



# MONTHLY

April '26 - Issue #191

## College News



Greetings from RTC! We trust that you had a very blessed and meaningful Easter as you meditated on, and celebrated, our Lord's victory over death.

Our Melbourne Campus continued to be a hive of activity during March. The month started with our graduation ceremony on the 3rd of March. This was reported on in the previous edition, but we can share the official group photo this time round. It was taken at the back of the expanded Knox Room, from which an interior wall was removed to allow for more natural light.

The rest of the renovation and building works are going well too. The renovated kitchen area on Level 3 is officially in use. The 12,000 books that were destined for our new Melbourne Library on Level 8 are all on that level now and in the process of being shelved. Please pray for Carolyn Wakefield, our librarian, as she oversees the process and for Alvin Anbeek, our library assistant, as he does most of the hands-on work to prepare the library for its eventual opening. Please watch this space for more details.



On the 23rd of March we had the privilege of hosting a veteran Bible teacher and author who led us in a series of reflections and conversations on cultivating a life of prayerfulness. It was so encouraging to be joined by around 50 guests who, along with our student body, appreciated Peter's pastorally warm and intensely practical teaching on this vitally important subject in the lives of individual Christians and churches.



We are currently taking a break from regular classes, which will recommence on the 21st of April. However, from 13–17 April we will be hosting two intensives ("*Theology of Mission*" and "*Introduction to Biblical Theology*"). During this week we will be joined by more than 30 students from all over Australia and New Zealand. Please pray for travelling mercies and that the Lord will powerfully use our time together for His glory and for the extension of the Kingdom.

## Upcoming Events

### 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

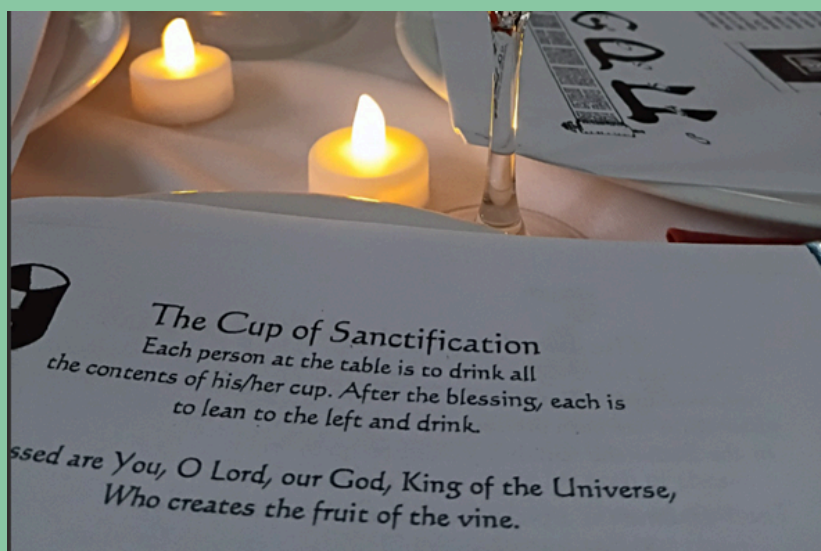
For more information, and to register, please click here:

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

## Faculty News

Phillip Scheepers is planning to visit Auckland and Christchurch, New Zealand from 1–4 May. During this time he is scheduled to preach at the Bishopdale Reformed Church (10:00 AM) and the Reformed Church of Dovedale (4:30 PM) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April Stephen Lewis hosted a 'Christ in the Passover' meal for students and guests. This was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on how the riches of the gospel were foreshadowed in the celebration of the Passover.



*The Cup of Sanctification*  
Each person at the table is to drink all  
the contents of his/her cup. After the blessing, each is  
to lean to the left and drink.  
Blessed are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe,  
Who creates the fruit of the vine.

Murray Capill spoke at the Hills Bible Church camp at the end of March and is speaking at the Box Hill Reformed Church camp in mid-April. At both events he is speaking from the book of Ecclesiastes on "*Life Under the Sun: Finding Wisdom in a Fallen World.*"

## Book Recommendation | Aleesha Bransgrove

Tim Chester, *Enjoying Jesus: Experience the Presence and Kindness of the Son of God in Everyday Life*. The Good Book Company, 2024. 195 pp.

This book helped me to enjoy  
Jesus more.

