



# MONTHLY

March '26 - Issue #190

## College News



After a few very busy weeks, the semester is well underway. We are delighted with the many new students who joined us this year. About 20 new students commenced RTC studies on 17 February, with about half as many taking units with us while being registered at other colleges within the Australian University of Theology. We are so thankful to the Lord for sending these new students our way and pray that the Lord will use their time with us to grow them in their love for him and in their readiness for effective gospel work.

At times, over the past few weeks, it felt as if the campus was bursting at the seams. This was added to by the fact that there were still some ongoing building and upgrade works going on, as we launched the semester. At this point, work to enlarge the Knox Room (one of the classrooms) and turning

the Reading Room into a meeting room and storage is complete. Upgrades to the kitchen and installation of new study spaces in the Calvin Common should be done in the next week or so. Solid progress is also being made with the construction of the new library on Level 8. It should be ready for student use by April. An official opening/celebration is planned towards the end of the semester. Watch this space!

On 19 February, we welcomed Alvin Anbeek to the team. Alvin agreed to take up a short term contract as Library Assistant to assist our librarian, Carolyn Wakefield, with the setting up of the new library space in Melbourne and the 'rightsizing' of the remaining collection (currently in a warehouse in Geelong). Alvin played a leading role in moving the library out of Pigdons Road and brings years of database, IT, and 'solution engineering' experience to this role. Please pray that the Lord will richly bless him, and his efforts over the next few months.

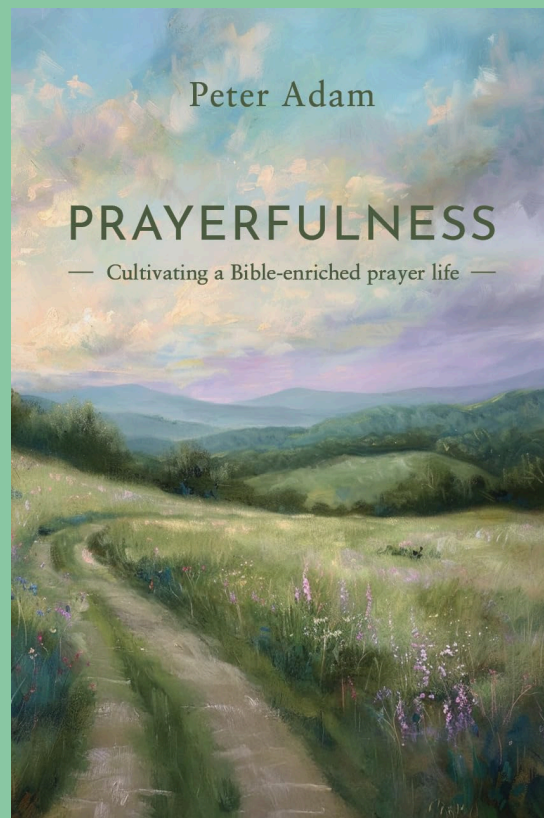
On 3 March, we had the joy of seeing 15 students graduate. The graduation address was delivered by Dr Rhys Bezzant, principal of Ridley College Melbourne and the Australian University was represented by the Vice Chancellor, Prof James Dalziel. It is always bittersweet to say goodbye to students whom we came to know and love, but this is tempered by the joy of seeing them launching into various kinds of gospel ministry in the service of our great and merciful King!

## Upcoming Events

### Growing in Prayerfulness – A Day with Peter Adam

Tuesday, 24 March 2026

A distinguished teacher of the Word with a lifetime of ministry wisdom, Peter Adam needs no introduction to our community. We are thrilled to host him for a day centred on his recent book, *Prayerfulness: Cultivating a Bible-Enriched Prayer Life*, as he leads us through sessions on personal devotion and church culture. We are "throwing the doors open" for this special event, warmly inviting pastors, gospel workers, and church members to join us for a time of refreshment and challenge. This event is free and open to everyone, but for catering purposes registration is essential.



