College Life

- We praise God that another semester of study has been successfully completed at the RTC. Students now have a break for a few weeks and staff are completing marking, taking some leave, speaking at conferences, and planning for next semester.
- Next semester will get off to a flying start with two week-long intensives. Rev John de Hoog will teach a Hebrew Intensive, beginning 11 July, and then we will be joined by Dr Mike Goheen for the Biblical Theology Intensive, beginning 18 July. It will be great to have a guest lecturer of Mike’s calibre here and we look forward to a stimulating week of input and interaction.
- Please pray for new student enrolments over the next few weeks. We’d love to have more students join us for our last semester of study in Geelong or for some of our units offered in flexible mode (see below for details).

Discipleship training
(by Rev KJ Tromp)

We’re off and running! I was greeted by a crisp and wintery Geelong morning on my first visit to the RTC in the role of Discipleship Training Coordinator. Crisp and wintery at least for a soft-skinned Queenslander! I was visiting the College to spend two days in June with Murray Capill and Phillip Scheepers, mapping out the vision and objectives of the RTC’s new discipleship training program. It was a successful couple of days; stimulating and encouraging. Personally, it was pleasing to see such senior members of a Theological College deeply and sincerely planning and praying for rich and lasting growth for Christians in every walk of life. Over the next few months some initial preparation and planning will hopefully lead to filming and production of our first material towards the end of the year. Stay tuned.

Study Next Semester

Even if you don’t live in Geelong, there are some great RTC study options next semester.

You can study online:
• **Old Testament Prophets and Writings** gives an overview of the second half of the Old Testament. In fact it covers all the books from 2 Chronicles to Malachi.

• **The Doctrine of God and the Work of Christ** explores the theology of the attributes of God, the Trinity, the Holy Spirit and the person and work of Christ.

• **The Church to 1550** gives a sweeping overview of church history from the end of the apostolic era to the Reformation.

• **Church Planting** will focus on the biblical basis of and the development of strategies for reaching 21st century communities with the gospel.

If you prefer class interaction, you can join the following classes live by skype:

• For the first time, the **Practice of Preaching** class will be available in this mode, providing preacher training for those who have already done foundational preaching studies.

• **Acts and Hebrews** is an in-depth study of these two great New Testament letters.

• **Continental Reformed** is a specialised unit focusing on the major figures, events and documents of the Protestant Reformation.

For more information, contact the RTC Registrar, Paul Lucas: registrar@rtc.edu.au

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**Preaching Conference**

Preachers, have you enrolled yet for the 2016 RTC Preaching Conference? This is a great opportunity to enjoy two days of stimulating input and fellowship with other preachers. This year’s conference focuses on Genesis as the foundational book of the Bible. With fascinating narratives and world-shaping promises, Genesis sets the scene for the rest of Scripture and provides an abundance of rich preaching material.

RTC Faculty will be joined by Paul Harrington, Senior Network Pastor, Trinity Network of Churches, Adelaide.

Register online [here](#) or call the RTC Office.
**Book Recommendation**  
*(by Rev John dee Hoog)*


There’s the old meta-story of the person who decided to read the whole Bible from cover to cover, got lost in Leviticus and jumped over to Matthew with a sigh of relief. I call it a “meta-story” because, while I’ve heard about the story, I’ve never actually heard the story itself from anyone. But perhaps you’ve always wondered about Leviticus, and perhaps you have gotten stuck there, or simply never really tackled it.

If that’s you, then I have the book for you! Perhaps you would not expect a commentary to be the kind of book you would pick up and read for pleasure, but this book by Jay Sklar falls into that category. Sklar teaches at Covenant Theological Seminary and has also contributed to the notes on Leviticus in the ESV Study Bible. [To see Sklar talking about his commentary, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuZxmNiKjfk.]

Sklar has a threefold aim throughout. 1. He aims to use everyday language. 2. When he comes across things that are confusing or seem simply “wrong” to a modern audience, and there are many of them in the Book of Leviticus, he seeks to explain their meaning and applicability to Christians today. He doesn’t ask “Is this passage relevant to us?” Instead, his question is “How is this passage relevant to us?” 3. He ends each chapter with a section showing how the section relates to Christians today.

This is an excellent book. If you have always baulked at reading Leviticus, then get this book, and use it as a guide. It will be money and time well-spent.