Like me, I suspect many Christians have gone through dry patches when it comes to faith in Jesus. When Jesus feels distant. When he feels unrelatable, or impersonal. When we're just "going through the motions", and it seems Jesus has little to do with day-to-day life. When being a Christian has lost its sparkle.



If you can relate to that at all, then this is a great book to pick up. Chester, a well-known and loved author, writes this book from a very personal place, recounting his own story of having an emotional breakdown. He is raw and vulnerable, sharing his experience of overwhelm and fear. This is not just a neat, happy book, which simply tells you to try harder at having joy in Jesus. It's written from a place which acknowledges how difficult it is to have a real sense of a living relationship with Jesus. And it's from here that Chester maps out how Christians can grow their enjoyment of Jesus day by day.

In 14 brief and easy-to-read chapters, Chester uses the Gospel of Luke to help focus on the person of Jesus. I found it so beneficial to have the simple link drawn by Chester, that what Jesus was like when on earth is what Jesus is like now in heaven. Jesus Christ really is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). I was struck by my own tendency to think that perhaps in the 2000 years since the ascension, Jesus' heart of love had somehow dimmed or cooled or changed. How refreshing for my soul to be reminded, page after page, that Jesus remains constant in his love and kindness towards his bride the church; and so towards me.

The loveliness of Jesus' love really shines in Chester's writing. Each chapter is saturated with the delight and warmth of the gospel. There is deep Trinitarian theology woven throughout, and yet the book doesn't feel heavy but invigorating. It's refreshingly honest and pastorally nuanced. There are choice Puritan quotes, and plenty of opportunities to pause and ponder and pray. Whether it's contemplating the shelter and compassion of Jesus, or savouring the voice and vitality of Jesus, or grappling with the anger and glory of Jesus, each chapter tackles a different angle on who Jesus is and why he is so beautiful.

Chester further crafts his work using the story of two fictional characters, Mike and Emma. We get a glimpse into the very ordinary week of this married couple and their kids. Chester cleverly uses their story to help ground the topic of each chapter. Ideas about Jesus are not left in the abstract. Instead,

the rich theology explored in each chapter is immediately applied and illustrated in the everyday life of Mike and Emma. This book is written for each chapter to be practical and lived out straightaway.

This book is also meant to be read slowly so that it can be applied and practised gradually. Great for slower readers like me! Each chapter ends with an action to try that week, which is a good challenge for putting the learnings into practice in your own life. There are also a few reflection questions, including an opportunity to reflect on how you went with the action from the previous chapter. This structure means this would be a good book for a couple or group to read together, and a great excuse to form a book club with friends. I lent a copy to a new person at church, who was coming back to faith after being away from church for many years. It's the kind of book that will be of value for new Christians, struggling Christians, and mature Christians alike.

This book was a delight to read. It's a delight because it helps you see how Jesus is a delight. It added so much sparkle to my Christian life. A wonderful resource for enjoying a deeper, richer, more vibrant relationship with Jesus here and now.

## Ministry Spot | Dr Stephen Lewis



### Why Congregational Singing Matters

You might be tone deaf. The music of your church might alienate you so much that you prefer to walk in right before the sermon when all the noise has ceased. Or you might be very taken by the sound of your own voice and

are tempted to think of congregational singing as your karaoke solo moment with the rest of the church as your back-up choir. I'd like to persuade you that congregational singing is too important to skip and too holy to turn into a form of entertainment. Worship music combines the beauty of praise with the pain of lament to present the affections of our heart to the Creator of song.

Church is the last place in our culture where corporate public singing still exists. We used to sing sea shanties while sharing a pint. Now music is private – your personal playlist for a small monthly fee. We live separate lives and so our neighbourhoods have no common folk songs, and no participatory art form that welcomes all ages and bridges our many divides. Music today is niche. Except for certain pop musicals. I was once with my family in our local park for a movie night under the stars, and the entire audience started singing the Frozen soundtrack – “Let it go ... let it go!” Maybe you have been in a pub and your team has just come from behind to win, the soundtrack from Queen starts playing in the background and everyone begins singing, “We are champions, my friend – we'll keep on fighting to the end.” But chances are you will now go through life and never sing a song with a big group of people, unless you go to church. Or unless you attend a Taylor Swift concert. Either one. If you are a Swiftie, you prepare for that pricey concert by memorising all the lyrics. As a Christian, your entire life is a rehearsal, as the Word of God is dwelling in you richly as Lord's Day after Lord's Day you sing together the songs of Zion, the praises of the Lamb who was slain.

