

REPORT
OF THE
COLLEGE BOARD

The College Board met on several occasions during the course of the previous year. It remains a cause of gratitude to God that our denomination, notwithstanding our smallness and the many demands on our financial resources, is still in a position to train its own ministers, and in addition is well placed to deliver a theological curriculum for the training of men and women in Christian service.

The Board is aware that there are voices within the Church questioning the feasibility of maintaining a College. As the denomination continues to decline, the support base for the College continues to shrink. This is especially true as the financial resources within the Church continue to be stretched; yet the fact that there has been a small but steady stream of men applying for the Free Church ministry shows that the College still represents an important aspect of the Church's work and ethos.

Coupled with this is a perennial discussion about whether we ought to outsource the training of our ministry to other Colleges and theological institutions. Of these there are many; and the development of modern technology is such that at a theoretical level it could be possible for our ministers to be trained via the internet by some of the leading Reformed scholars in institutions all over the world.

Yet although the Free Church College is also staffed by Reformed scholars, its ethos is quite different to that of many other seminaries and institutions. The scholarship remains in the service of the church, and the academic work is not carried out for its own sake.

While this report is perhaps not the place to try to justify the continued existence of the Free Church College, the Board recognises that part of its function may be to commend the College to the Church as well as to those outside it. The ideal of providing denominationally oriented theological training has been part of the Free Church ethos from the outset, and there are strong arguments for its continuance.

For one thing, the Free Church College exemplifies the principle of men committed to Reformed orthodoxy, spirituality and piety passing on their learning and experience to help shape a new generation of gospel preachers and Christian workers. The apostle Paul spoke about faithful men who could teach others; and we have been singularly privileged as a Church to have had men of proven faithfulness and of sound orthodoxy gifted in the training of successive generations of evangelical preaching.

For another, the College is a reminder that academic theology does not exist for its own sake. It is for the church, and for the people of God. We are running an academic institution, but we are not in the business of furthering academic careers. We are in the business of harnessing minds and lives for the glory of God and for the good of His people.

The College also represents a unique and living Scottish tradition. We ought never to undervalue our history, and a glimpse of the volumes and memorabilia in the Free Church Collection in the Chalmers Hall, for example, is a reminder of the rich diversity of giftedness and of interest there has been in the Church over the almost 170 years of her existence. That collection could be housed in a museum, and be regarded as of purely antiquarian interest; but it properly belongs in a functioning College, where the resources of the past may be dynamically used and critically applied to the life of the Church in the present.

More pertinent than any of these reasons, however, is the fact that the College provides the forum where students, committed to a common theological position, called to a common ecclesiastical work, and training for a common evangelical purpose, can live and learn together. Bonds are forged, fellowship is fostered,

friendships are made, and the best interests of Presbyterian ministry are served as those who will work together first learn to train together. The denomination can surely only be enriched and enhanced by continuing to encourage and support such an institution.

However, arguments to justify the continued existence of the Free Church College do not address all the issues raised in connection with the College at the present stage of our life as a Church. The filling of vacant Chairs in the College has proved difficult, as this year's report explains. The Board may have to ask questions about the delivery of its theological training in view of the reluctance of men to present themselves as candidates for full-time professorial roles; and perhaps the overdue quinquennial visitation of the College will also address these issues.

The College Board is committed both to the Church as a denomination, and to the College as an institution. That means several things. It means being answerable to the Church for the use of its financial resources while ensuring that no element of theological training is compromised or lost as a result of financial cutbacks. It means serving the College on behalf of the Church, so that the staff and students of the College are encouraged and the whole Church informed. It also means ensuring a balance between principle and practice: while it has been happy to encourage the use of part-time teachers, for example, in the delivery of the Practical Theology component of the course, it longs to ensure that the most fundamental element of that practice - the preaching of the word in a way that is articulate, powerful and comprehensible - is prioritised.

Above all, the Board is committed to the missional aspect of the College's life and work, as part of the ecumenical mission of the Church to serve others, not just itself. While the main function of the College is to train Free Church ministers, its own ministry is wider than that, and as this Report highlights, the College can be a leader in the development of theological education within the Reformed world.

The Board, therefore, remains a vital link between the wider church and the College, and remains optimistic that a diminishing support base does not mean a diminution of support for the College itself. Its meetings over the past year have ranged over several areas of responsibility and interest, and have always been conducted in a warm spirit of fellowship and (not to put too fine a point on it) collegiality. This year's report will comment on the main items of business which have been on the agenda of the College Board. The Principal's Report will deal with matters internal to the College itself.

