MONTHLY
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College News

On 29 October we marked the end of the semester, and academic year, with a time of prayer. Looking back on the past few weeks, leading up to this point, comes with deep thankfulness, as we rejoice over a fruitful time of ministry, teaching, and the continuing management of the final steps of our transition to the Melbourne Campus. Thank you so much for your prayers over this time. The Lord has certainly heard and answered them.



One of the highlights of October was our biennial Elders' Retreat, which focused on "Working Together as a Team". Around 30 elders attended in person. They were joined by many more who attended as part of "watch parties" organised by their local churches. It was a very encouraging day as we reflected together on the calling to shepherd God's flock.

On 23 and 24 October we ran a “Giant Theological Book Sale”, with 12,000 books on sale! These are the books that had to be removed from our collection as we established the Alexander Barkley Library in Melbourne. The sale on the 23rd was limited to students and they certainly rose to the occasion, with some of them spending hours among the shelves. On the 24th we opened the doors to the public. We were so encouraged by the response, with more than 250 people turning up, some leaving with more than 100 books in their car boots. We are very thankful for the success of this day, and for the hard work of staff and volunteers to make it happen. It is wonderful to reflect that many thousands of good theological books now have new homes, and we pray that they will be a blessing to their new owners.



(Photo Credit: Amy Lewis)

As we headed towards the end of the semester, we were blessed by the ministry of John Huynh (St Stephen’s Presbyterian Church, Surrey Hills) and Ross McKinnon (AFES, Swinburne University) at devotions, and Aaron Boyd (REACH Australia) during Community Time.

Please pray for our students as they prepare for exams and head into the break. In addition to valuable time to recharge, many of them will be engaged in ministry during the summer. Pray that the Lord will use them for the advance of the gospel. Please also pray for those who are finishing their studies with us, that our Saviour will richly bless them in their new ministry and life contexts.

Upcoming Events

We are planning to be present at three key events over the summer:

- The first is the National Training Event (NTE) of the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students, which will take place in Canberra from 5–9 December. If you are planning to attend, please visit RTC's stand. Our NTE team (Aleesha Bransgrove, Elle Borinaga, and Gabriel Lim) will be delighted to see you!

- Murray Capill will be the main speaker at the CRCA National Youth Convention, which will be held in Busselton, WA, from 6–11 January 2027. If you are planning to be at the convention and would like to know more about RTC study, please take the opportunity to have a chat with Murray.

- We are, lastly, planning to have a stand at the annual Engage Conference, which is scheduled for 22–25 January at the Belgrave Heights Convention Centre. Again, please come along and have a chat about RTC if you are planning to be at Engage.

SUMMER INTENSIVE – "PATTERNS OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION"

We are so excited to announce our first summer intensive! It will focus on "Patterns of Spiritual Formation" and will be led by Chris Pretorius. Chris is the minister of Wonga Park Christian Reformed Church and recently completed a DMin at the Melbourne School of Theology, with a dissertation focusing on Reformed spiritual formation. The intensive will be open to all registered AUT students for credit.

We would also like to encourage serving pastors to come along, as audit students, to be better equipped in their calling to shepherd God's people. The intensive week will run from 25–29 January 2027 at RTC's Melbourne Campus.

Please click below for more information and/or to register your interest:

https://rtc.edu.au/summer-intensive-patterns-of-spiritual-formation/

Staff Activities

On 30 October **Murray Capill** will be providing eldership and preacher training for a group of Baptist pastors in Melbourne. Then, in the first week of November, he looks forward to being in Brisbane for the commissioning service of the new TGCA National Director, Dave McDonald. Any Brisbane people are welcome to come to the service on 4 November. More information can be found here: National Director Commissioning Service

Phillip Scheepers will be teaching an intensive on "Theology of Mission" at the Chinese Reformed Theological Seminary in Taipei, Taiwan, during the first week of November. This unit will be taught in cooperation with Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (with some students enrolled in a PRTS ThM program). It is part of our commitment to work in partnership with other seminaries to assist in the formation of theological educators for East Asia.

