

# Growing in Grace

Newsletter of Grace Presbyterian Church  
of New Zealand

March 2004

Volume 1, Issue 2

## Living in Line with the Gospel

As a pastor I have long known how important the gospel is for people coming to saving faith. But it is only recently that I have realized how important it is for the day-to-day existence of Christians.

Nowadays I find myself agreeing with Tim Keller when he says 'we never get beyond the gospel in our Christian life to something more advanced... The Gospel is not the A-B-C's but the A to Z of Christianity. The gospel is not the minimum required doctrine necessary to enter the kingdom, but the way we make progress

in the kingdom.'

To put it another way, the thing you begin the Christian life with is the thing you need every moment and in every situation. The Christian life is a matter of radically applying the gospel to every circumstance we face.

The apostle Paul understood this well. His letters show that he saw every aspect of the Christian life connected in some way or other with the gospel. The problem of sexual immorality in Corinth was fundamentally a gospel problem – a failure to recognize what it means to be redeemed (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Reluctance to give freely and generously was also in essence a gospel problem – a failure to reflect the pattern of the gospel in sacrificial giving established by Christ (2 Cor. 8:9-9:15). Consecration to God was a gospel issue too – a necessary response to receiving God's

mercy (Rom. 12:1).

One of the clearest examples of this connection between the gospel and life is found in Paul's letter to the Galatians. In the second chapter the apostle tells of his confrontation with Peter in Antioch. Peter had initially eaten freely with Gentile believers, but when visitors from Jerusalem arrived, he withdrew from doing so. Paul saw this as wrong and accused Peter of '*not acting in line with the truth of the gospel*' Gal 2:14. His actions were a denial of the gospel. As he goes on to say, the gospel tells us that we are justified by faith, not by becoming Jews, or by keeping the law. That being so, there is no place for erecting barriers between Jew and Gentile. To do so is to fail to "live in line with the truth of the gospel!"

Does the gospel shape everything we do every day? Are we living in a way that reflects what Christ has accomplished for us? Sometimes I fear that we don't. We reduce Christianity to a mixture

### Inside this issue:

Editorial	2
Youth Bible Conference 2003-4	2
Christian camping- CYC Waiholo	3
Short term mission to Japan	4
A teacher goes home to glory	5
What's happening in the South	6
News and prayer points from the churches	7

of initial belief followed by faithful rule-keeping. We need the gospel to be saved, we say, but from then on, it's a matter of striving to obey God's commands.

When that happens, our focus changes from what God has done for us to what we must do for him. And that can produce a spirit of legalism, or at least, a sense of burden that we have to perform to please God.

continued on page 2



Mark Smith

*Continued from page 1*

God means us to live in the freedom of the gospel, not under a heavy burden of duty. He wants us each and every day to remind ourselves not so much of what we must do for Him, but of what he has done for us in Christ. This inspires and moti-

vates us to live for him. God has forgiven us in Christ, he has reconciled us in Christ, and he has empowered us through Christ. How else can we live but “by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20)?

Is that how you are living? That’s what it means to live “in line with the truth of the gospel”

◇ Mark Smith  
*Grace Bible Church, Dunedin*



## Editorial

The first issue of *Growing in Grace* published in November last year proved an instant hit. We were thrilled by the positive responses received from GPCNZ members, churches and Presbyteries. Thanks to all who responded so encouragingly.

The value of this publication to our denomination was also highlighted by responses from overseas. John Rollo, former Asian Director of Mission to the World (the Overseas Mission agency of the Presbyterian

Church in America) wrote expressing his jubilation at the formation of the new denomination. Howard Eyrich, Dean of Birmingham Theological Seminary in Birmingham wrote simply – “Hallelujah! It’s humbling to know that we [including Briarwood Presbyterian Church along with himself] have had a small part in seeing this come to pass.” Praise the Lord for these encouraging responses.

This issue focuses upon summer mission and outreach ministries. Azriel and Melissa Gray have provided

a brief report on the National Youth Bible Conference, Grant Bullin on CYC camping ministries, and Louise Kennedy on a short-term mission trip by a team from Covenant Presbyterian Church in Manurewa. We have also included a tribute to Joan Gibson who died on January 14<sup>th</sup>.

Another issue of *Growing in Grace* is planned for May. It’s not too early to begin sending articles, news reports and prayer items now!

◇ Andrew Young  
*Editor*

## Discipleship & Discipline Youth Bible Conference 2003-4

The ninth national Youth Bible Conference (YBC) was held this year between December 29th and January 3rd at “Wesleydale” camp-

site near Waihola. This was an older campsite nestled into the base of the Maungatua mountains, but it nevertheless proved adequate for our days

of Bible teaching, fellowship and fun together.

