

Growing in Grace

*Newsletter of Grace Presbyterian Church
of New Zealand*

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An Outpost in Tuatapere!

In March of this year the Planning Group of the Grace Presbyterian Church in Invercargill received a Macedonian call for help from a group of Presbyterians in the inland Southland town of Tuatapere. These people had heard of the new Grace Presbyterian work in Invercargill and been tremendously encouraged by it. They had become frequent visitors to the evening service, gladly making the hour and a half journey to the city to find fellowship and teaching that warmed their hearts and helped their spiritual lives. Now they wanted

help!

This presented a great challenge to the young congregation in Invercargill. Here they were, still in the stages of emerging as a congregation themselves. They had no resources, and not even a formal membership. What is more, Tuatapere was some 90 kilometers away, on the very borders of Fiordland! Surely they should wait until they were stronger and in a better position to offer help.

However, knowing what God had done among them, they felt compelled

to step out in faith and do what they could. They were confident in their God and believed that his resources always follow faith-filled action.

A meeting with the Tuatapere people was organized and well attended. A decision was made to hold fortnightly services in the town – people would travel to Invercargill on alternate Sundays. On their part, the Invercargill congregation drew up a list of men with preaching gifts to provide ministry for the group. A suitable hall was found for worship services and the first

service was planned for May 9.

I had the privilege of preaching at that first service. Nineteen people in all attended, and several gave their apologies. Some of those who attended hadn't been at worship for two years. It was a great joy to be able to minister to this

needy group.

Pray for this bold venture as those involved in it look to their Heavenly Father for wisdom and direction. Pray that he would provide the resources needed for a regular ministry in the town, and for the gathering of a committed congregation that will glorify his name in this southern outpost of Tuatapere.

♦ Ross Thompson
GPCNZ Moderator

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Worshippers at the first GPCNZ service in Tuatapere

Authentic Fellowship

"All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:44-47

When we stop and think about this familiar passage it fills us with wonder at the depth of fellowship in the early church. We do not always experience it because of the innate independency of our culture. Yet such richness of fellowship is at the heart of what we are in Christ.

Having been united to Him by an unbreakable spiritual bond, we are also eternally bound to one another. It is contrary to Scripture to think that we are so united to Christ yet to view our connection with one another as less important. To know and practice this truth is genuinely costly but it is also essential to spiritual growth and effectiveness. Indeed I suggest that without that richness of fellowship our own experience of Christ will be less than it should be.

There can be a problem in the cul-

ture of the Church. We all know how we must behave but we are often afraid of letting others know what is really going on underneath. We are unsure how they will react; at worst, we believe they will react badly. The modern buzzword for this is "authenticity", being able to be real about ourselves and our struggles. Being authentic creates a "culture" of authenticity where others also feel the safety to be open. Such a culture doesn't justify sin, but practices grace so that we can confront sin and find support to change.



Peter Boyd

One Church has this vision for their *Small Group Ministry* – "to become a Church where nobody stands alone." They want their church to be a place where people are transformed into fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ. That is a most worthy goal. How blessed we can be if that becomes a reality. How much more apparent it would be that the God of transforming grace was in our midst. And how fruitful for the unchurched to begin to see God's love because of the way we love one another, not simply in "word or with tongue, but in deed and truth" (1 John 3:18).

Depth of fellowship is crucial to effective evangelism. Despite the independent nature of our culture there are thousands crying out for relationship. I know of one person who looks forward to trips to the supermarket just so they can have human contact. The Christian Church has the God-given potential to be the caring community that people need.

The ministry of *Exodus* illustrates the need for the Church to excel in this area. As people seek victory over a homosexual lifestyle, they often testify that the Church's reaction to their struggle has hurt. They experienced a deep degree of community, love and acceptance in their previous lifestyle and if the Church cannot provide a greater degree of grace there is little encouragement to pursue fullness in Christ. But when the Church does practice fellowship at a deeper level it has the potential to be a powerful agent for transformation and growth in the knowledge of Christ.

