A few years ago I came across a sentence I have never forgotten: “Attempt something so great for God it is doomed to failure unless God be in it.”

I love that challenge because it is easy to live the Christian life within the comfort zone of what we are used to doing and what feels safe. But when we avoid risks and only work within our means, we easily miss out on seeing God at work in special ways. And we don’t grow that much in our faith either.

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Over the last 18 months, the changes we’ve embarked on at the RTC have taken us far beyond our means and well outside our comfort zone.

The changes have been many and most of them are challenging. Faculty have been stretched in writing new courses, adopting new delivery modes, using new technologies, and preparing to teach in Melbourne. Our Business Committee has had the challenge of increasing our financial resources by embarking on some ambitious projects. These include building a Child Care Centre, upgrading Barkley Hall, our student residence, and making improvements to our Geelong building (now known as the RTC Resource Centre), so we can lease some spaces to other Christian ministries. We have also launched our new RTC logo, developed better marketing material, built a new website and increased our presence on social media.

Since embarking on these changes we have encountered many obstacles. We had difficulties recruiting some of the new support staff we needed; we encountered an early set-back in one key source of funding we were hoping for; we experienced obstacles in getting our land re-zoned; we experienced delays and unexpected problems in securing a permit for the Child Care Centre; and there were major hurdles and frustrations as we looked for a Melbourne property.

But each obstacle was also an occasion for God to provide in amazing ways. We have many wonderful stories to tell of last minute break-throughs and unexpected provisions. We’ve seen God at work in the most surprising and special ways.
These challenges and provisions have been wonderfully faith building. I am a slow learner in this area, but I am gradually learning to trust more when something goes wrong, knowing that while I don’t have a solution, God does. It really is good to “attempt something so great for God it is doomed to failure unless God be in it” because it keeps us dependent on the Lord. And when we know that without him our attempts would have been doomed to failure, we are moved to give him all the credit. We really can say, to God be the glory!

It really is good to “attempt something so great for God it is doomed to failure unless God be in it” because it keeps us dependent on the Lord.

That doesn’t mean we can be reckless or naïve; we still have to work hard and plan well. But it does mean we can pray boldly and trust God totally.

Please join us in praising God for our new campus, our new website and logo, the start made on the Child Care Centre, wonderful financial provisions, and the great staff team he has provided. And in faith, please pray for many new students in 2017 and beyond.

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**VISIT TO INDIA**

**Phillip Scheepers**  
Lecturer in Missions and Church History

The Christian Reformed Fellowship of India (CRFI) was founded exactly ten years ago and is assisted in its mission of planting churches by GOSPEL, an official missions arm of the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia. CRFI works among the poorest of the poor and does so in very difficult circumstances which often include intense opposition. One of the major challenges they face is in the area of training their church planters. Over the past two years I have participated in the annual CRFI training seminar where about 100 church planters and other workers come together to be equipped for their task.

This year’s visit was very special as it coincided with the 10th Anniversary celebrations. After the training seminar finished, about 800 people who were touched by the ministry of the CRFI gathered for a time of teaching and of reflecting on the past and praying for the future. Since they come from very different parts of India the opportunity was also given for the different ‘clusters’ to show off something of their culture through dance and drama.

It was eye opening to reflect on the fact that very few of the people in the room were even exposed to the gospel ten years ago. However, God used the support and prayer of many believers in Australia (and beyond) and the faithful work of the CRFI church planters to bring the Good News to them.

It is humbling and gratifying to be able to play a small role in helping to equip these brothers for their vital task and it is something that we hope to continue to do through the RTC Overseas Assistance Fund.

May we encourage you to continue to pray for this vital gospel work in India and also for fruit in the RTC’s small part in it.
It was exciting to welcome over ninety people to the annual RTC Preaching Conference in September.

Our guest speaker was Rev. Paul Harrington, rector of Holy Trinity church in Adelaide. Paul led three sessions focussing on Abraham. In his first talk, Paul placed Abraham in the overall narrative of the Bible. A key question for this session was: what does Galatians 3:8 mean in its affirmation that the gospel was preached beforehand to Abraham? Paul also addressed very practical questions of how to preach from the life of Abraham in Genesis 11-25, and later from Genesis 22:1-19, both edifying us and giving us a sample of his practice.

The conference also featured sermons on the lives of Jacob and Joseph, presentations on Genesis 1-11, and a delightful session from Mike Raiter on “Lively Communication.”

The conference was a great blessing to the many who attended. As one attendee put it, “it was such a brilliant model for imperfect preachers like me.”

Next year’s Preaching Conference will be our first in Melbourne and features international guest speaker Bryan Chapell, former president of Covenant Theological Seminary. Our theme on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation will be “Preaching Romans.” Add it to your diary now - 28-29 September, 2017!

Graeme Zuidema (35) is married to Amanda (32) and they have two children, Sarah (8) and Joshua (7).
PRAYER POINTS

Praise God for:
• students who have just successfully completed their studies and are now heading into new ministry areas
• the incredible people he has provided to help with the new RTC model over the past months
• his many wonderful answers to our prayers - especially the provision of the Melbourne campus.

Please pray:
• for many new students in 2017 and beyond
• for rapid progress on the fit out of our new Mebourne campus
• that the building of the new Child Care Centre would go well and that it will become an effective community ministry and successful business venture for the RTC
• for a good response to our appeals for financial assistance

GIVE TO RTC

Do you share RTC’s vision to provide Christ-centered training for life and ministry? We rely on donations from financial supporters in addition to the income we receive from student fees, membership fees, business ventures and our supporting denominations.

As we step out boldly to grow and expand the reach of RTC, you can help us by financially supporting us in a number of different ways: making a donation or leaving a bequest to the RTC; participate in the growth and expansion plans with a interest free loan to RTC or participate in a RTC bonds issue. For further information, please contact the Business Manager on (03) 5244 2955 or bm@rtc.edu.au.

Tax Deductibility

Reformed Theological College is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR). It is covered by Item 1 of the table in section 30-15 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. All gifts of $2 or more made to the RTC are tax deductible in Australia.

Please contact the office regarding tax deductible gifts from New Zealand residents.

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Signature

☐ Please send me information about leaving a bequest to the RTC in my Will.

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