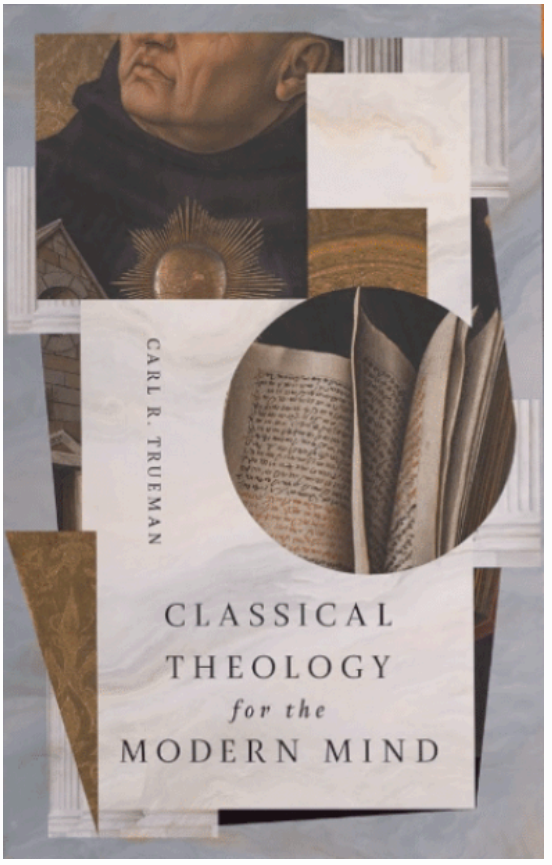
Aleesha Bransgrove will be heading to the National Training Event in Canberra from 5–9 December. She will be wearing both her RTC and AFES hats (she works as an AFES Staff Worker at Melbourne University on some of the days that she is not at RTC). She will be at RTC's stall (in between her AFES duties), so please seek her out for a chat about RTC study.

THINKING ABOUT STUDY IN 2027?

If you are thinking about embarking on RTC studies next year, please get in touch with our Principal, Phillip Scheepers, at pscheepers@rtc.edu.au to discuss your options. If you have specific course planning questions, please get in touch with our Registrar, Paul Lucas, at plucas@rtc.edu.au.

Book Recommendation | Dr Andrew Stewart

Carl R. Trueman, *Classical Theology for the Modern Mind* (Crossway, 2026).



In a slim volume of just 77 pages Carl Trueman has written a helpful introduction to an immense topic - Classical Theology and its relevance for modern Evangelical Christians. Classical Theology is the term coined to describe the historic teaching of the Christian Church about the attributes of God, the Trinity and the person of Christ. These doctrines were drawn from the Scriptures in the theological debates of the early Church, maintained through the Middle Ages, and agreed upon by Roman Catholics and Protestants through the bitter struggles of the Reformation. Only with the coming of the rationalism of the European Enlightenment and the rise of Liberal Protestantism in the nineteenth century was this theological consensus undermined.

Trueman argues that modern Evangelicalism has been more influenced by modernity and post-modernity than it cares to admit. His opening chapter summarises several pathologies of the modern evangelical mind. These include a biblicism which imagines that it upholds the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura* (but, in fact, bears an uncomfortable resemblance to the rationalism of the Socinians); a disparaging of the lessons which can be learned from previous generations; a pragmatism which values therapy over truth and which apes the world in its attempts it reach the world with the Gospel.

As a result of these pathologies the language of the great Creeds of the early Church and the Reformed Confessions sounds strange even to those who profess to adhere to them. Trueman defends this bold claim in his discussion of the doctrines of the Trinity and the person of Christ as stated in the Nicene Creed which, he argues, are grounded in the doctrines of

divine simplicity, immutability and impassibility. By losing sight of these doctrines many Evangelical Christians have become vulnerable to the teachings such as Social Trinitarianism and the Eternal Functional Subordination of the Son.