In the end it depends on the depth of our life together, our genuine caring involvement with one another. It cannot be manipulated or engineered but we can develop an environment that would allow it to flourish.

◇ Pastor Peter Boyd
Covenant Presbyterian Church

A Memorable Missions Week (Briarwood Missions Conference)

On February 13th my wife Helen and daughter Tanya and I boarded the Air NZ flight from Auckland to Los Angeles. We were on our way to Briarwood Presbyterian Church

in Birmingham Alabama to take part in its annual Missions Conference. Our nine days at Briarwood were extremely busy but also incredibly stimulating. Above all, they were a

great encouragement – not just to us personally, but to us as part of Grace Presbyterian Church in New Zealand.



The Conference turned out to be quite different to my expectations. I had expected that we would spend our time listening to the main conference speaker preaching about missions. Instead, the speaker (Dr Moon) preached only on the first Sunday. For the rest of the conference the church focused on the people it supports around the world. The midweek speakers were the missionaries themselves – including us and Ian and Glenys Bayne who were also there.

We were kept busy! During the week, I spoke to two adult Sunday School groups, two evening conference groups (Monday and Wednesday), one home group, and to ten Briarwood High School classes.

Helen spoke to twelve Primary School classes. Tanya ably assisted us in all of this, among other things, delighting audiences by singing a Maori action song!

The Oceania sub-committee of the Missions Committee – the sub-committee overseeing mission support to New Zealand - interviewed Helen and me about the work at Trinity. We were also able to speak to individual members of the Missions Committee and other interested church members. All these people impressed us with their humility and sincere desire to assist us in our plan to establish an active biblical Presbyterian Church in NZ.

The degree of interest in what is happening in New Zealand was reflected in the numbers of people who attended the presentations that Ian Bayne and I made. We were allocated a table in the main corridor outside the “Fellowship Hall” that we set up with a display of what is happening in New Zealand. Large

numbers of people flocked to it, wanting to know more about New Zealand and Grace Presbyterian Church in particular. I came away encouraged and more convinced than ever that we must actively pursue church planting in New Zealand while we have a very active and interested partner in Briarwood.

Between the Conference events the hospitality showered on us was generous in every way. We could not meet all the invitations that came our way, there were so many of them. To these people we say heartfelt thanks!

◇ Pastor Andrew Macpherson
Trinity Presbyterian Church



More on Missions Week (Briarwood Missions Conference)

In February Glenys and I traveled to the USA. We went there chiefly for the Briarwood Missions Conference, but also to catch up again with various church contacts we had previously built up while over there. We were also eager to establish new contacts that may have an interest in the work here in New Zealand.

During the course of the Missions Conference week the role of visiting missionaries is to communicate to as many groups within the Church as possible to inform them of the work and vision in which they are involved. This may mean speaking up

to 8 times a day to groups of various ages, small children through to adults. What spare moments Glenys and I had during the week we used to visit and meet with other individuals and churches in the region with whom we had previously built relationships. This included speaking at a separate missions conference at a relatively new church in Chelsea about 20 minutes out of Birmingham.

One of the pleasurable duties we have at Briarwood is to report to the Global Missions committee. This committee is made up of mission-

minded members of Briarwood Presbyterian Church who have the responsibility of distributing the mission funds raised by the Church to the many missionary endeavors they support throughout the world. Perhaps even more importantly they especially commit themselves to pray continually for the work of missions.

The budget for missions at the Briarwood Presbyterian Church is sourced solely from faith promise pledges made during the missions week. The giving of the members of the congregation to missions is over

and above their regular tithes and offerings. Much of the giving therefore is of a costly and sacrificial nature; many of the congregation who participate in the faith promise pledge gladly take a cut in their own living standards to enjoy the blessing of giving in this way.

This year the Briarwood family committed 2.25 million U.S. dollars to the mission budget. The support we receive here in GPCNZ comes

out of this figure, and this, if nothing else, ought to spur us on here in New Zealand to greater works of service and love for Christ's sake.