Our main speaker this year was Stuart Bonnington, a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia who lives in Melbourne. Stuart spoke to us from Matthew 9:35-10:42, challenging us on a range of subjects connected to discipleship. He spoke of our need to serve Christ through love, prayer, fellowship, guidance, perseverance, and courage, and of our need to keep focused on eternity. Somehow he managed to get to know some of our New Zealand bugs rather intimately, and spent a couple of days, as we would say, “as crook as a dog.” He was only one of several campers who



YBC attendees

suffered sickness problems – problems we suspect were connected with contaminated water. Thankfully everybody, including our main speaker, eventually recovered.

Alf Bradfield was our second speaker. His theme was “God disciplines those he loves.” Taking Hebrews 12 as the basis of his talks, and drawing on case studies from Scripture involving Jacob, Nebuchadnezzar and Peter, Alf explored God’s ways of using suffering in the lives of people. His own experience gave his messages a special quality. They made a powerful impression on us all.

Numbers were down a little this year, but that had its benefits on

camp dynamics. It meant that people were able to get to know each other better and gave everyone a sense of belonging and fitting in. There were a number of highlights, among them the sizeable group of young men with a genuine love for God. In fact, there were more mature leaders among them than we had groups for them to lead. A great problem! Uplifting times of group singing were also a special part of the conference.

YBC is a great opportunity for young people to grow in their walk with God and enjoy wholesome fellowship with likeminded Christians around their own age. It builds friendships throughout the nation and helps develop our youth as lead-

ers of the next generation.

The next conference is in Auckland. We encourage all young people in the church to start saving, to start fundraising, and to make a conscious effort to be there!

YBC Points for praise

- \* Sound teaching
- \* Encouraging spiritual growth
- \* Good discussion groups
- \* Godly young men coming through
- \* Nation wide friendships developing & strengthening

YBC Points for prayer

- \* More senior women to help lead study groups
- \* More people encouraged to come
- \* Preparation for this year’s conference – camp speakers etc.

*We have received a brief note from Stuart Bonnington expressing his appreciation of the camp, and of the connections he established with EPC members in Christchurch. Stuart writes,*

May I express my gratitude to the members of the National Christian Education and Publications Committee for the very kind invitation to be part of the National Youth Bible Conference to share ministry and to be ministered to.

I really enjoyed my visit to the beautiful South Island and was greatly encouraged to meet so many fine younger Christians, led at the camp by Azriel and Melissa Gray. By God's grace your denomination has a potentially great future with such a rising generation! Alf Bradfield spoke very helpfully about the judgment and discipline of the Lord with lots of great spiritual lessons being made plain.

Thank you to all who befriended me and extended hospitality of various kinds while I was in NZ. Especially here I think of Jeff and Jenny Ross of the Christchurch EPC who I stayed with and Geoff Macpherson who kindly invited me to preach while in Christchurch.

It was exciting to learn about the emergence of the Grace Presbyterian Church and to hear of further advances for the gospel while I was in NZ.

May God bless you all in future years, Stuart Bonnington, *South Yarra Presbyterian Church, Melbourne*

## Fields Ripe for Harvest CYC Waihola

*Christian Youth Camps Waihola (Inc.) is one of the ministries that GPCNZ endorses and supports. In this article Camp Manager Grant Bullin outlines the vision and goals of the organization and reports on the camps of this past summer.*

Christian camping is one of the most culturally acceptable and relevant forms of evangelism within our

society today. What makes CYC Waihola so significant is that it alone, among the various Christian camping organizations in New Zealand, has a



CYC Waihola

distinctly Reformed ethos.

Camps provide a wonderful meeting place for people inside and outside the Church. People enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of camps and respond positively to Christianity in this context. It gives them an opportunity to hear God's Word and respond positively to it in a safe, tranquil and secure location outside of the usual structured church environment.

However, the spiritual awakening that can occur at a Christian camp needs to be nurtured within a Bible-believing church fellowship. We are encouraged that there are churches who are alert to this, and who show their commitment to camping ministries by providing enthusiastic and committed personnel for camp leadership and follow-up for returning campers. Christian camping can be a mission field for such churches!

This summer there were five adventure camps that enabled 150 camp-

ers to enjoy memorable experiences - both spiritually and physically! Campers this year (as always) came from many backgrounds. It was particularly encouraging to see an increasing number who had become aware of our camps through school newsletters.

