

Newsletter

Summer 23



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Welcome to Highland Theological College

Another semester has ticked by at HTC, and with it comes the close of another academic year. This summer edition of our newsletter brings with it some exciting developments, along with a happy reflection of a life well spent in service to our great God.

It's well worth taking the time to appreciate Alasdair Macleod's work on John Kennedy of Dingwall. I've had the pleasure of being able to read the finished work, and been profoundly influenced by the life and ministry of a faithful - and lesser known - minister who devoted his life to gospel work in the Highlands. Keep an eye out for an accessible version!

At the beginning of the next academic year, we are looking forward to the launch of our new MLitt programme, which we're hopeful will bless churches throughout Scotland, and further afield, as Christians navigate an ever-changing culture.

As ever, I love hearing from everyone who has supported our work over the years, so do get in touch!

William Gwynn

Marketing and Communications
Officer



From the

Principal's desk

At our final college worship for this academic session, I spoke on Psalm 2:8 where the King of Israel hears these words from the heavenly Father: 'Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, and the ends of the earth your possession' - a prayer that includes and embraces, therefore, all the nations and peoples spoken of in the opening verses of that psalm; nations and peoples who were gathered together against the LORD and against his Anointed One or Messiah! Does that, in itself, not show us something of the immensity of the loving heart of the heavenly Father?

Now, there is no doubt that this 'ask' is ever part of the intercession of Christ at the Father's right hand. He has asked, and He continues to ask the Father for the nations and the Father is in the process of making the nations Christ's inheritance, and the ends of the earth his possession.'

"Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, and the ends of the earth your possession"

-Psalm 2:8

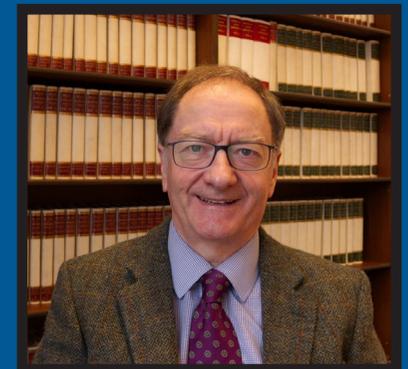
But, is there not a message here for the Body of Christ too in relation to this 'ask'? As those who, in Christ, have the anointing of the Spirit, and are also called to be 'kings and priests' and joint-heirs with Him, are we not to take up this petition as well, and ask for the nations?

Let us all continue to make prayer a significant part of the ministry of our lives and of the lives of the congregations to which we belong and which we may be privileged to lead at present or in the future: prayer for the work of the gospel in the congregation and area to which we are called; yet not forgetting the nations and peoples of the earth. In particular, ask the LORD for the particular places and peoples and the particular needy or neglected groups that the Lord has placed on your heart – ask the Father for them, that they may be part of your inheritance too as well as that of Christ.

In Christ,

Hector Morrison

Principal



Dr John Kennedy Of Dingwall (1843-1900)



John Kennedy and Evangelicalism in the Scottish Highlands, 1843–1900 by Alasdair J. Macleod is now in print from Edinburgh University Press, RRP £90 (Hardback).

This spring was an exciting time for me, as I finally published my long-planned book on John Kennedy of Dingwall (1819–1884), the nineteenth-century minister and church leader.

My interest in Dr Kennedy goes back to childhood, when I read his books 'The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire' and 'The Apostle of the North', classic works of the evangelical literature of the Scottish Highlands. I grew up on the Isle of Skye, in a church culture deeply influenced by the conservative evangelicalism of Dr Kennedy and those who came after him. I therefore had a longstanding interest in Kennedy and in exploring the nature of his ministry and why it became so influential throughout the Highlands.

In 2012, I began a Ph.D. programme at the University of Edinburgh, studying Kennedy in particular. The process of research was fascinating: one remarkable find was a manuscript notebook of Kennedy's discovered during the recent renovation of Dingwall Free Church, and kindly lent to me for research purposes by the then minister, Rev Angus Macrae. This included lots of fascinating drafts and annotations, including the rough first draft text of The Apostle of the North. I also examined hand-written presbytery and synod minutes from the nineteenth century, and travelled around various academic libraries to photograph copies of exceedingly rare pamphlets published by Kennedy during his ministry.