In Ephesians 5:18–21, singing together is one of the ways we are filled with the Spirit and one of the ways God commands us to *submit* to one another. Someone else wrote the song. Someone else chose the song. Other people know the song and I'm still learning it. I am being asked to place my personal preferences in a secondary position in order to prioritise what is best for the whole group to sing. That is extremely healthy for me, right there. Congregational singing is about unity in prayer and unity in Christian discipleship. The rest of the church needs me to contribute to the overall song even if I'm graced with questionable raw talent. My voice is valued not for my ability, but for this simple fact: I'm one of the redeemed and I'm supposed to say so. The aesthetic that is in play is an aesthetic of submission, the beauty of unity in Christ, the blessed mash-up of lives changed by Jesus, joining together in song.

Searching for a church where your musical preferences are 100% shared is not submission, it's division – sorting ourselves by style. Some people indeed choose a church on the basis of biblical convictions concerning music. But for most it's a matter of taste. The individualist sings his favourite song and then sits out the rest. The Christian submits and experiences a deep joy in realising that she is one small member of a larger body in whom

the Holy Spirit is at work, even if the song list is not her favourite. If you love the music at your church, tell the elders and the musicians that you love it, and encourage them to broaden the set of songs and styles so that a wider set of believers might likewise sing a song they absolutely love. Widening the selection may decrease your church's coolness factor, but may provide you the greater joy of knowing that more and more of God's children are being freed up to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Why sing? Because doing so is submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. But there's more. When we sing, we teach one another – if form and content are well fit, the music harmonises with the doctrine. Singing is a God-prescribed way for the Word of God to dwell richly in us. Music not only does wonders for the brain, it has a unique way of proclaiming the gospel all week long as the song resurfaces in your mind. Singing psalms and hymns with rich biblical content can powerfully penetrate the heart of the unbeliever while simultaneously shaping the heart of the believer. Church music combines aesthetics with truth, life-giving words with memory-enhancing features (repetition, rhyme, alliteration, and imagery). Singing is a unique vehicle for adoration, as it slows us down and forces us to ponder the wonder of God. Singing can carry a confession of faith – our corporate declaration of who God has revealed Himself to be and what He has done. Songs of repentance not only acknowledge our corporate responsibility for our group sins, they offer us practice so we can do a better job of privately confessing our individual sins.

What amazes me most when I think of music in church, is that Zephaniah 3:17 says that God sings over us. God is a singing God whose singing surrounds us with a wall of spiritual protection. His singing assures us in our spirits that we belong to Him and He is delighted to be our Father. We sing because we are made in the image of the God who sings! If we were not created in God's image then we would be under no obligation and could sit there silently. But since He created us to lead the rest of creation in worshipping Him, we sing. Job 38:6-7 tells us that "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy" when God was creating the universe. When God spoke into the darkness and created the light, the angels sang and shouted for joy in response. Even in our dark and fallen world, held captive by lies, delusions, and spiritual rebellion, God is still singing over us. His divine voice is in opposition to the nihilistic soundtrack with which the world tries to depress you. God's singing over you is in opposition to the nonstop whisper of the god of this age whose incessant background static attempts to steal from you the quiet moments of your slumber through the night. God's voice will someday silence all voices that are spiritually out of tune.

Our singing in church is about unity, discipleship, and joy. It's also about resistance. We sing today in resistance against every evil power assembled against the gospel of peace. We sing today in resistance against our own

traitorous hearts, against the sin that still so easily entangles us. On the day Christ returns, God will supernaturally defeat every last dystopian enemy. What will we do in that moment? Turn to each other and say, “Well, glad that’s over”? Revelation 15:3–4 indicates you will join the saints and sing, “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.” Whatever the whole church learns by heart today, that is what it will be prepped to spontaneously sing in victorious gratitude tomorrow when God’s kingdom comes in all its glory. Every Lord’s Day of your life is a rehearsal for that final day of worship in Revelation 15. We will enjoy the beauty of singing together on that day if we are learning the art of submitting to one another now.



p [03 5244 8600](tel:0352448600)

e [admin@rtc.edu.au](mailto:admin@rtc.edu.au) w [rtc.edu.au](http://rtc.edu.au)

**RTC Melbourne Campus**

3/221 Queen St, Melbourne VIC 3000

© 2025 Reformed Theological College, All rights reserved.

Update your [preferences](#) or [Unsubscribe](#)

“Soli Deo Gloria—Glory to God Alone”