Parents become interested in CYC for a variety of reasons, as the following story illustrates! I received a telephone call one day from a parent wanting to know about CYC. "How much of that Bible stuff do you do?" they asked. I told them that the Bible was an integral and unavoidable part of the programme, and then waited with bated breath to hear their response. "Brilliant, excellent, just what I wanted to hear," came the reply. I was pleasantly surprised, as the usual response is somewhat different to that. The reason for this parent's delight was something I had never come across before. Their child had received a Bible from a grandparent as a birthday present. Although the parents themselves had no interest in the

gospel, they could see great value in the moral and ethical practices of Christianity. They were keen for their child to be exposed to and get an understanding of Christianity in a neutral setting. This parent went on to explain, "Dropping our child off to Sunday School is not an option for us; that would make us hypocritical." Talk about the fields being ripe for harvest! What an opportunity.

We are thankful to those within the wider church who are committed to praying for and supporting us in this vital evangelistic outreach. We have a unique mission field here in Waiholo in which we have been privileged and much blessed to see the hand of the Sovereign Lord at work during the past 40 years fulfilling His eternal purposes through His unfailing mercy and grace. Please pray with us for His continued enabling presence as we plan expectantly into the future.

To God alone be the Glory!

◇ Grant Bullin, CYC

## Bridge-building in Japan

*In December 2003 a short-term missions team of fourteen made up mainly of members from Covenant Presbyterian Church in Manurewa travelled to Japan for three weeks. This was the third visit a ministry team from our church*



*Japan Team: Adults: Scott Kennedy, Louise Kennedy, Mark Tasker, Rosa Faletanoai, Janet Boyd, Jesse Killip, Cathy Tasker, Malcolm Tasker, Geraldine Loef, Peter Boyd, Anna Bartlett; Kids: Madeline, Callum and Gabriel Boyd*

*has made to Japan in recent years. Like the others, it was crammed with challenge and blessing.*

Upon arriving in Japan we stayed initially in Ichikawa (just out of Tokyo) before travelling north to a city called Sendai. There we presented a

concert and were billeted out to various families for the night. From Sendai we travelled still further north to what is called the Prefecture (or province) of Aomori where we spent the last two weeks of our time travelling around preschools and rest homes, singing songs, sharing skits and forming friendships.

The goal of our visit was to help local missionaries and churches form bridges with non-Christians. English-speaking visitors always create an attraction in Japan, and the concerts we hold and visits we make are a great way of widening the net of contacts for the local churches.

This was my second time in Japan

on a short-term missions trip. On returning to the country, I was greatly encouraged to see the growth in the churches we visited. I could really see the way God has blessed them, not just in numbers, but also in vision for the future and in their unity in Christ.

There are several highlights that stand out from our short visit of three weeks. One was being part of the first Christian meeting ever held in a small coastal fishing village, Imabetsu. In this village we were able to sing and share in a concert held in the local hospital waiting room. God truly answered the prayers of the sole Christian in the village that day. She had prayed for

a long time for something like this to happen in her village, and it was just so special to be a part of that answer to her prayer.

It was another highlight to witness the baptisms of three young Japanese at Tsugaru Chapel in Aomori. Their testimonies were very moving and encouraging. They were able to testify to the way God can soften hearts and draw people to Himself through various events and circumstances in their lives.

We were in Japan at the invitation of Martin and Ruth Ghent, a missionary family in Aomori. Martin and Ruth have a vision to reach the northern part of the main island of

Honshu for Christ. There is a need for workers in this and other parts of the Japanese harvest field. There is plenty of evidence that God is opening the hearts and minds of the Japanese people to receive the gospel, so we need to pray that He will raise up willing and able workers to share in the amazing work that is happening. Although Japan is seen to be an affluent nation, it is very poor spiritually. It needs God's grace and our prayers.

I hope and pray that this little glimpse into our time in Japan will give you a heart for that country and its people.

◇ Louise Kennedy  
*Covenant Presbyterian Church*

## A Teacher Goes Home to Glory

At ten past eight on Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, one of GPCNZ's best known and loved members, Joan Rosamonde Gibson, went to be with the Lord she had long loved and served. Her battle with cancer and Parkinson's disease over, she was immediately "made perfect in holiness" and "passed into glory" (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q&A. 37).

Joan was raised in the country district of Duntroon in North Otago, the oldest of seven children. She became a Christian on her thirteenth birthday, and through the influence of Christian neighbours in particular, quickly became committed to serving God with her whole heart. Convinced that the Lord had made her to be a teacher (in spite of a troublesome stutter), she went to Teachers Training College in Dunedin and then taught for two years at the Presbyterian girls school, Columba College.

