

growing in GRACE

HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US...
THE STORY OF GPCNZ

GREETINGS from the other side of the Pacific!

SOUTHERN EASTER CAMP / NORTHERN EASTER CAMP

Photo by Nicholas Allen. PROTOFOS MEDIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND
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GRACE

HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US...

THE STORY TO 2003

GEOFF MACPHERSON

PRESBYTERIANS IN NZ

Presbyterianism has a long, but not always illustrious history in New Zealand. In this sketch I will attempt to trace the progress of the Presbyterian movement in NZ to the point when the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand was formed.

Christianity came to Aotearoa in the early 1800's. The Church of England established its first base in Northland in 1814 through the tireless labours of the evangelical Church Missionary Society workers like Samuel Marsden. The Methodist Church also made a significant contribution to introducing Christianity to the native Maori population of the colony when the Wesleyan Missionary Society established its mission in 1822. Roman Catholic missionaries under the direction of Bishop Pompallier set up the French Catholic mission in the Hokianga in 1838.

Presbyterianism soon followed, and on October 31, 1839 the ship *Bengel Merchant* sailed from Glasgow with 89 adults and 33 children destined for Port Nicholson, Wellington. The Rev. John Macfarlane, a Church of Scotland minister, was one of the passengers. The first Sunday after arriving at Wellington, February 23, 1840, Mr. Macfarlane led the passengers in public worship, choosing as his text Psalm 137:5,6: *'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.'*

By 1842 there were enough Presbyterians in the Auckland region to warrant the establishment of a congregation there. In the south things moved forward on a grander scale with the purchase of 144,000 hectares of land in Otago to establish a Free Church (of Scotland) colony. By 1850 Rev. Thomas Burns estimated the population of Otago to be 1,149, of whom 888 were Presbyterians and 206 Episcopalians!



Wellington Harbour (Port Nicholson) and the City

By the 1870's strong Presbyterian Churches had been established in all the major centres and were developing well in the more out-lying parts also. These early churches usually consisted of people from all of the Presbyterian denominations in England, Scotland, and Ireland. Many also had other non-Presbyterian worshippers as part of the flock. The early ministers were outstanding in their willingness to accept 'outsiders', most being careful not to cause unnecessary divisions in the community.

In 1901 the northern and southern Presbyterian churches united to form the Presbyterian Church of NZ. This was not, however, until the southern church too had adopted a Declaratory Statement which relaxed the terms of subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith for her office bearers, thus bringing it into line with the northern church.

THEOLOGICAL COMPROMISE

In 1874 a theological hall was established to train ministers. While the original tutors were reformed, its very first professor was not. Appointed as college principal in 1876, William Salmond rejected the doctrine of hell, and embraced universal salvation instead. He also argued that the Westminster Confession was, *'As dry almost as a deed of conveyance; it smells of the controversies of the ages; it is very scholastic, and part of it at least sounds like a metaphysical jargon.'* (W Salmond, 'What is Christianity?' in *The New Zealand Presbyterian*; July 1, 1880)

Unfortunately heterodox views of Scripture became more common amongst these teachers of the future pastors. Others like Professor John Dickie who taught from 1910 to 1942 continued with the liberal shift which both denied the supernatural realm and also rejected biblical infallibility. (See Dickie's *The Organism of Christian Truth*, 1931). This slide continued until the mid-1960's when Professor Lloyd Geering began to state publicly the same theology that had been taught for years. Geering, a gifted academic and communicator, wrote articles questioning the resurrection, the immortality of the soul, and the deity of Christ.

The resulting heresy trial did little to allay the concerns of church members, and many began to react. Some simply walked out the door to the nearest Baptist church. Others left in groups to form independent Presbyterian churches like the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Finally, some chose to remain, but circled the wagons and cut themselves off from contact with the wider denomination.

HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US...

THE SEED OF GPCNZ IS CREATED

Throughout the last three decades of the twentieth century, Presbyterian groups and alliances waxed and waned. In the 1990's, however, a new movement crystallised which ultimately led to the formation of the Grace Presbyterian Church of NZ. A New Zealand Council of Evangelical Presbyterians came into being. This was a meeting of individuals from different churches up and down the country that ultimately gave birth to Grace Theological College (www.gtc.ac.nz) and an inter-church Youth Bible Conference.