As time went by, the pieces of the jigsaw began to fall into place. I was able to understand more about Kennedy's background as the son of the parish minister of Killearnan in the Black Isle, his dramatic conversion experience following the death of his father, and his own ministry, which was in one pastorate, Dingwall Free Church, from 1844 to 1884. From Dingwall, Dr Kennedy's influence spread across the Highlands, and he was able to influence a whole generation of Christians by his preaching. As the effective leader of the Highland Free Church from about 1860, Dr Kennedy instilled a resolute conservatism in the evangelicals of the Highlands that led them to decline to participate in the changes embraced by Lowland evangelicals during this period.

In 2019, I finally graduated with my Ph.D. and with encouragement from my supervisors and examiners published my research. One down side of academic publishing is that the books tend to be ferociously expensive and I regret that my new book is an example! However, I do hope that a cheaper paperback version will be printed in due course. Look out for a public lecture at some time to introduce the present generation of Christians to Dr Kennedy and to his influential ministry.

Rev Dr Alasdair J. Macleod

Part-time Lecturer in Church History.

In memory of

Reverend Alexander Murray

The copy for our previous newsletter was already on its way to press when word came through to us of the passing of the Reverend Alexander Murray on Sunday the 11th of December 2022. The Rev. Murray was for many years a well-known figure in Highland communities, as a minister of the Free Presbyterian Church and, subsequently, of the Associated Presbyterian Churches, and also as a councillor in both the Ross & Cromarty County Council and later the Highland Regional Council.

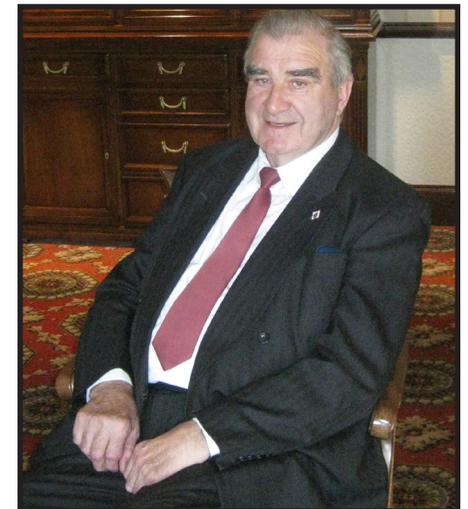
His involvement with HTC began when the Rev Dr Andrew McGowan approached him regarding the possibility of creating a Theological College as part of the proposed University of the Highlands and Islands in 1991, a proposal which 'Mr Murray' (as he was most frequently called) embraced warmly and enthusiastically and as a result of which he eventually became Chair of the Board of Governors of HTI (I for Institute) and then HTC when we moved from Moray College to our own premises in Dingwall in 1999. He continued in his position of Chairman of the Board until his retirement from that position in 2011, from which point he continued to show an abiding interest in and support for the college in a variety of ways.

At his funeral service in Migdale Free Church, Mr Murray was described as 'a big man with a big heart,' and that he certainly was. There was a gentleness and tenderness about him in his dealings with individuals, no doubt enhanced by his personal knowledge of his meek and lowly-in-heart Saviour and Lord, and by his own personal life experiences. He was one in whom grace was seen to have triumphed.

He was, and continues to be, highly esteemed in the HTC community, something that was acknowledged when the front building of the college premises was designated as 'The Alexander Murray Building,' and also when in 2014 the award of Honorary Fellowship of the University of the Highlands and Islands was conferred on him in recognition of his tremendous services to education and civic life in the Highlands and Islands over 50 years, including his role in the establishment of HTC and of the wider university.