The vision of establishing a GPCNZ church within reach of every New Zealander is a goal that our brothers and sisters at Briarwood and other churches in the surrounding districts are firmly behind. When we report to them the small progress we have so far made they are greatly encour-

aged. They regularly and faithfully pray for us and join with us in seeking God's glory above all else here in New Zealand.

At the finish of the conference Glenys and I returned back home tired but thankful and encouraged to continue on in the work of church planting in Wellington.

◇ Pastor Ian Bayne
Grace@Wellington

So What's a General Assembly?

From July 8-10th our Church will hold its third General Assembly in Gore. For some, mention of a General Assembly will arouse memories of bitter debates and disputes. For others, especially the younger generation, it will mean very little. If the General Assemblies of GPCNZ are to be what they should be, and if we are to pray intelligently for the coming meeting in July, all of us need to understand what a General Assembly is and what it is supposed to do.

In a Presbyterian Church, the General Assembly is – as the very name suggests – a gathering (or assembly) of teaching and ruling elders from all the congregations within the national church. Elders (or presbyters) are those entrusted with the rule of the Church. They exercise their au-

thority not as individuals, but along with their fellow-elders in what are commonly called “church courts.” The smallest and most familiar of these courts is the Session of the local congregation. In this court, the elders oversee the spiritual and practical affairs of the congregation they have been elected to serve.

Beyond the local church Session there are also Presbyteries (three in total in GPCNZ). These are what are called “regional courts” of the Church. Elders from the various congregations within the Presbytery participate in this court to provide oversight and direction in matters that concern the regional church. This includes such things as developing church planting strategies for a region, examining candidates for the ministry and those seeking ordination, and developing regional training and evangelism programmes.

The third and highest court is the General Assembly. This is made up, as mentioned above, of representative elders from all the congregations and/or Presbyteries within the national church. It is concerned with issues that affect the Church as a whole. It is the General Assembly that devel-

ops and approves the Constitution of the Church. It is this court of elders that establishes the general direction and vision for the Church and decides which other denominations to form close relationships with. If there are problems or disputes that can't be sorted out at local and regional levels, they come up to this level of the Church for resolution. These are just some of the things that are the responsibility of a General Assembly.

Much of the work of the General Assembly is carried out by what are called Standing Committees. These are Committees appointed by the Assembly to work in specified areas between regular Assembly meetings. There are three such Committees in GPCNZ – the Finance and Administration Committee, the Christian Education and Publications Committee, and the Missions Committee. All three Committees have been working hard since the last Assembly and will be producing reports and recommendations for the General Assembly to consider. Much of the work of the Assembly centres around receiving reports from these Committees and making decisions on their recommendations. When the Committees have done their work well, the Assembly functions smoothly and productively.



Current GPCNZ Treasurer George Wallace, Moderator Ross Thompson, Stated Clerk David Bayne and Business Administrator Tony Bracefield

At this early stage in our development we still have many things to clarify and formulate at our Assembly meetings. It is important that we have wisdom from God so that we can discern and do his will in the Church. We also need grace to work together in harmony and humility. Disunity is always a possibility in gatherings of people drawn from different backgrounds and localities with different interests. All too often church meetings of this nature can degenerate into factional wars. Mercifully we have been preserved from that so far in GPCNZ. Do pray that we will continue to be, and that a

spirit of understanding and love will prevail.

Pray too for our Moderator, Ross Thompson, and the Assembly Clerk, David Bayne. They have the challenge of guiding the Assembly through its business in a smooth, fair, and orderly way. This is seldom an easy task – especially toward the end of the second or third day of intense meetings. These men need clear minds and firm hands to keep the proper spirit of the meeting alive and proceedings moving efficiently.

General Assemblies are enormously important and can be (and should be) a great blessing to the Church. They bring together the widest array of gifts in the Church and create the greatest opportunity for cementing unity and love within it. They are opportunities for sharpening the vision of the church for giving it impetus in its mission. Pray that the teaching and ruling elders attending will return home from this coming Assembly inspired and energized to work at local and regional levels for the glory of God in New Zealand.

