his father's mission to "serve the Lord and introduce other people to him." He recalled the way in which each day started in the Scarlet household, "with the family around the table for breakfast where we got to start the day with a reading from the Bible and morning prayers." While not always appreciative of this practice at the time, in later years he came to see how important and influential it had been. He likened his father to the Sower in Matthew 13, sowing the good seed of the Kingdom in his own life. "I would have to say without a shadow of doubt that it was my father and mother who sowed these all important seeds into my life, and many others all over the world. To me this is the ultimate legacy that a father could leave behind because he brought the Bible alive to us all through his actions."

Chris spoke of his father as a man of few words, yet a man from whom he learned so much. He took the list of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 and demonstrated one by one how these qualities shone in his father's life. He saw his father's *love* especially in the way he had supported him over the years, and even in the way he had disciplined him as a child. "Even when dad disciplined me," he said, "he always said, 'This hurts me more than it hurts you.'" He spoke of his *peace* as he struggled with cancer, his *patience* as he put up with seeing his sons try things their way, and his *kindness* as he put the interests of others before his own. His *faithfulness* showed itself especially in the way he stood up for what he believed the Scriptures taught, "even if people thought he was mad stopping the harvest at midnight Saturday and only starting again midnight Sunday, [because] the Lord's day was always special to him." He may have been a father of few words, but, Chris ended by saying, "his actions have had a great impact on me and on many others."

Peter shared his brothers' deep appreciation of his father's godly life. One of the things that impressed him most about his dad was the way he reacted (or rather, *didn't* react) to situations that would have inflamed most men. "I can't ever remember my Dad being in an angry mood with me," he said. "That's quite an awesome thing to be able to say... He never lost the plot and threw a tool at me in the workshop when my car had been in there getting fixed

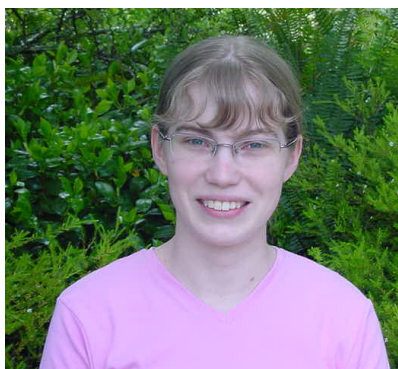
for 6 months. He never got angry when I sunk the jet boat in Lake Te Anau. He didn't get angry when I crashed the Hilux into a gatepost, or burnt a row of trees, or even when I had a party when he and mum were away for the weekend. He always reacted in a way that taught me how to focus on the bigger picture of life; he showed me that getting annoyed over little things had very little significance in terms of eternity." He then went on to give a number of moving and remarkable one-line tributes to his dad – saying things like, "He hardly ever disciplined me, but he showed me how to live a disciplined and obedient life... He never told me how to love, but he showed me through his life what unconditional love really meant... I don't remember him telling me to tell the truth, but I remember many examples of his honesty, and integrity... He never told me to be bold, but I could see that he was never ashamed of the gospel."

Peter was probably speaking for his brothers as well when he ended his tribute with the words, "There are things that my dad didn't talk about with me – he was a quiet man – but the example of his life and the impact that it had on me could never be summed up with words." Words like these would bring joy to any father's heart. God grant that another generation of fathers will merit them from their children.

Can we be Sure that we are Saved? by Katherine Young

[GPCNZ is what is sometimes called a "confessional" Church, that is, a Church that subscribes to one of the historic confessions of the Christian faith. We have adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith and use it as a basis (secondary to the Scriptures) for our fellowship, teaching and discipline. We need to know what this valuable summary of Christian truth teaches. Katherine Young is one of over 30 people who have regularly attended lectures on the Westminster Confession offered by Grace Theological College this year. We have abridged below an essay on the topic "How can we know that we are true believers and not self-deceived hypocrites?" that Katherine wrote as part of the requirements of this course. Hopefully it will inspire people to read the Confession for themselves.]