For myself, as one who came late to know Mr Murray, one of the greatest encouragements I have experienced in my involvement with HTC came in February 1994 when the group of Christian ministers and businessmen, whom Dr McGowan and Mr Murray had gathered around them to discuss the possibility of creating a theological college as part of UHI, were challenged by the Principal of Moray College to start the college, in August of that same year, in premises he offered to us in Elgin – though we had no funds, no staff, no library, indeed, nothing but an idea! Mr Murray asked us all to pray about it for two weeks. And when we came together two weeks later, we were all of one mind that we should go ahead with this venture of faith.

I had become convinced from words in Isaiah 66:7-8, written into my heart by God's Spirit. And what an encouragement it was for me to know that the Lord had spoken to Mr Murray through a very similar kind of passage, Ezra 6 about the rebuilding of the Lord's cause after the Exile.



When we met for the last time in Migdale Hospital, Mr Murray was still enquiring about the Lord's cause in this land – but he was also aware that the college has been used to prepare many men and women for a variety of ministries not only across our land, but far beyond as well. And, in keeping with that, what an encouragement it would have been to him that same week to be visited by two HTC students, one a recent PhD graduate now teaching in a Bible College in Singapore, and another a PhD student who teaches in a Presbyterian College in the foothills of the Himalayas in North India. No doubt little tokens to Mr Murray of that ancient promise of Isaiah 61:22 (which itself reflects God's even more ancient promise to Abraham): 'A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time.'

It was precious to be able to hold Mr Murray's hand and to pray with him at the close of that visit, and now we have the assurance that his soul is already enjoying the experience of the Lord's close and glorious presence that is 'far better,' even as his mortal remains sleep awaiting that great Day when the glory of our great God and Saviour will be revealed to all in the face of Jesus Christ.

A bright light has gone out in the north of Scotland, though I have no doubt that many of his prayers will yet find fulfilment, and that among these answered prayers will be other lights that become bright ultimately in the firmament of heaven and of the new creation. We remember Mr Murray's children and the wider family circle in our prayers as they adjust to life without this gracious and gentle giant with amazing eyebrows.

Hector Morrison
Principal



Our new taught masters

MLitt: Theology, Worldview and Culture

What does it mean to be a Christian professional in a complicated and largely secular world? How can a Christian who is an artist truly be 'a Christian artist'? How has the Church engaged with the public sphere in the past? How is it engaging with our culture now and how should it in the future?

HTC's new MLitt Theology, Worldview and Culture is designed to help students navigate these and other questions surrounding the place of Christians and Christianity within the world of commerce, science, politics, the arts, engineering, education, health care, the environment and so on.

This one-year, full-time Master's degree is open to graduates from any academic background who are interested in reflecting on the ramifications of their faith for their professional and life setting.

As well as the full-time option, it will be possible to take the degree on a part-time basis over three years. All face-to-face sessions will be conducted via video-conferencing technology, so students will not have to relocate, and will take place in the evening to allow for participation outside the working day. The aim is to create a flexible, virtual community of learning that accommodates a broad diversity of backgrounds.

Modules:

- + Theology and Worldview
- + The Doctrine of Creation
- + Culture and Society
- + The People of God
- + The Land
- + The *Polis* (or City)

Taught by

- + Rev Dr David Kirk
- + Dr Mark Stirling
- + Professor Mark Elliott
- + Dr Jamie Grant

Study Online
Full or part time
Bi-annual retreat
Built to suit busy folks



Find out more!

Email: htc@uhi.ac.uk
Website: www.htc.uhi.ac.uk

Study at HTC

+ Are you interested in becoming part of our community of faith and scholarship? Have a look at these course overviews, and get in touch or head over to our website to find out more!