(A) RETIREMENT OF PROFESSOR DONALD MACLEOD

Last year's report paid tribute to the work of Professor Macleod as Principal of the College. This year Donald Macleod retires from the Chair of Systematic Theology, a position he has occupied with distinction since his appointment in 1978. It is a matter of gratitude that although he has now passed his seventieth birthday, Professor Macleod remains in good health, and we trust that he will still be able to assist in delivering courses in the College.

In over thirty years of teaching systematics, Professor Macleod has developed a worldwide reputation. He is a wide reader, and is qualified to comment on a vast range of subjects. His passion for his own area of academic expertise is enthusiastic and infectious, and he has demonstrated a mastery in it.

Not only has he shaped the thinking of a generation of ministers, he has also contributed to many areas of theological and historical research and thinking. His volumes on Christology and on Christian doctrine will hold the field in theology for many years. His published books and occasional journal articles are always characterised by clarity of thought, freshness of insight and crispness of expression. They are a joy to read and a reward to contemplate.

Professor Macleod's legacy as he leaves the post of Professor of Systematic Theology will have been to make a generation of Christians and of Christian ministers think for themselves, reflecting critically on their own heritage and the cherished elements of their tradition. For this, the Church owes him a debt of gratitude. It is difficult to imagine the College without him; but we trust that the closing of this chapter in

the College's story will mean the opening of doors of further usefulness for Professor Macleod himself. We can only thank him for his many years of service, and wish him God's blessing for the future.

(B) APPOINTMENT OF NEW PROFESSOR

Much discussion in the meetings of the College Board centered around the arrangements for appointing a new Professor of Systematic Theology. In accordance with current legislation, nominations were sought from Presbyteries, and nominees were invited for interview.

The nomination of the Board to the Assembly would normally be presented as a supplementary report, in accordance with Act XLV, 2009). However, three of the nominees declined to attend the interview, and the candidate who was interviewed, and whom the Board was prepared to recommend to the Assembly, declined to allow his name to go forward for consideration.

Following an unsuccessful attempt to get the nominated candidates to reconsider their positions, and given the short time available to re-run the selection process, the Board felt that interim arrangements ought to be made for the delivery of this aspect of the College course. Since Professor Donald Macleod is still available and willing to teach Systematic Theology, the Board is recommending that he be appointed as lecturer for the forthcoming session.

(C) COLLEGE SECRETARY

The Board has greatly benefitted from the appointment of Miss Joan Macleannan as College Secretary. She has applied herself to the secretaryship of the Board with efficiency and with dedication, and the meetings of the Board have been greatly enhanced by her input. We wish her God's blessing in her continued work as secretary to the Board.

(D) QUINQUENNIAL VISITATION OF THE COLLEGE

The Board wishes to draw the attention of the General Assembly to an oversight in its arrangements for 2010. The following legislation was passed by the Assembly in 2006 (as Act L, Class II):

Act anent Quinquennial Review of the College

The General Assembly ordain that future Quinquennial Visitations of the College shall not be conducted by the College Board since, as part of the governance, the Board is itself subject to the review process. They direct that a Special Review Committee be appointed by the General Assembly to report directly to the General Assembly and not through the College Board. The Review Committee shall be required to submit its Report first to the Senate, the College Board and Training of the Ministry Committee for their response prior to presenting it to the Assembly. They further declare that the Quinquennial Visitation of the College shall hereafter be termed the Quinquennial Review. They further appoint that the next Review shall be appointed by the General Assembly of 2010 to report to the General Assembly of 2011.

Although the legislation specifically states that the Board will NOT arrange the quinquennial review, the Board felt that it was the body in the best position to remind the Assembly that a Special Review Committee ought to be appointed now, to conduct a review of the College, and to report to next year's General Assembly.

(E) PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

The Church continues to be grateful to those who are assisting with the provision of training in practical theology. In the view of the Board, the involvement in the training of students of men who serve in

different ministries in the Church is invaluable. The Board is grateful to Professor Donald Macleod for having organised this element of the College course, and is glad that he is willing to continue overseeing the provision.

(F) THE 1560 INITIATIVE

Last year's Assembly approved an initiative to encourage the Board to advertise the College as a centre for Reformed theology and training. There have been no developments in this matter to date, partly because of the excellent work done by Professor John A Macleod on the development of the College website (<http://www.freescotcoll.ac.uk>). The Board will, however, continue to work with the Senate in promoting the College as a centre of excellence for academic training.