Over a series of national meetings in 1997 the member churches agreed in principal to a motion that would have the churches *'commit themselves to work together under the authority of the Scriptures and on the basis of the reformed faith, for the expansion and glory of the Kingdom of God in New Zealand and the whole world.'* Three churches ultimately committed themselves to this group.

This Fellowship of Evangelical Reformed Churches, as it called itself, met again in 1998 to agree to the authority of Scripture and the Westminster Confession of Faith as their basis of fellowship. Throughout 1999, some churches called for the formation of a presbytery, while others demurred because of either hesitancy about traditional Presbyterian polity, or local issues that needed addressing. Visits from friends at Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Alabama also commenced around this time, much to the encouragement of local churches.

In March 2000 the Fellowship of Evangelical Reformed Churches met for the last time to formally enter into a covenant of federation known as the Grace Bible Churches of NZ. A manual of operation (BCO) was also adopted by the federation. The first Assembly of the new federation was held in Auckland in July of the same year. One of its stated purposes was to, *'enable particular churches holding to Presbyterian and Reformed principles in New Zealand to express their unity within the body of Christ in tangible, practical ways.'*

THE FINAL STEP

In 2002 representatives from the Grace Bible Churches of NZ and other independent Presbyterian churches met to form a church unity committee. This committee held meetings to discuss the way forward under a common basis of union. It was finally agreed that a modified form of the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America should be adopted.

When the groups finally met again, it was in Christchurch on 28th February 2003 to sign the covenant of union to formally establish the Grace Presbyterian Church of NZ.

We will come back to this story in the next issue of Growing In Grace to find out how things developed since 2003.



Signing of the Constituting Covenant by representatives of founding churches

in this issue.

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PASTOR PROFILE

NICK & INGE BRENNAN



Nick is married to Inge, and they have two sons, Elijah, 5, and Micah, 3. They moved back to New Zealand as a family from the States last year and at the beginning of this year Nick began as Assistant Pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Manurewa, while also doing further studies part-time in Hebrew grammar. "The best thing about being in ministry," says Nick, "is the privilege to share the word of life with people each week from the pulpit and, alongside that, share with other Christians in the trials and joys of everyday life."

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This year we were very blessed with a large turn out at Easter Camp. We had over 90 campers and including cooks and the speakers family we had over one hundred people. We were blessed with a great team of leaders, many who came through the student ministry in Dunedin as well as others from afar afield as Invercargill, Christchurch, Palmerston North, and Auckland! Rusty Milton from Grace Christchurch was the speaker and he gave talks on 'Reflowering the gospel' essentially looking at some of the great gospel truths. His talks were a huge encouragement to those who were believers, but also a challenge to those who were not believers.

A special word of thanks must be said for the great cooks we had, Graham and Ellen Calder and Neville and Jan Jopson. They feed us very well indeed! Long live camp food!

Also to give thanks and pray for was the number of youth from non-church families. It was great to see so many hearing the gospel and really enjoy hearing it. Pray that these young lives may come truly to know Christ, and pray that the Southern Easter Camp would continue to live up to its mission statement;

'Helping young people meet and follow Jesus.'



On the weekend following Easter, we packed their sleeping bags, tents, togs and towels and descended on Mangawhai Heads for a weekend of fun and fellowship. We made up 20 of the 60+ crowd that had gathered including youth groups from Covenant, Redeemer, Providence and the North Shore.

Although only a few were nervous first-time campers, things quickly evened out for the rest of us when we arrived in darkness to realise we would be camping on the side of a hill. This provided a few logistical issues and much entertainment, especially throughout the night as camp beds and bodies slowly descended to the bottom of tents! Port-a-loos and wading through the long grass added a real sense of roughing it to the camp; while the hill intensified the fun and fails in our games of tackle bullrush and spotlight.

Early on Saturday morning we piled into vans and made our way to the beach to pick pipis and watch the sunrise. The next few hours were spent back on the farm under the marquee in sessions on the book of Hebrews. Later on we went to the beach for sports and swimming in the surf. We also learnt a high-energy game called 'Pukana'

which became very noisy and popular.