Christian Theology Access

- No entry requirements
- Ideal for those interested in entering the BA programme
- Can be completed online at your own pace
- Modules include:
 - Study Skills
 - Pastoral Theology
 - Old/New Testament

BA (Hons) Theological Studies

- Equips you with a broad knowledge and understanding of Christian Theology
- Will provide you with the personal and professional capabilities required for a variety of ministries
- Study on campus in Dingwall or Paisley, or at home
- Access to excellent library facilities

Masters by Research (MRes)

- Full time over one year, or part-time over two
- Complete a 40,000 word dissertation
- Can be completed at home or on campus
- Write on a topic of your choice under supervision
- Engage with our faculty, and make use of their specialisms to inform your work
- Access to our post-graduate seminars

PhD

- Faculty offers excellent supervision on a wide range of topics
- Can be completed remotely or in Scotland
- Some recent completions include:
 - Polanyi's critique of reductionism
 - Exodus 19:5-6 as a missional text
 - Samuel Rutherford's doctrine of sanctification

Get in touch

Email: htc@uhi.ac.uk
Website: www.htc.uhi.ac.uk

The Access Course

Our Access course provides students who don't have the necessary qualifications entry to our degree course. With modules introducing Study Skills and providing an overview of the Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Systematic and Pastoral Theology. Access students also pursue the course for personal growth: elders seeking more in-depth theological education to better serve the local church, or interns and church apprentices adding a more academic strand to their practical experience. Access students represent a wide variety of denominations, range in age from 18 to 80, are as close-by as Dingwall or as far afield as Hungary, Sweden, and the south of France!

Our team of tutors serve over and above their personal commitments, demonstrating academic rigour and pastoral sensitivity in their teaching. The Access committee works hard to keep the course content relevant and in line with current scholarship. It's a privilege and joy to play a small part in the lives of students and in building the kingdom of God through the delivery of the Access Course.

All our students' feedback is overwhelmingly positive. Applications have increased, with the open learning format and no requirement for face-to-face teaching clearly proving appealing. If you're interested in beginning the access course, get in touch with us to explore how the course could help you in your life and ministry: htc@uhi.ac.uk

Rev Dr Jonathan Fraser
Access Course Lead



Moral and Philosophical Studies with Religious Education BA (Hons)

- + Ever considered becoming a teacher?
- + Want to influence young people in schools?
- + It's a pleasure to be part of UHI, and to have the opportunity to run modules that make up the content for courses throughout the university. The Moral and Philosophical Studies, with Religious Education BA, is one of these. The course includes some modules that also make up part of the Theological Studies undergraduate course.
- + This course will set you up for a lifelong teaching career, teaching religious education in schools.



Interested in
Teaching?

Go to: uhi.ac.uk/mpsre



Partner with HTC

If you'd like to partner with us in prayer, we hope the following prayer points will be a helpful guide

- Pray for the refreshment of staff and students as they have some time off over the summer.
- Pray for our new MLitt as it launches this September, that many would be blessed and influenced by it's content.
- Ahead of the next academic year, pray for those beginning their theological studies.
- Some of our access students are gathering together in the coming months, pray that these meeting would be a blessing and encouragement to those present.

At Highland Theological College, we're thankful for all of our generous friends who partner with us financially. If you don't already give to the work of the college, and are interested in doing so, you can find more information overleaf, or on our website.

Sort Code: 60-83-01
Account no: 20229489
Account name: Highland Theological College Donations Account

Bankers Order

You can use this form to make donations to HTC by Standing Order. Please return the completed form to **Highland Theological College UHI ~ High Street ~ Dingwall ~ Ross-shire ~ IV15 9HA**

Bank/Building Society _____

Name of Branch _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Pay Unity Trust Bank (Sort Code 60-83-01) for credit of Highland Theological College Donations Account 20229489

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starting on _____ (date) and continuing until I give notice in writing.

The instruction supersedes any existing Standing Order in favour of Highland Theological College.

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Gift Aid

You can use this form to increase the value of your gift to HTC by about a third. Please return the completed form to **Highland Theological College UHI, High Street, Dingwall, Ross-shire IV15 9HA.**

I wish all my donations to Highland Theological College (unless I specify in writing) to be treated as Gift Aid donations. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that HTC will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

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Signature _____ Date _____

You can cancel this declaration any time by notifying HTC. Please notify HTC if you change your name or address. If your circumstances change you can cancel your declaration.

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