Can I be sure that I am a Christian and that I am destined for eternal



Katherine Young

life? People have asked this question throughout the centuries and struggled to give an answer. Many have held that you will not know for sure that you have been saved until you die. The Westminster Confession of Faith insists, however, that people can be "certainly assured that they are in the state of grace." It gives three strong foundations that enable Christians to know this.

The first and most important is "the divine truth of the promises of salvation." God has promised, for example, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life" (John 3:36). For everyone who does this he says, "I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). We can be confident in these promises for God "is faithful to all his promises" (Ps. 125:13), and "no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ" (2 Cor. 1:20)." God's greatness assures us that he *can* fulfil his promises, and his faithfulness guarantees that he *will*. It is not subjective experiences, then, but the promises of God that form the "objective unchangeable foundation on which Christians find assurance."

Building on this base of God's promises are two other more secondary (and more subjective) grounds of assurance. The first of these is "the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made." We might express this more simply as the evidence of saving grace in our lives. This is what the apostle John refers to when he tells his readers in 1 John that if they have right beliefs about Christ, love for other believers, and obey God's commands, then they will know that they are truly God's children (1 John 5:1; 4:7; 2:3). We might add to this list such characteristics as faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, and brotherly kindness (2 Pet. 1:5-7), and other fruits of sanctification. We can be assured that we are true Christians when our practical daily living displays these characteristics because they are the promised fruits of saving grace.

The third ground of assurance mentioned in the Confession of Faith is the "testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God." The Holy Spirit is also spoken of as "the earnest of our inheritance, whereby

we are sealed to the day of redemption.” Just how the Spirit actually witnesses to us and seals us is a vast mystery and should not be detailed too specifically so that his freedom is not limited. Several things about his “inner witness” though can be understood. We know that the Spirit does not give new revelation to each person, but works through and in what has already been revealed in God’s Word. He applies this Word so that Christians are able to believe the promises, and when they do believe them, the Spirit enables them to know that they really do believe. It is also through the Spirit that Christians are enabled to see the ex-

isting graces in their hearts.

Using these grounds of assurance as a base, the Christian is to give “all diligence to make his calling and election sure.” Sometimes it may take a long time to gain a firm and settled assurance, and even then it may fluctuate. But by examining ourselves in terms of the grounds above and using the means of God’s Word, the church and prayer, even the most ordinary believer can, by God’s grace, come to full assurance. It must be remembered that assurance is a gift from God. At every point in the process the application of the Spirit is essential. The “root

is grace, the tree is diligence, the fruit is assurance.”

Christians can know that they are true believers and that they have a sure and certain hope. God gives them assurance of this through his promises, his transforming work in their hearts, and through the gift of his Spirit in their lives. As a result of knowing they are destined for eternal life, the Christian’s heart “may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience.”

News and Prayer points from the Churches

Northern Presbytery

The Northern Presbytery has approved the *planting of a church in the Flat Bush area* which is set to grow by some 40 – 50,000 residents over the next 10 – 20 years. The church is to be called **Redeemer Grace Presbyterian Church**. Andrew Young will give overall leadership and carry most of the preaching work and Tony Bracefield will be responsible for community liaison. Please pray for this work, particularly for a *suitable venue* to meet for worship. It is planned that worship services begin in February.

Covenant Presbyterian Church Points Of Praise:

* *Missions Week 31st October – 7th November:* We give thanks to God for a challenging and encouraging Missions Week here at Covenant. The theme for our week focused on our local missions field through immigration – “*understanding and praying for our local Muslim and Buddhist neighbours*” The Overseas Missionary Fellowship ran seminars

on both topics during the week. We now look forward to building on the foundation laid during the week.

* *The Khan Family:* We give thanks that our prayers for Nasira and Sarah have been heard and answered in the most wonderful of ways – they have now arrived safely in New Zealand and are settling into life together as a family. We are seeking to develop with Amjad a ministry that will stimulate Muslim awareness and evangelism (Grace to Islam). This could be launched with a DVD of the testimony of Arshad Rizvi “Ashby” a Muslim man who was soundly converted to

Christ. Ashby had terminal cancer. He was baptised at Covenant on the 19th September 2004, an occasion of tremendous assurance and joy for him personally as well as his church family. On the 4th November we held a memorial service for him as the Lord had called him home on the 26th October. We are at work producing a testimony he recorded about 2 weeks before his death. We believe this could have tremendous impact for the cause of the Gospel in the Muslim world. We have already received well over 60 requests for a copy of the DVD.