Gareth Jones, a Welshman from Redeemer, did a fantastic job as our speaker and encouraged and challenged us from the book of Hebrews. We learnt about the danger of 'drifting from God', clinging to the Rock, the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the heroes of the faith. On Sunday morning we had a church service including a song and testimony from Janina Muriwai which many found encouraging.

The vibe at camp was awesome. God's hand at work was visible from the very first planning meeting, to the small conversations between campers and leaders at camp. Seeing the Holy Spirit at work gave us much encouragement. There was also a sense of unity amongst the youth and lots of new friendships were made. We are so thankful for the efforts of everyone who organised the event at such short notice. We were blessed by happy cooks, and a great bunch of leaders and who brought along lots of enthusiasm. We are also very grateful to the many people who made camp possible by contributing food, bedding, tents and vehicles. It was a wonderful weekend and we look forward to the next one.

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INVERCARGILL

GPC Invercargill is a friendly congregation, well known for its hospitality. We have a relatively even spread of age-groups and enjoy a strong network of friendships that are firmly based in commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ.



WYNDHAM EVANGELICAL CHURCH

We are a vibrant fellowship centred in Wyndham and have a full and active program. We exist for the purposes of:
Worshipping the sovereign God.

Equipping believers for ministry.

Communicating Christ locally and abroad.



GRACE CHURCH GORE

Grace Church Gore started firstly as the East Gore Evangelical Fellowship in July 1998 in the East Gore School hall and in October 2002 purchased its present building. We previously had Azriel Gray as Pastor for 7 years and Sam Duthie has been our Pastor for the past 3 years.



OWAKA GRACE FELLOWSHIP

Owaka Grace Fellowship has been in existence for 10 years, having come out of the Presbyterian Church of NZ. We worship in a local Brethren Hall and have just welcomed Dillon Thornton and his family as part time pastor.



GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WAIHOLA

Grace Presbyterian Church, Waihola, is a church open to all people who want to learn more about God. The church is founded on the Reformation principles as expressed in the historic Westminster Confession of Faith. Our church offers rich and theologically sound teaching with a friendly family atmosphere.



GRACE BIBLE CHURCH DUNEDIN

Our mission at Grace Dunedin is to magnify God as we seek to reach and love our city for Christ. Being a constantly changing university city makes demonstrating Christ's love both a challenge, but also a delight as we send disciples off to all corners of the world.



EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ASHBURTON

We seek to worship in spirit and truth, grow as a congregation which displays graciousness and care for its members, compassion for the lost and have a clear commitment to the Scriptures, the Reformed faith and Presbyterian polity.

These photos are from Lil and Ernie Hight's 60th wedding anniversary.



GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHRISTCHURCH

Grace Presbyterian Church, Christchurch - a community of Grace centered believers dedicated to reaching the least and lost for Christ.



GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PALMERSTON NORTH

The Palmerston North Grace Church meets at 10.30am on Sunday for Worship. To date, between 15-30 people usually attend Sunday worship at 157 Broadway in the city centre. We welcome any new people to attend.



GRACE COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP NEW PLYMOUTH

Grace Community Fellowship is committed to biblical teaching and preaching, warm fellowship, active evangelism and community involvement.

The church is founded on the Reformation principles as expressed in the historic Westminster Confession of Faith and stands firmly on the inerrancy of the Word of God.



GRACE GOSPEL CHURCH HUTT VALLEY

Grace Gospel Church Hutt Valley is a church plant of Grace@Wellington, seeking to reach the people of the Hutt with the Good News of Jesus Christ.



GRACE CHURCH GISBORNE

God's Grace for Gisborne;

A church that exists to:

Glorify God by enjoying Him through grace
Be an authentic community of grace among
the wider community

Bring all for Christ and Christ for all by grace.



COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Covenant Presbyterian Church desires to be a transforming community transforming communities in Manurewa and throughout the world for the glory of God by the power of the Gospel through the presence and practise of grace in the heart.



CITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

City Presbyterian Church is a new church plant in the Central Auckland area. We look forward to seeing what God is going to do in and through us. It is our prayer that we would be used by God to help be a part of Gospel transformation in the city of Auckland.