◇ Andrew Young
for the CE&P Committee

WHAT'S ON AT THE GPCNZ ASSEMBLY

Commissioners for the third General Assembly of Grace Presbyterian Church will gather together in Gore on Thursday afternoon, July 8th for the opening of Assembly that night. General Assemblies in Presbyterian churches typically begin with a worship service followed by formal or procedural matters setting up the Assembly for its main business sessions to follow.

Most of this year's Assembly business will come from its Standing Committees. These will include reports from the Missions Committee – including material from Don and Dawn Wallace on their missionary service in Kenya - and further plans for church planting in New Zealand. The Finance and Administration Committee will be bringing recommendations to the Assembly regarding the position of Business Administrator and will present a budget to Assembly for consideration. The Church will be asked to discuss how many of its operations it wants to finance from a central fund, and how much should be covered by local churches. The Christian Education Committee will be presenting reports on the development of Women's and Youth ministries in the Church, on the GPCNZ website, on Public Issues, on the development of a vision statement and publicity material, and on a memorandum of understanding with Grace Theological College.

Part of the Assembly will be set aside to discuss church planting in NZ and to hear from visiting seminary teacher Dr. Carl Stevens. Together, these items, and the informal fellowship enjoyed in homes and around meal tables, will provide more than enough to keep everyone busy over the Friday and Saturday business sessions of the Assembly.

Update on Invercargill

In July last year the Invercargill congregation began holding evening worship services. Attendance averaged around 50, including a number of people who were members of other churches in Invercargill that didn't offer an evening service. Everyone agreed that this new congregation of Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand was needed and had come to Invercargill at the right time.

Such was the blessing being enjoyed that a morning service was launched in February 2004. The work became a Mission Church of GPCNZ under the oversight of GPC Gore, and began looking for a minister. Lorraine and myself were asked to come and spend 6 months with them in the interim. A list of foundation members is being prepared, and consideration is being given to those who might serve as elders.

With morning attendances averaging in the 30's and evening services in the 40's, there is much to be thankful to God for. We look forward to the time in the near future when the congregation becomes a fully-fledged local church in GPCNZ. Thank you to all who have prayed for this work, and all praise to God for what he is doing!

◇ Ross Thompson
GPCNZ Moderator

Major Events in the South

Southern Women's Conference

"Christian Women in Action" was the theme for the inaugural Southern Presbytery Women's Conference held in Gore on Saturday 29th May 9:30am-3:00pm.

Nola Young and Rosemary Burns from Auckland were the speakers. Nola spoke on the topic "*Women Ministering to Women in the Church*," drawing on her years of experience in church life and recent insights from a "Spiritual Mothering" course she has led in Covenant Presbyterian Church in Manurewa. Rosemary shared insights from what she has learned about "*Women Influencing the Community*" from her recent ministry among needy people in Takanini, South Auckland. We hope to present a fuller report of this conference in the next issue of our newsletter.

Winter School of Theology

A second Winter School of Theology will be held during the week of July 5-8th at Christian Youth Camps, Wai-hola. The advertising brochure for the School describes it as "an intensive week of study for anyone contemplating future theological study or wanting simply to grow in their understanding of God."

There will be four main topics covered at this year's Winter School. Dr. Carl Stevens from Perth, Australia, will give four lectures on "The Doctrine of God," providing an overview of what God has revealed about himself. Pastor Wally Rakete from Milton will give lectures on the Doctrine of Man, David Bayne on the Ancient and Medieval periods of Church History, and Andrew Young on the Doctrine of the Church and Principles of Interpretation illustrated from the book of Colossians. The cost for the School will be \$80. Enquiries and registrations are being handled by David Bayne, phone (03) 342 5354 or BayneD@Consultancyservices.co.nz

News and Prayer points from the Churches

Northern Presbytery

Covenant Presbyterian Church

*Praise for growth in our *Small Group ministry* and for potential leaders.