Prayer Points:

* Please pray for our annual *Children’s Holiday Program* to be run from the 17th – 21st January 2005. During this week we have contact with over 200 families from our local area. Please uphold the team as they prepare, and pray for the children who will come. Pray that they will see Christ portrayed in the leaders and that He will touch their hearts and minds through the program “Desert Detectives” and



Ashby

News and Prayer points from the Churches continued



Work has continued on Covenant's site with a big drainage project and new classrooms and decks being built for the Christian School

call many to himself even at this young age.

Trinity Presbyterian Church

- * It is great to report *many new people* have attended Trinity over past 2 months. Pray that they will come back again to hear God's Word.
- * We can report *we have found a venue for Sunday worship* - another Church in Takanini. While thankful for this church it will mean we cannot hold a morning service. Please pray this will not affect the routine of people coming to Trinity.
- * Pray for *our move* on the 19th December to the Church of Christ building.
- * Pray that *many more people will come* to church.
- * Pray for a *good rest* over the summer break for ministry leaders.
- * Give thanks for the *help of Kynan Gray* who will shortly return to the South Island.

Sovereign Presbyterian Community Church

Please pray for:

- * Our *Christmas singing program* at community rest-homes and a private hospital.
- * Our *Christmas Eve combined ser-*

vice with the Korean Presbyterian Church, Howick.

- * *Equipping and serving* at SPCC.

Central Presbytery Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Christchurch

- * Give thanks for the *opportunity to serve Christ in Christchurch* for another year. Pray for the thousands who don't know God.

* *Uni Impact*: Give thanks for the *Vinson's return* to work with uni students. Pray for *godly servant leadership* for 2005 and beyond - Blake Marshall will serve an internship with Uni Impact at Lincoln University.

- * *Peter van den Brink* was received as a candidate for ministry, licensed to preach and accepted as an intern by the Central Presbytery on 30th Nov, 2004. Pray for Peter and Ruth as they determine their future.
- * Give thanks for *Matt van Rij's* safe return from Kenya, and pray for his internship in Blenheim.
- * Pray for the *preaching* of the gospel. Pray for the *Growth Groups 2005* plan for fellowship and edification.
- * Pray for *evangelism ministry* in Christchurch in 2005. Pray for the ministry of *Youth Forever Club*, specifically its outreach to Muslims.
- * Give thanks for the *safe arrival of Faith Morrison* born to Kris and Louise (17th Nov). Pray for the *little children* in EPC.

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ashburton and Fairlie

- * Ashburton gives thanks for having some *new visitors* in recent times.
- * The officebearers have just had a

planning meeting and we are beginning a program of increasing awareness of the church in Ashburton. Coloured information flyers are going to be distributed to motels etc. and information brochures will be hand delivered to those living in the area around the church. The first half hour of door knocking resulted in an opportunity to share the gospel. Please pray for our *outreach activities* that the Lord will bless them and direct us to being effective in His service.

- * We rejoice in the *baptism* of our youngest member Caleb Tarbotton.
- * As this goes to press, *Sarah Gibson* will be in India on a missions trip. She will be visiting Phyllis Treasure who we support in the work with children at Rehoboth. Pray with us for safe travel and the Lord's blessing on the work.

Grace@Wellington

Give thanks for encouraging *growth*

Southern Presbytery

Grace Bible Church, Dunedin

Items for prayer:

- * Plans for *Ignite* (our student ministry) in 2005. We have the possibility of Rush Jackson coming over. There are several things that need to fall into place for him to be here early in 2005.
- * We give thanks for the different people from *different nationalities* God has brought along during this year.
- * Thanks for the way our *Sunday School* programme has been going and the number of children involved.