In the 1960's she heard of London Bible College through a friend, Ann Scott, and determined to study there. Her three years in Britain made a decisive impact upon her life. Much as she wanted to use the Bible knowledge she gained there on the mission field, she felt called to return home to New Zealand. After teaching positions at Middlemarch and Kurow, she was appointed to Campbell Park School near Duntroon, "a Government school for delinquent and backward boys." For the next 16 years she worked, loved and prayed for the students of this school, making an indelible impression on many confused young lives.

The closure of the school, the death of her mother, and remarriage of her father, opened a door for new teaching opportunities. After four years in an Oamaru North school, Joan was appointed to the head teacher's position at Windermere Christian College in Christchurch. Here, in an environment where she was free to bring her Christian convictions into the classroom, her teaching gifts came to full bloom. She was greatly loved by her pupils and highly esteemed by their grateful parents.

Many will remember Joan most of all for her role in Christian camps. They were one of her great loves. She loved to teach at them, to cook for them, and to spread her infectious love of books through them. Her contribution in this area will live on in the minds of her co-workers and campers, and with time, will probably reach legendary proportions.

Books and Bible studies were passions of Joan. She was never happier than when she was gleaning insights from the Bible and from favourite authors like M'Cheyne and Bonar, Bainton and Paton, and passing these on to others. It was through these that her passion for overseas missions came to be fulfilled in her last years. Unable to go



Joan Gibson

to Asia herself, the Lord brought Asia to her in the form of Korean migrants. A Saturday morning Bible study with a group of Korean ladies was to be one of the greatest joys in her later years.

Joan stood out in her generation as a woman utterly devoted to God. She believed in a great God, and believed that he deserved the total dedication of his redeemed children.

Her life will remain a powerful testimony to what God can do through those whose hearts are given wholly to him. Joan was a woman who influenced many of us, and who was in no small way responsible for promoting the faith we hold dear in Grace Presbyterian Church. We honour her memory and praise God for all that he did through her.

◇ Andrew Young



## What's Happening in the South?

*Mark Smith, Moderator of the Southern Presbytery, provides us with this glimpse of what the coming year holds within the Presbytery.*

2004 is shaping up to be an exciting year for our congregations in the South.

For one thing, there are several exciting developments on the ministry front. **Steve Panapa** from Auckland is spending his internship year in the Catlins congregation. Candidates for the ministry in GPCNZ have to spend twelve months under the oversight of one of the Presbyteries in an internship programme before they can apply for ordination as a teaching elder. Steve, though a member of the Northern Presbytery, is fulfilling his internship requirements ministering to the congregation in Owaka. Do pray for him and for his wife Eva and their family.

The **Wyndham Evangelical Church** also has a new interim pas-



Steve, Eva and Victoria Panapa



"Setting Churches Alight" Conference

tor – Barry Swan from Australia. Barry has been a pastor in the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Australia, initially in Mandura in WA, and latterly in Canberra. He and his wife Cynthia have responded to an invitation to spend three months in Wyndham with a view to being called for a longer-term ministry.

The **Invercargill mission church** also has a short-term ministry for the first six months of the year. GPCNZ Moderator Ross Thompson and his wife Lorraine have responded to a Macedonian plea to cross Cook Strait and return to the South for a further period of ministry. A major objective in the church will be to establish a thriving morning service. Again, please pray for this.

[Ross and Lorraine Thompson's address in Invercargill (until 22 May) is: 304 Tay St, Invercargill.

Ph (03) 217-0983 ]

Last year we held the first of what we hope will be many **Presbytery conferences**. In November 2003 we invited Grace Theological College Principal Andrew Young to run a 'Setting Churches Alight' conference. This was a great time of fellowship and challenge that will continue to have its impact this year as the different sessions work out the application of what was learned in their individual situations. This year we are planning two conferences, one for women and the other for Sunday School teachers.

Congregational reports have been an encouraging highlight of our regular Presbytery meetings over the past year. Hearing what God is doing in the different churches of the Presbytery has inspired us. We look to the Lord to continue His work in our midst this year.

# News and Prayer points from the Churches

## Northern Presbytery

### Covenant Presbyterian Church

- \* We are looking forward to the launch of a *Small Group ministry* through the Church. This ministry has such potential to develop fellowship that is authentic right across the Church, to provide genuine transformation in our knowledge of the Lord and to further the churches endeavours to bring others to Christ. It is also an excellent way of developing younger men in leadership since it requires real pastoral care of a small flock.
- \* We rejoice at the return of the *Japan Team* and the fruit of its labours in Japan. Pray for those who feel a stronger call to mission work. Remember the various ministries to our young people as they commence the year.
- \* Remember the *English language outreach ministry* as it develops relationships for the sake of the Gospel.
- \* The *Christian School* is moving into Phase Two to get all the classrooms down to the Covenant site this year. Pray for provision of finance and labour.
- \* Pray for the *Northern Presbytery* especially as it seeks the Lord's vision and plan for the North Island.