(G) OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Previous College Board reports have highlighted the opportunity the Free Church College affords not only for foundational theological training, but also for further professional training and development. With this in view, the Board communicated with ministers and Deacons' Courts to encourage ministers to take advantage of the opportunity for continued study and research. The Board is particularly keen that ministers should consider studying for the Master of Theology degree. This is available in two forms, as a research degree (which may be undertaken on a part-time basis over two years), or by taught courses leading to the M.Th. in Scottish Church History and Theology.

As the Board's letter pointed out, the Board see a twofold advantage to this, first, in allowing ministers to benefit personally through continued training and research, and, second, in allowing congregations to benefit as a result of these continued studies. However the Board recognises that for many ministers the cost of these courses may be prohibitive.

Nonetheless, new sabbatical arrangements are in place which would provide ministers with periods of study, some financial assistance is available from the Church for this purpose. It was also the Board's desire to encourage Deacons' Courts to make some financial contribution to their ministers should they be willing to engage in such study.

(H) EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF REFORMED CHURCHES

A conference on Theological Education and Mission was held in Kampen, Netherlands, from 22nd-24th March 2011. The Board is grateful to Professor John McIntosh, who represented the Free Church College at the Conference. The main subjects addressed at the conference were 'Prepared for a missionary ministry in the 21st century', 'Academic excellence, biblical godliness and compassion in Theological Education', 'Teaching Systematics in a missionary context' and 'Missionary teaching of the Old Testament'. These are noble themes, fully supported by the Free Church College.

Several workshops were also held, and it was agreed that all the colleges represented (which included almost all the Reformed Colleges in Europe) would continue to work towards a commonly-recognised curriculum (i.e., not a common curriculum) which was to be based on the Free Church College syllabus. It was also agreed to work towards a commonly-agreed scheme of assessment which would also be based on the Free Church College system of assessment (which, of course, is that of the University of Glasgow).

The Eastern European colleges saw the system of External Examiners as a most promising way of strengthening the academic credentials of the Reformed colleges in Europe as a whole. It was also agreed that more work needed to be done on the balance between the academic and practical elements of our courses, and in particular on the question of assessment of the practical elements in courses in such a way as would satisfy secular/academic authorities as to their rigour. There was recognition that this would require closer liaison between the colleges and the denominations with which they are connected.

In connection with this aspect, there was strong unanimity that the academic credibility of Reformed theological education should be maintained. This was felt to be particularly essential if the independence and recognition of the newly emerging colleges in Eastern Europe was to be gained and retained. There was a feeling that the two Dutch 'Theological Universities' and the Free Church College have particular responsibilities in this area.

It is hoped that the Free Church College can continue to play its part in delivering theological education in the changing landscape of modern Europe in association with other Reformed churches and theological institutions.

(I) OTHER MATTERS

Chalmers Hall Part of the remit of the College Board is the College building refurbishment. During the course of the past year, under the guidance of Professor Donald Macleod, substantial renovation was carried out in the Chalmers Hall, with new decoration and lighting to the ceiling. The effect has been to improve the lighting of the Hall considerably. Although the cost was not insubstantial, it is hoped that this will be a valuable investment for the long-term use of the Chalmers Hall.

Professors' Reports The Board regularly receives reports from its full-time Professors detailing their teaching responsibilities, their academic responsibilities outwith the College, their responsibilities within the wider Church, their publications, their preaching engagements and other activities in which they have been involved. While this may be a chore for the professors themselves, it is a very necessary element of the supervisory role of the Board in keeping the work of the College teaching staff under review. The Board is gratified to note the involvement of the College staff in projects within the wider academic world, and wishes to encourage the Professors in continued research and writing.

UK Border Immigration Following last year's successful registration with the UK Border and Immigration Authority, the College, in common with other institutions, has suffered from bureaucratic red tape which has prevented foreign students from being able to come to study at the College. One student, for example, whose fees were to be covered and who was a bona fide applicant, was denied access to the UK as a student. His case is currently subject to appeal. The situation shows little sign of improving. A visit by a Border Agency officer in March concluded that one student had been allowed to study at the College without a valid visa, and this situation is currently being considered by the Agency, which could alter - or in the worst case scenario, revoke - the licence by which the church admits foreign student to the College. The Church ought to make this a matter for prayer, so that international students can take advantage of the training offered at the Free Church College.