Grace Presbyterian Church, Invercargill

Give thanks:

- * GPC - Invercargill continues to give thanks to the Lord for his *provision of a wonderful church building* and a house with grounds. In addition to this we are delighted to have folk from the *Georgetown Baptist Church* worshipping with us. We have been amazed by the generosity of the Georgetown people and have found them to be a faithful people who love the Lord and have a desire to see a work continue in this area. So we have much to be thankful for.
- * The arrival of *Barry and Cynthia Swann* in late November will be another answer to prayer. We are looking forward to them commencing their ministry amongst us.

Prayer items:

- * *A house* for Barry and Cynthia.
- * We are also looking at *ways of reaching out to the community* and commencing that ministry.

Grace Presbyterian Church, Gore Thanks for:

- * *Good numbers* at Sunday morning services.

- * The *gospel being shared* in the community.

Pray for:

- * *Community visiting* to be fruitful.
- * *Youth and children's ministries* to be fruitful.
- * *Continued spiritual growth* in the people.

Wyndham Evangelical Church

- * Give thanks for another year of *knowing the Lord's hand* upon our church and worship services.
- * Join with us in prayer in our search for a *pastor*.
- * Pray that the Lord will use our many *contacts* throughout the communities we represent for the gospel's sake.

Catlins Evangelical Church

- * Give thanks for *John Tamati* becoming a member and being baptized this Sunday.
- * Pray the Lord would *bless our outreach/visiting* in Kaka Point this summer.
- * Pray that He would *be with the*

church as Steve and Eva are away in Auckland for the months of December and January.

- * Pray for our church to have a *love for the lost and for boldness/grace* in speaking to others about spiritual truths.
- * Pray for *the coming year and planning* for outreach activities and opportunities to serve in the community.
- * Give thanks for the way in which *the Lord has provided financially* for ministry here in the Catlins in the last year, and for those from other Grace Churches who have been so supportive of the work.
- * Pray that the Lord of the Harvest would add *more workers*.

Tokomairiro Grace Bible Church

- * Give thanks for the life of *Wallace Hall*. Give thanks for His consistent witness to the lord Jesus Christ. Give thanks for his

More pictures from GPC Invercargill:

Below: Inside the main auditorium

*Right: 1) Ministry house that also came with the property
2) Hall inside the main building*



teaching ability and knowledge. Give thanks for his concern for the spiritual welfare of all the boys who ever went to camp with him.

- * Pray that the Lord will *raise up other men* to minister at CYC camps and Tokomairiro Bible Church in his stead.
- * Give thanks that *Ross and Ruby Brightwell* are able to come to Toko for 6 months next year.
- * Pray that there will be a *smooth transition* as Wally leaves Toko and Ross arrives. Pray that as much continuity of pastoral care as possible may occur.
- * Give thanks for the *ASK Club* (After School Kids) is going well. This year we have had a low attendance of 12 and a high attendance of 27. Our average is about 18. Give thanks that one ASK club family has visited our Church. Pray for our break-up BBQ on 30th Nov. Pray that the parents will be keen to attend. Pray that others in our Church will get to know the

families better. Pray for decisions that need to be made regards 2005 and ASK club.

- * Pray that the members of Toko will continue to *seek ministry niches* for themselves to honour God with.
- * Pray that Toko (and all our churches) will be an *out-going, outreaching, disciple-making church*.

To send articles or give us your feedback please contact us at

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Pastor: Andrew Macpherson
Ph (09) 267-2847
- **Sovereign Presbyterian Community Church (Mission Church)**
14a Grayson Ave, Papatoetoe, Auckland
Pastor: Pita Uo
Ph (09) 275-8945

Central Presbytery

- **Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Christchurch** www.journey.org.nz
The Fendalton Community Centre,
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- **Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ashburton**
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- **Grace @ Wellington (Mission Church)**
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- **Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Fairlie (Mission Church)**
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Southern Presbytery

- **Grace Bible Church, Dunedin**
Leith Bowling Club, Duke Street, Dunedin
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- **Tokomairiro Grace Bible Church**
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Union Street, Milton, Otago
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