Please click the link below for more information and to secure your place: <https://rtc.edu.au/peter-adam-day/>

## A Day at the RTC

12 May 2026



Curious about theological study? On Tuesday 12 May, RTC is opening its doors, both physically and virtually, for a free taster day running from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm. Whether you join us at Level 3, 221 Queen Street, Melbourne or online from home, you'll get a genuine feel for life at RTC. The day includes devotions, classes, a dedicated session on what studying at RTC looks like,

and plenty of opportunity to chat with lecturers and fellow students over morning tea and lunch. For more information and to register (essential for catering purposes), please click here: <https://rtc.edu.au/a-day-at-rtc-2/>.

## Preaching Conference 2026

### Guard the Gospel – Preaching the Pastoral Epistles with Courage and Grace

15–16 July 2026

This year's Preaching Conference will explore the urgent relevance of Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus. We are pleased to announce that Lionel Windsor (Moore College) will be our main speaker; he will be joined by several RTC lecturers as they open up the riches of these letters for today's church. Over two days of sermons, lectures, and discussions, attendees will be equipped to handle difficult passages and embody gospel-shaped ministry with greater clarity and conviction.



Please click the link below for more information and to register for this event: <https://rtc.edu.au/pc26/>.

## Pastoral Counselling Short Course

Join us for five insightful weeks of teaching on how to understand and care for people. Former Senior Pastor, Rev. Neil Chambers, and long-time Melbourne psychiatrist, Dr Rod Smith, will help us explore:

- Biblical perspectives on people and models for understanding people and their problems
- What pastors and churches can and can't do when people have complex problems

- The interplay of the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual in people's lives
- How to help people facing mental health challenges
- Ideal for pastors, pastoral carers, and ministry leaders.

**Where:** RTC campus, Level 3, 221 Queen St, Melbourne

**When:** Thursday afternoons, 1.40pm – 4.40pm

**Dates:** 23 and 30 April, 14, 21 and 28 May

**Cost:** \$150

For more information, and to register, please click here:

<https://rtc.edu.au/pastoral-counselling-short-course/>

## New: RTC's Women's Cohort

The RTC is committed to raising, training, and supporting women for Christ-centred life and ministry. One new and exciting opportunity to further support our female students in their training for gospel ministry is the addition of a Women's Cohort.

This cohort gathering is open to all women currently studying at the RTC, with a focus on mutual encouragement, discussion and prayer.



In semester 2 2025 the women met online a number of times, zooming in from all around Australia. The time together was facilitated by Aleesha Bransgrove, RTC's Women's Ministry Development Worker.

In 2026 our Women's Cohort has doubled! So please be praying that the women enjoy connecting with each other, and that the time is enriching and fruitful.

# Faculty News

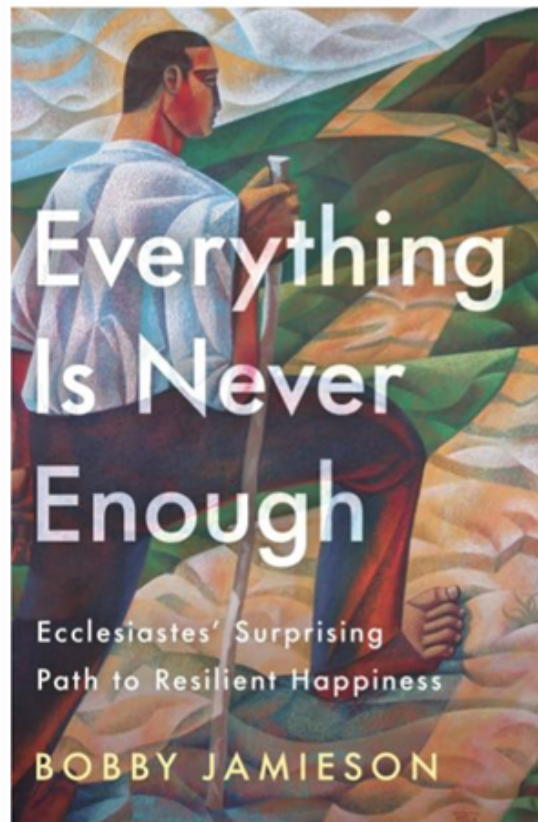
Phillip Scheepers is planning to visit New South Wales and the ACT from 20–23 March. During this time he is scheduled to preach at St George’s PCEA in the Sydney CBD (10:30 AM) and the Reformed Church of Canberra (5:30 PM) on the 22nd of March.