## Central Presbytery

### Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Christchurch

The news from the front-end of the year is that there are lots of things to pray for! With all the other things please pray for the energy to get through to April!

- \* *Uni Impact (CONZ)*: Nathan & Holly Tutor (along with 4-month-old Nathan) returned to the USA after two years labouring on Canterbury University. Give thanks for their time and sacrifice. Pray for them as they settle back into life in Alabama.
- \* Pray for *Neal and Jennifer Vinson* (Ivey, Clay, Baylie) who have taken early furlough to be with both fathers who are battling cancer. Pray for Jennifer's dad who is not a believer.
- \* Pray for *Rodney and Jennifer Barton* (Abigail) who are holding the fort at Canterbury Uni.
- \* Give thanks for all the *students* being ministered to at both Lincoln and Canterbury Universities.
- \* *EE*: We have commenced weekly Evangelism Explosion training every Wednesday evening. Pray for Peter van den Brink, Ben Hillery, Dong-Gi Jun, and Lynaire Millar as they complete the course. Pray for the trainers Adrienne van Rij, Jeffrey Ross and Geoff Macpherson as they lead. Pray especially that the Spirit would prepare hearts to receive the word of God.
- \* *Ron & Cathy Ellis* have had to move their arrival time out to April. They are coming to work



*New buildings for St Andrew's Christian School*

with the EPC in small groups ministry and will have a particular interest in Korean families. Pray for adequate financial support for them.

## Southern Presbytery

### Grace Bible Church, Dunedin

- \* Grace Bible Church Dunedin has *celebrated five years* which has been very exciting for us.
- \* Please pray for us in making contact with *new students* as they begin their studies in Dunedin, and thanks for the contacts that we have made so far.
- \* Pray that as a community of God's people living out the gospel more and more, and seeing it's power to transform lives.

### Grace Presbyterian Church, Gore Points for praise:

- \* Thanks for fruitful *elders retreat*
- \* Thanks for *community contacts* coming to church

### Points for prayer:

- \* Pray for *wisdom* in actioning plans
- \* Pray for *Youth work* development

### PART-TIME POSITION AT CYC WAIHOLA

The Council of Management for CYC Waihola is seeking to fill the newly created part-time remunerated position of Camping Programme Coordinator. With the increasing diversity and enrichment of the camping programme it has become necessary to appoint someone in this position. In taking this step the Council is proceeding on its long established practice of trusting God, praying, and acting in faith. If anyone is interested in this position please contact CYC Camp Manager, C/- Post Office, Waihola, South Otago.

To send articles or give us your feedback please contact us at [ayoung@gtc.ac.nz](mailto:ayoung@gtc.ac.nz) or [tonybracefield@clear.net.nz](mailto:tonybracefield@clear.net.nz)

GPCNZ's on the web:  
[www.gpcnz.org.nz](http://www.gpcnz.org.nz)

## GPCNZ's Inaugural Covenant

*With a sense of being led of God and for the glory of His name, with a commitment to see a faithful, biblical, godly, growing and fruitful Presbyterian witness, with a desire to see such a Church bless our children and our children's children and, with an awareness of absolute dependence upon a sovereign God that such a Church would be used by Him to bring spiritual renewal and revival to the nation and advance the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, the following named commissioners do covenant together this day the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2003 to establish together the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, on the basis of the Book of Church Order (October 2002).*

## Contacts

### Northern Presbytery

- **Covenant Presbyterian Church**  
77 Rogers Rd, Manurewa, Auckland  
Pastor: Peter Boyd  
Ph (09) 269-2553
- **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](http://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  
Pastor: Azriel Gray  
Ph (03) 208-8027
- **Wyndham Evangelical Church**  
Balaclava Street, Wyndham  
Contact: Murray Ure  
Ph (03) 206-4713
- **Grace Presbyterian Church, Invercargill (Mission Church)**  
Royal NZ Foundation for the Blind  
172 Queens Drive  
Contact: Simon Wallace  
Ph (03) 214-0098

### Moderator

- Ross Thompson (09) 266-8571

### Stated Clerk

- David Bayne (03) 342-5354

### Treasurer

- George Wallace (03) 208-6635