SHORE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Shore Presbyterian Church plant is in the North Auckland area. The target location is the upper North including Albany and the Northern Bays area. This is close to the Auckland north expansion at Long Bay and within reach of Albany Massey University. Our vision is to establish a faithful Bible proclaiming Church, on the North Shore, that exalts the Lord Jesus and loves people through authentic and grace-filled relationships.



PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Providence is a multi-ethnic church committed to God's Truth, which will bring change to the heart of Manukau City, so that they will love God, love one another and will reach the world in Christ's name for God's Glory.



TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Trinity Church was established in June 2001 and is committed to Bible teaching, warm fellowship, active evangelism and community involvement. We'd love to have the opportunity to serve you and your family.



REDEEMER GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Redeemer's mission and vision is to be a Great Commission, Resourcing church - that is, a church committed to taking the gospel to people who do not attend church and providing resources for other churches.



GRACE @ WELLINGTON CHURCH

A Bible-believing Presbyterian Church, seeking God's Glory Above All Else. Believing the Bible to be Authoritative and Sufficient. Weekly Expository Teaching and Preaching. Encouraging Every Member to Discover Their Own Gifts and Reach Maximum Personal Potential. Building a Covenantal Community of Love and Care.



GRACE CHURCH ROTORUA

GRACE EVANGELICAL CHURCH WANGANUI

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FAIRLIE



GREETINGS from the other side of the Pacific!

JOHN AND ALEX VAN RIJ

Greetings from the other side of the Pacific Ocean! It's a drizzly Spring day here in St Louis but the trees are budding and blooming, which is a promise of Summer, and Covenant Seminary has just announced its new President, who is a man we already know and love! So, there is much to be thankful for.

By the time you read this I, Alex, will have graduated from Covenant Seminary and there will have been much celebrating taking place! Even now it's incredible to look back on the last two years and see how God has been at work teaching, renewing and transforming me in ways that I never expected and am incredibly humbled by and thankful for. I approach graduation with a desire to keep learning and also fully aware that there is still much that God needs to do to shape me into the woman that He intends for me to be.

John is over half way through his studies and realizing daily that there is still a lot more to learn. What they are able to teach us here, although it is a lot, is enough to give us a solid foundation and jumping off point toward deeper learning and a better understanding of who we are, who God is and what that all looks like in a broken world.

A wise man (Jerram Barrs) reminded us in class last week that we don't build God's Kingdom, God does. This little family of van Rij's desires to see God's Kingdom flourish in New Zealand, and all over the world, and we would like to be used by Him as His instruments. God uses the weak, and we are well qualified in that department. So we continue to be equipped by faithful men and women here at Covenant, as God has called us to do, and ask that you would join us in praying for NZ, God's Church and our place within all of that as humble, broken and righteous-in-Christ servants of the King.



John and Alex van Rij

We cherish and covet your prayers and are so grateful to know that we are supported and encouraged by so many who we respect and admire. Praise the Lord for His bountiful provision in the way of mentors, friends, finances, jobs and scholarships.

GRACE
Presbyterian Church of New Zealand

ANNOUNCING THE
TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
and TENTH ANNIVERSARY
of the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand

15TH - 18TH OCTOBER 2013

WAIHOLA CHRISTIAN YOUTH CAMP, OTAGO
7:30PM TUESDAY 15TH TO 12PM FRIDAY 18TH

FOR MORE INFO:
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GRACE DIRECTORY

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND

NORTHERN

MANUREWA

Covenant Presbyterian Church
77 Rogers Road, Manurewa, Auckland
Service Times: 10:00am & 6:00pm
Pastors: Peter Reynolds & Nick Brennan
P: (09) 269-1046
E: covenantchurch@ihug.co.nz

TAKANINI

Trinity Presbyterian Church
Takanini School Hall, Old Park Place
Service Times: 10:00am
Pastor: Geoff Macpherson
P: (09) 296-8601
E: geoffmacpherson@gmail.com
www.trinitychurch.org.nz

FIAT BUSH

Redeemer Grace Presbyterian Church
30 Hilltop Road, Flat Bush
(entrance off Arrowsmith Drive)
Service Times: 10:45am and 6pm
Pastor: Wally Rakete
P: (09) 267-5584
www.redeemer.org.nz