*Please pray for those planning the *Covenant Missions Week* in early November

*Please pray for the *school* development site here at Covenant as we wait for drainage work to be done by Manukau City Council before the school can come on site. Also please pray for those with the burden of getting the work done.

*We rejoice that *Hamish MacDonald* is a candidate for ministry training at GTC, and that *Christy Peek* is pursuing her heart for evangelism by attending Sydney Missionary Bible College next year. We also have another young person planning to spend a year on a mission to Japan teaching English.

*Please pray for *Amjad Khan*- it has been a long battle to get approval for his wife and daughter to join him in NZ. We would urge focused petition to the Lord for this man of God who has shown tremendous patience and whose ministry is beginning to bear fruit among the Punjab and Urdu community.

Trinity Presbyterian Church

This year has been a different year for Trinity, adapting to absence of Steve and Eva Panapa. But we have seen many encouragements in the congregation as members have stepped forward to fill the gaps. Caleb Gray has been doing a great job of assisting Andrew in the various duties of church life including preaching and is proving to be effective at contacting new people in the community. At present Caleb is training 6 people in EE. Altogether Trinity has 10 people engaged in

weekly visitation and evangelism. Trinity recently welcomed Gemma Greenhow into membership by profession of faith and was encouraged as Gemma gave her testimony of God's work in her life.

*Please pray for our people to have *a love for the lost* in Takanini

*For *evangelism to be effective* in means of saving people

*For *Leslie Cooper* and *Ashley Page* who have come from the USA to work in Trinity for 6 weeks

Sovereign Presbyterian Community Church

On May 16 Sovereign celebrated one year since its official opening

Central Presbytery

Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Christchurch

**Uni Impact*: Give thanks for the work of Campus Outreach in Christchurch over the past two years. Give

thanks also for the committed students who are carrying on the work with an excellent Monday night Bible study. Pray that the Vinson family will be accepted by MTW, and return to continue the ministry.

**Ron & Cathy Ellis:* Praise God that all of Ron's support has come in, and they fly into Christchurch on 5th June. Pray for their ministry in the EPC, especially for acceptance by the Korean community.

**Bible Studies:* Pray for the various Bible studies led by capable volunteers. Pray that the word of the Lord would be mixed with faith in the hearts of those reading.

**Evangelism Explosion:* Give thanks for the good responses to the public questionnaire ministry. Pray that the Spirit would keep the words spoken to stranger alive in their hearts.

**Property:* Pray for EPC as we continue our search for suitable property for use in ministry.

**Elders:* Give thanks for Richard Eyre's election to office. Pray for his ministry in the EPC.

**Membership:* Give thanks for Mark Hedges & Nitika McMillan's profession of faith.

**Babies:* For the safe arrival of Alysha Hedges, first child of Mark & Rochelle (Millar) Hedges.

Grace @ Wellington

Give thanks for:

**3 families* coming to worship now.

**the young people's Bible study.*

**the ladies' Bible study*



New meeting room for Grace@Wellington

**the three students* doing a GTC tape course.

Pray for

**a worship leader* now that Brent has returned to the USA.

**the Iranian 9 year old boy* who has been kidnapped and is being held for \$30,000 and the new contact we are having with this community here in Wellington. They meet for church just down the road from where we live.

Southern Presbyterian

Grace Bible Church, Dunedin

**Our Christian life training* (all age Sunday School programme) is working well after the morning service. Pray that it would be a fun learning experience for children and adults alike.

**We give thanks to the new people* that have come to Grace Bible Church Dunedin this year, and for the new children that have been added to the church family.

**We thank God also for the many contacts* we have. Pray that they would be able to taste and see that the Lord is good.

Grace Presbyterian Church, Gore

**Thanks for new people* interested in our Sunday morning services.

**Thanks for spiritual growth* in the people

**Prayer for the children's outreach* in our area through tel-a-story, junior, youth group, and girl's rally.

**Prayer for clarity* in the church's vision.

Grace Presbyterian Church, Invercargill & Tuatapere

**Pray for the recently started mid-week study* in Invercargill, and for the newly commenced *men's Bible study* in Tuata-



1 year celebration at Sovereign PCC

pere.