## Book Recommendation | Dr Murray Capill

Bobby Jamieson, “Everything is Never Enough: Ecclesiastes’ Surprising Path to Resilient Happiness.” Waterbrook, 2025. 255pp.

Ecclesiastes says that “of making many books there is no end”, and that is true of books on Ecclesiastes itself. But this one stands out as a gem.

Bobby Jamieson is pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in North Carolina, and a scholar with a PhD from the University of Cambridge. That combination of a pastor’s heart and a scholar’s eye seeps through on every page. His writing style is itself notable. It is clear, penetrating, engaging, poetic, memorable. This book is a delight to read.



I have found Jamieson’s approach to Ecclesiastes exceptionally helpful. He interprets it as if looking out from a three-story building. From the first floor, where the Preacher (Qohelet) in Ecclesiastes spends most of his time, he sees all that is broken and frustrating in this fallen world, under the sun.

Jamieson shows how the Preacher sees and explores everything, observing all that fails to make sense. Among the many ways of translating the key word, *hevel*, Jamieson particularly opts for “uncontrollable” and “absurd,” in place of the ESV’s “vanity”, or the NIV’s “meaningless”. Jamieson unpacks this first floor view not in the textual order of Ecclesiastes, but thematically, with chapters on topics such as work, wealth, pleasure, money, time, and death.

Jamieson then notes that seven times in Ecclesiastes the Preacher ascends to the second floor, from which he sees all that is good under the sun. These two views co-exist in tension all the time, for all of us under the sun. The key emphasis here is that in this fallen world, God gives good gifts that are to be received with gladness. Jamieson now explores the gifts God gives and the way we are to be present in the moment to receive and enjoy them. He opens up themes like eating and drinking, wealth, and marriage.

Just a few times the Preacher takes us to the third floor. From here, Jamieson argues, we see and meet God, the one we are to fear and who is judge of all. Two chapters unpack those two themes. Then finally, in the conclusion, Jamieson takes us to the gospel, showing that life under the sun has been “pierced from above.” While he has shown that under the sun “everything is never enough,” he now lands with saying “but Jesus is enough”. “Jesus is enough to satisfy God’s judgement on your behalf. And Jesus is enough to satisfy your soul forever” (211).

Not only is this interpretative framework insightful and compelling, but as he unfolds it, Jamieson does what the Preacher in Ecclesiastes does. He makes one pertinent observation after another about life in this world. He interfaces his biblical interpretation with the insights of contemporary scholars, particularly the German sociologist Harmut Rosa. He also quotes dozens of other scholars and philosophers (from Albert Camus, to Blaise Pascal, to C. S. Lewis, to Annie Dillard, to name a few), providing a rich and penetrating analysis of our world. As such, this is not so much a commentary on Ecclesiastes, as a contemporary exposition of the insights of Ecclesiastes for our late-modern Western world.

It is no surprise the book has won both TGC (The Gospel Coalition) and Christianity Today book awards. It is a fine work, with value not only for those who want to study Ecclesiastes, but those who want to understand life. It would be a great tool for evangelism or for group discussion as well as for the study of Ecclesiastes.

## Ministry Spot | Dr Andrew Stewart



### How to Read the Book of Nature.

Recently my wife and I enjoyed a wonderfully restful holiday in Tasmania. We walked around Dove Lake and looked up at the towering slopes of Cradle Mountain. We stayed in a remote homestead near Strahan with spectacular views over Macquarie Harbour. In Launceston and Hobart, we enjoyed warm hospitality in the homes of the Lord's people. We saw, tasted and enjoyed God's wonderful goodness.