MANGERE EAST / PAPATOETOE

Providence Presbyterian Church
26-28 Rosella Road, Mangere, Auckland
Service Time: 10:00am
Pastor: Uaita Levi
P: (09) 267-9440

CENTRAL AUCKLAND

City Presbyterian Church
283 Karangahape Road, Newton
Service Time: 10:30am
Pastor: Travis Scott
P: (09) 550 5415 / 021 628 041
E: tscott@citypres.org.nz
www.citypres.org.nz

GISBORNE

Grace Church Gisborne
481 Gladstone Road
(opposite Carpet Court)
Service Time: 10:30am
P: (06) 868-8695 / 021 488 018
www.gracechurchnz.org

ROTORUA

Grace Church Rotorua
Lynmore Primary School
Iles Rd Lynmore (Opposite Gull Service Station
Te Ngae Rd)
Service time: 10.00am
P:(07) 345 7881/ 022-0129-615
E.stevenfuieva@gmail.com

CENTRAL

NEW PLYMOUTH

Grace Community Church
Fred Tucker Memorial Hall, Bell Block
Service Times: 10:00am & 6:30pm
Pastor: David Farr
P: (06) 759 9378
www.gracenp.co.nz

WHANGANUI

Whanganui Evangelical Church
Meets Seventh Day Adventist Church
Service Time: 6pm Sunday
Contact: John van Dalen
P: (06) 347-1257
E.ashtonjones@slingshot.co.nz

PALMERSTON NORTH

Grace Presbyterian Church
25 Nikau Street.
Service Time: 10:30 a.m.
Pastor: Andrew Macpherson
P: (06) 358-0132/ 022-0608-634

WELLINGTON

Grace@Wellington
Evans Bay Intermediate School
14 Kemp St, Kilbirnie
Service Times: 10:30am
Pastor: Ian Bayne
P: (04) 976-5093

HUTT VALLEY

2 Waddington Drive, Naenae
Lower Hutt 5011
Pastor: Richard Eyre
P: (04) 565-3757 / 027-559-5044
E: eyred@clear.net.nz

ASHBURTON

Evangelical Presbyterian Church
63 Princes Street, Ashburton
Service Time: 10:30am
Pastor: David Bayne
P: (03) 307-7355

FAIRLIE

Evangelical Presbyterian Church
McKenzie Centre, Fairlie (preaching station)
Service Time: 4:00pm
Contact: Andrew Johnson
P: (03) 685 8222

CHRISTCHURCH

Grace Presbyterian Church
Middleton Grange School,
50 Acacia Ave
Service Times: 10.30am
Pastor: Rusty Milton
P: (03) 354 4443
www.gracechristchurch.co.nz

Lamp Presbyterian Church (Korean)
Riccarton Baptist Church,
cnr Rattray & Peverel St.
Service Time: 1:00pm
Pastor: John Oh
P: (03) 960-6879 / 021-855-267
P: (03) 357-1059 / 021-189-3886

SOUTHERN

DUNEDIN

Grace Bible Church
Leith Bowling Club, 2 Duke Street, Dunedin
Service Time: 10:00am & 7:00pm
Pastor: Mark Smith
P: (03) 473-8100
E: admin@gracedunedin.org.nz
www.gracedunedin.org.nz

WAIHOLA

Tokomairiro Grace Bible Church
Service Time: 10:00am
Contact: Grant Bullin
P: (03) 417-7120

OWAKA

Catlins Evangelical Church
Gospel Hall
2 Campbell Street, Owaka
Service Time: 11:00am
Contact: Gavin Landreth
E: landrethgw@farmside.co.nz
P: (03) 415 8117

GORE

Grace Church Gore
30 Hamilton Street, East Gore
Service Times: 10:30am
Student Pastor: Sam Duthie
P: (03) 208-6180

WYNDHAM

Wyndham Evangelical Church
Corner of Balaclava and Redan Street
Service Times: 10:30am & 6:30pm
P: (03) 206 4147
www.wyndhamevangelical.org.nz

INVERCARGILL

Grace Presbyterian Church
Cnr. Centre and Morton Streets, Georgetown,
Invercargill
Service Times: 10:30am & 6:30pm
Pastors: Peter van den Brink & Barry Swan
P: (03) 216 7746