One of the reasons which Trueman gives for these evangelical blind spots is that Evangelicals have, understandably, devoted more time and energy to defending biblical doctrines of Salvation (during and after the Reformation) and Scripture (in response to theological Liberalism), than to understanding and articulating Theology Proper and Classical Christology. Trueman insists that a sound understanding of the doctrine of God (what he calls "the ontic foundation of the gospel") is just as important as a sound understanding of the authority of Scripture (or "the noetic foundation" of the Gospel).

In his chapter on the ecumenical implications of Classical Theology Trueman takes the discussion in a direction which will make some Evangelicals uncomfortable. He cites the example of John Owen who regarded the Socinians as enemies of the Christian faith, yet quoted approvingly from Roman Catholic theologians who articulated a classical doctrine of God. This, Trueman suggests, gives us reason to reassess how we relate to non-Protestants who hold to Classical Theism, as well as how we relate to professing Evangelicals who do not.

On a more positive note, readers will benefit from chapters which survey, succinctly and in an easily accessible way, recent scholarly work which has blown away the cobwebs and the myths around the theology of the Fathers, the Mediaeval scholastics, as well as the theologians of the Reformation and post-Reformation eras. Not every reader will readily identify the line which Truman draws from Thomas Aquinas to the Second London Baptist Confession. Nevertheless, the debt which those who drafted the great Reformed Confessions of the seventeenth century owed to pre-Reformation theology is immense.

The final chapters on the pastoral and devotional implications of Classical Theology alone make this book well worth reading. Trueman's discussion of divine impassibility challenges the assumptions of many modern evangelicals that only a suffering God is able to comfort humanity in its pain. His chapter on the origins of Classical Theology in the worshipping community of God's people demonstrates its relevance to the worship and prayers of God's people today. Its potential of to enrich our language of prayer as well as our experience of God surely makes the historic doctrine of God a resource worth rediscovering.

Ministry Spot | Aleesha Bransgrove



The Joy of Intergenerational Relationships Among Women

One of the beautiful things about church community is the opportunity for intergenerational relationships. As modern society can feel increasingly individualistic, as more relationships happen in online spaces, and as loneliness and isolation is felt by more people, there is a great need for genuine connection. For women in the church, there is also a great opportunity to foster rich and deep relationships across different generations of women as we relate to one another as family.

The Family

One of the ways the Bible speaks about how people within a local church relate to one another is through the language of family. We are a family of believers (Galatians 6:10), the household of God (Ephesians 2:19). Paul instructs Timothy to relate to various demographics of people in the church like the family roles of father, mother, brother and sister (1 Timothy 5:1-2). Jesus himself speaks about people of the kingdom being his family (Matthew 12:49). Although we may walk through the doors of the church building without any blood relatives present, the blood of Christ makes us part of the one spiritual family.

Church as family presents a special opportunity for women to enjoy and nurture relationships within a far bigger family than any of us are born into. This might seem like great news for some women who perhaps come from small families or who are perhaps an only-child who always wanted a sibling. Or for those who have come from difficult and broken family backgrounds it's an opportunity for a new, healthy family.
For other women, those who are weary, worn-out with work, burdened by carrying the mental load, and busy caring for children or ageing parents, having

more family members arrive on the scene (a whole church-full!) may feel a bit overwhelming. Why invest in more relationships with women in the church?

The Joy

One reason to invest in relationships with the other women at your church is that it can increase your joy. Sometimes it will be surprising joy with unexpected people. The diversity in church means that women from different political viewpoints, cultural backgrounds, languages, work industries, socio-economic backgrounds, and vastly different experiences of life, can all be drawn together by the one, unifying gospel. And in this melting pot of personalities and life circumstances, there is a wonderful opportunity to learn from each other's views as we follow Jesus together. There is a richness in relationships when the gospel overcomes the divides, and we listen to and love those who are different from ourselves. It sharpens us and expands our perspectives. Where else do you spend lots of time with women where the only thing you might have in common is Jesus? There is joy in seeing the gospel at work as unlikely friends learn to journey in life's and ups and downs together.