**Ministry Spot: A Pastor’s Week**  
*(by Dr Murray Capill)*

How is a pastor to spend his time? Last month I reflected on some of the variables that go into answering that question, identifying eight areas of ministry that combine to form the pastoral ministry package: teaching, preaching and preparing for worship; care and counselling; evangelism and discipleship; training; leading; personal growth and prayer; ministries beyond the local church; and administration. These areas sit alongside what I called the “fuzzy fringe” of ministry where formal ministry and active participation as a church member and committed Christian overlap.

The competing time demands cannot be navigated by fixed rules and schedules. Broad principles and perspectives are needed because people’s individual situations and capacities vary greatly. But there are principles that are helpful for all pastors and their churches to consider.

First, the pastor can’t and shouldn’t do everything. If a pastor tries to cover all eight bases comprehensively, he will soon burn out or the church will be stunted by his limited capacities. A pastor simply cannot do justice to all these areas and will not be equally gifted in all of them. The first principle is simple but essential: don’t try to do everything.

Second, pastors must decide what they will do in consultation with their elders. Church leaders cannot afford to leave the pastor to determine his own job description; it is a shared responsibility and the elders are responsible to oversee his ministry. A pastor is one of the church’s key and, to
be honest, most expensive, resources, and the elders ought to help him work out how he will carry out his calling, alongside them, to shepherd the flock. There must be shared decisions about time usage, priorities, gifting and focus. Pastors need both accountability and advice. Ministry has become increasingly complex and the elders together must work out how best to use the pastor’s gifts.

The third principle is that pastors should work more to their strengths than their weaknesses, more to what energises them than what drains them. Since a pastor will not be equally gifted or passionate in all areas, where can he bring greatest blessing to the church, and where is it better to look to others take the lead? If your pastor is a gifted preacher but a hopeless administrator, get a secretary! If he is great in one-to-one ministry but not a visionary leader, make sure others with stronger leadership gifts step up into that area. The point of a team is that not everyone plays in the same position, so when a pastor is part of a leadership team, different people will focus on different areas.

Fourth, whatever a pastor’s gifts, he is called to multiply ministry. Pastors and teachers are to equip the saints for works of service (Eph 4:11-12). In many regards, training is the most strategic of all the ministry areas. Pastors need to train elders, train ministry leaders, train disciplers, train small group leaders, train pastoral careers and train other preachers. A training ministry will grow a healthier church. Pastors need to be serious about intentionally discipling, mentoring and training people in the church. Historically, pastors did a lot of teaching but much less training. That is an imbalance that needs to be rectified.

Fifth, time spent reading, thinking and praying is not wasted time. We easily feel that we have to be busy to be valuable. But busyness can be the enemy of depth, substance, wisdom and insight. It takes time to think, read, pray and grow. Personal growth and prayer is easily relegated to spare time, and elders seldom ask pastors how they are doing with this. But if we want to see growing ministries we need growing pastors - and that takes times.

The sixth principle we must hold to is that rest is a biblical mandate. It is essential that pastors have time for recreation and relaxation, and that if they work hard on the Lord’s day they have another day when they rest. God designed us for a rhythm of work and rest, and pastors need to find that rhythm both weekly and annually. Rest is also critical because there is an emotional and spiritual intensity to pastoral ministry that requires time to unwind. Preaching itself can be hugely demanding physically, emotionally and spiritually so that a 30-40 minute sermon can leave one feeling drained. Rest is essential.

Finally, pastors, as all believers, have multiple callings or responsibilities. Pastoral ministry is a wonderful calling, but so too is the calling to be a husband and father. In fact, if a man neglects his family he will soon become disqualified for public ministry. Married pastors need to prioritize family life, which may well mean finding ways to compensate for the many evenings and weekends they may be away from home.

These principles need to guide a pastor’s use of time. I am hesitant to suggest how many hours per week a pastor should work because, as I have said, capacities, demands and churches vary. But if a man is working full-time for the church I suspect it will be somewhere in the vicinity of 45-50 hours a week, plus the fuzzy fringe of ministry. I come to this figure because many an elder will work at least a 40-hour week and then devote voluntary time to the church on top. Significantly less may be indulgent, but significantly more will most likely mean that family, rest, hospitality, health, or something else is being neglected, unless the Lord has given a man great capacity.
The challenge becomes to divide the pie wisely. There are many good ways to do so, and I know that if I return to full-time pastoral ministry one day I will divide the pie differently to how I used to. It's worth taking the time to think about it. Time is a wonderful, yet finite, resource and we need to make the most of it.

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