**There is urgent need for a pastor* to care for the Invercargill and Tuatapere congregations. Pray constantly for this need.

**Pray for the fortnightly services* held at Tuatapere – that people will attend these services and for those preaching that they will be helped and blessed.

**Pray for a more suitable building* for worship services in Invercargill.

Wyndham Evangelical Church

**Pray for good ideas for outreach* within Wyndham town to follow up on recent visiting.

**Pray for the Lord to overrule* with our local council in matters relating to planned *building improvements*.

**Pray for recent contacts* made that the Lord will use these to draw people to himself.

**Pray for Barry Swann* our pastor in his work and ministry as he prepares and unfolds the word of God to us.

Tokomairiro Grace Bible Church

**Pray for the After School Kids Club (ASK).* Give thanks for the kids (6-10) who are eager to come to our simple program of games, Bible story, memory verse, songs and "craft". Pray that God would be pleased to impact these kids lives.

**Give thanks that our list of contacts* keep growing. Pray that we may be able to start studying the Scriptures with people who don't come to church.

Standing up for Truth (Fighting the Civil Union & Omnibus Bills)

The proposed Civil Union and Omnibus Bills have stirred Alison Gray deeply. Alison, a second year student at Grace Theological College currently attending Trinity Presbyterian Church in Takinini, believes that Christians should be making their concerns known on this vital issue.

Alison believes that the proposed legislation strikes at the heart of what Christians hold dear. Its provision for a number of different relationships to receive



Alison Gray

legal recognition on a par with marriage completely ignores God's plan for mankind. It dishonours God, threatens the family, and jeopardizes the future of children in particular. It is something that we as Christians should care very deeply about. "We should be standing up for what is true and right" she says.

She suggests there are three things that we should be doing. First, we need to pray; sec-

ond, we need to write to our local Members of Parliament, expressing our opposition to these proposed Bills; and third, we need to be keeping ourselves informed on developments.

Alison herself has initiated a petition to enable Christians to express their views collectively. Several churches in Auckland have taken copies of this and are encouraging their members to sign it. Others interested in obtaining copies should write to Alison at Flat 2, 33 Lawrence Crescent, Manurewa, or at calebsalicat@hotmail.com.

Contacts

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- **Trinity Presbyterian Church**
19 Waimana Ave, Takanini, Auckland
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,
170 Clyde Rd, Fendalton, Christchurch
Pastor: Geoff Macpherson
Ph (03) 342-8617
- **Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ashburton**
63 Princes St, Ashburton
Contact: David Bayne
Ph: (03) 342-5354
- **Grace @ Wellington (Mission Church)**
Cuba St, Wellington Central
Pastor: Ian Bayne
Ph: (04) 380-9078
- **Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Fairlie (Mission Church)**
McKenzie Centre, Fairlie
Contact: Andrew Johnson
Ph: (03) 685-8222

Southern Presbytery

- **Grace Bible Church, Dunedin**
Leith Bowling Club, Duke Street, Dunedin
Pastor: Mark Smith
Ph: (03) 473-8100
- **Tokomairiro Grace Bible Church**
Senior Citizens Room
Union Street, Milton, Otago
Pastor: Wally Rakete
Ph: (03) 417-4338
- **Catlins Evangelical Church**
Owaka Community Centre,

3 Ovenden Street, Owaka, South Otago
Contact: Grant Bradfield
Ph: (03) 415-8377

- **Grace Presbyterian Church, Gore**
30 Hamilton Street, East Gore
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- **Wyndham Evangelical Church**
Balaclava Street, Wyndham
Contact: Murray Ure
Ph (03) 206-4713
- **Grace Presbyterian Church, Invercargill (Mission Church)**
Hearing Association Room,
126 Leet Street., Invercargill
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- Ross Thompson (09) 266-8571

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GPCNZ's on
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www.gpcnz.org.nz