Another joy is the opportunity for physical presence within intergenerational friendships. With so much relating occurring online in a disembodied way, being physically present regularly with other women can be a special place of connection. When I was working as an Occupational Therapist, I would often work with older women who were quite isolated and rarely had any physical touch. No hugs, no pats on the hand, no contact at all. Sometimes they didn't even have a person to chat with that week. It seems so simple, but having safe spaces for women to just be with each other, no matter their age or season of life, can be such a gift. To at least weekly have meaningful conversation, with eye contact. Even if one woman is juggling her children, another is worried about her exam, and another is leaning on her mobility aid, the church family is a unique space where all these women can connect together in relationships of deepening care and genuine affection.

In a culture where it can feel like a shameful thing for women to age, the Bible honours the role that older women have in the church family. Paul speaks of the special role older women have in teaching younger women as they apply the gospel to their daily lives (Titus 2:3-6). For most of your time as an adult woman in the church, you will probably be both an older and younger woman at the same time. You will be the younger woman for the women of the older generation to teach and encourage and mentor. And simultaneously, you will be the older woman to the ones younger than you, for you to be their teacher, encourager and mentor. Even if the ones younger than you are youth or children, we always have something to o<er our younger brothers and sisters in Christ. There is always a place of dignity, meaningful contribution, and value for women of all ages in the church family.

There is also a delightful way for women to be involved in church family life where they get to fulfil roles they may not otherwise have. For me as a single woman without biological children, being able to contribute to the lives of the children at my church is very precious. Paul calls Timothy his true child in the faith (1 Timothy 1:2), and church family gives me the opportunity to be a “spiritual mother” to more kids than I would ever be able to physically birth! Similarly, for me and others in my church who have already lost our own mothers, we get to enjoy the benefits of gaining many “spiritual mothers” and aunties and sisters through whom we experience the wisdom and love of Christ.

The Practice

So, what would it look like for women of all generations at your church to foster rich and deep relationships with each other?

It may mean recognising some of the key barriers to connection and together finding ways to overcome them. A lack of time is one. The nurture of relationships with those different to us takes intention and the freeing up of more capacity. It means perhaps saving a little more relational energy in the tank to connect more on Sundays or making time during the week to offer simple hospitality to one another. Perhaps, rather, it’s fear and insecurity which is the hurdle. Often, I hear mums at church tell me they don’t know how to speak with university students anymore, and they feel the age gap – what do young adults even talk about? And yet speak with the uni students and they can feel they have nothing to offer and so are intimidated to initiate conversation with the mums. Yet they are all figuring out what it looks like to follow Christ and live out the gospel in their lives – we have more in common then we might think.

One of the most underrated ministries I think in our Christian communities is the joy filled ministry of 1 to 1 discipleship amongst women. The relationship where one woman who is older or who has been a Christian longer, intentionally disciples and mentors another woman who is younger or is a newer Christian. These relationships are built on reading the Bible and praying together. It helps press the gospel deeper into a woman’s life so that she is more able to live for Christ in all areas of her life. This kind of deep disciple-making shows new or younger Christian women that living for Jesus is not only plausible but attractive. It helps them to grow to be more like Christ as they mature in him. It helps women be supported to keep depending on Jesus and persevere through the suffering and hardships of different life seasons. Women discipling women with the word is incredibly important in the church family.

The church remains one of the best places to find and foster intergenerational relationships amongst women. It’s rare and it’s precious. It’s worth the investment, as women show each other what it looks like to follow Christ in all seasons of life.



Christ-centred training
for life and ministry

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