When I describe our holiday in this way, this is not simply Christian jargon which describes everyday pleasures in weird, religious language. This is how things really are, because God reveals himself in his creation. As Christians we believe that, just as truly as God reveals himself in the Bible, he also

reveals himself in the world around us. The world of nature is also God's book. But how skilled are we at reading this book?

Many of us remember how much time and effort we put into learning how to read literal books. We learned the alphabet, many new words, and how those words are joined together to make sentences. As we progressed, we learned how to recognise metaphor and irony, knowing when a writer is to be taken literally and when not. These skills take many years to learn.

One of the reasons why Christians are keen to learn the skills of reading is so that they might read the Bible. This too requires a range of skills which take time and require some effort to learn. We learn about the different books of the Bible and how to compare one passage with another in order to unlock the richness of God's word.

But how do we train ourselves to see God at work in the world around us? Perhaps we have never asked that question. One of the reasons why we don't invest much time in learning how to read the book of nature is because it does not show us the way of salvation. Only God's revelation in Jesus and the Bible can do that.

Nevertheless, nature does show us God's glory. Psalm 19:1 tells us that "the heavens declare the glory of God." The rain and sunshine declare God's goodness and generosity, even to those who treat him with contempt (Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:17). The beauty of creation shows us God's wisdom and attention to detail. The vastness of the universe declares his immensity and majesty.

In his account of the Arab revolt during the First World War, T. E. Lawrence (better known as Lawrence of Arabia) describes the moment when he and his companions emerged from a rock canyon into the vast expanse of Wadi Rum (in what today is southern Jordan). The rugged beauty of the landscape overwhelmed him with a sense of wonder. Lawrence describes how the "vast, echoing, God-like" landscape impressed them with a sense of their own insignificance. Lawrence does not tell us what that experience taught

him about the magnificence of God. But how would we have described it? How do we read the book of nature and share its lessons with others? A first step is to pause and look at the world around us. That often requires us to stop what we are doing and take time to observe God's creation. When Jesus urged his disciples to "come away ... to a desolate place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31), the setting was the Galilean countryside. They needed rest that restores the soul. They enjoyed that rest in the presence of Jesus; but note that the setting was also significant. The rest they enjoyed enabled them to observe the works of God and admire his wisdom.

It is not only in the countryside that we can see God's beauty and wisdom. We can see the beauty of God's wisdom in towns and cities as well. When I walk through the Melbourne CBD my attention is often captured by the bright signs and shop windows. But when I look up above street level, to the upper stories of many buildings, it is amazing what intricate design is hiding in plain sight. We can see God's wonders not only in birds' nests and beehives but also in buildings. An example is the beauty which David admired when he went to worship in the Temple in Psalm 27:4. Do we take time to stop and look?

A second step is to talk about what we see with others. Many of us meet regularly to study God's word and share what we have learned with others. That is a great blessing because God's word shows us the way of salvation and sanctification. But surely, in our times of fellowship, we can also talk about what we learn as we read God's book of nature. Perhaps if we heard each other talking more about this book we would grow in our skill at reading it.

A third step is to praise God because of what we see and learn. That happens when we put our breathless wonder into words. That is what David did when he looked at the night sky and saw the moon and stars. Like Lawrence of Arabia, he saw his smallness and frailty, but he was also struck by the fact that the creator of the universe cared about him (Psalm 8:3-4).

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,  
what is man that you are mindful of him,  
and the son of man that you care for him?*

A fourth and final step is to let what we see in God's creation send us to the clearer and more perfect revelation of God in his Word. Psalm 19 begins by rejoicing that the heavens declare the glory of God but concludes by confessing that the words of God are more precious than gold (Psalm 19:7-11). They show us how to enjoy freedom from sin and guilt. They also show us how to enjoy God's creation. John Calvin describes Scripture as the spectacles which help us to see more clearly what God is telling us in nature. Viewed through the lens of Scripture the world around us appears even more beautiful because it is the place which God is preparing where he will dwell with us forever.



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