The Board has been occupied with several other routine matters, including College budgets, semester dates, and student fees, accommodation and (through the student representative on the Board) student matters. It is hoped that as the Board continues to oversee the work of the College within the wider Church context, that we will all continue to pray that God will use this asset of his Church to extend his kingdom and to train a new generation of gospel workers who will not be ashamed either of our Reformed heritage or our confessional Presbyterianism, but who will become faithful servants of Christ and his church.

IAIN D. CAMPBELL, *Chairman*
PETER MORRISON, *Vice-Chairman*

APPENDIX

REPORT OF THE COLLEGE PRINCIPAL

(A) OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

The year was marked by three new starts: a new College Principal, a new College Secretary, and the

commencement of an M.Th. programme in Scottish Church History and Theology. Although only two students enrolled for the new programme in September 2010, it is hoped that a wider measure of publicity will be able to increase the numbers involved. The new Secretary, Miss Joan MacLennan, has already proved her worth in the contribution she makes to the smooth running of the College, and in particular in organising College records in an accessible electronic format.

In that connection our continuing gratitude must be expressed to Professor John Angus MacLeod for his indefatigable activity in maintaining and extending the College's computing facilities, which are such a necessary feature of any modern teaching establishment. Professor John R. McIntosh continues to act as Post-Graduate Studies Director.

Throughout the year there have been several difficulties with the UK Border Agency. One particularly frustrating occurrence was the inability to gain a visa for Tomás Sáenz from Peru to study with us for a one year M.Th. despite the fact that the Senate had agreed to pay his fees and maintenance through the Macleod Scholarship Fund and the International Missions Board to meet his travel expenses. We trust renewed applications will fare better in the morass of red tape. The Agency seems more interested in loading further burdens of administration and policing on sponsor institutions than in applying common sense. There is also a significant lack of any reciprocal flow of information from the Agency on the grounds of confidentiality.

Relations with Glasgow University continued to be cordial and helpful, and this was particularly evident as regards the interview procedures for nominating a successor to Professor Donald Macleod in the chair of Systematic Theology. Professor Macleod's staged retirement from the College had begun last year with his relinquishing the post of Principal, but his presence in the College is to be extended for at least a further year. The provisional arrangements for Practical Theology class were put in place for three years and they have still one year to run. Consequently Professor Macleod has consented to continue as course supervisor while the review of these arrangements is undertaken. It is hoped that this will be done in conjunction with a Quinquennial Review of the College which is (over)due to be initiated by this Assembly.

(B) STUDENT DATA

The following B.Th. students graduated in 2010:

B.Th.:	Hye Young Kim, BA, MDiv
	William A Paterson, BA
	Morgan Tivatyi
With Merit	Jihe Gaius Song, BA, MSc, PhD
With Distinction	Jonathan Kirk, BA
With Distinction	Winston Tay, BA, BSocSci

The following new students were registered for the B.Th. programme at 31.3.11:

Neil L. Macdonald
Daniel J. Paterson, B.A.
Shiho Soda, BComSt.
Suraj Kasula
Omega T. Gwasira

A two-year study plan is being followed by James P. Ross, M.A., B.A.

The following M.Th. students graduated in 2010:

Matthew Ford, MTheol
Koji Harada, BA, MDiv

The following M.Th. student will graduate in 2011:

Adam de Jong, M.Econ, BTh.

Students enrolled on M.Th. courses at 31.3.11:

Enock Gwasira (by research, part-time)
Johnathan B. Keenan, B.Bus.Admin., M.Div. (taught M.Th.)
John J. Park, BMedSci (taught M.Th.)
Daniel S. Ralph (taught M.Th.)
John W. Reid, BA
Henry M. Smith, BA

The total number of students registered for degree programmes as at the end of March 2011 was 23 (B.Th. 17; M.Th. 6). The total number of candidates for the ministry of the Free Church of Scotland at present studying at the College is 11.

The part-time Certificate and Diploma courses continued to be held on eight Saturdays throughout the year. The number of students registered for the part-time courses was 76. Most of these will make use of the recorded online video and audio lectures which are made available for the duration of the session. The live sessions in Edinburgh are not as well attended as in earlier years, though an appreciative audience still gathers. Video-conference sessions are offered in Stornoway, and Aberdeen hosts a joint session using the archived lectures.

JOHN L. MACKAY, *College Principal*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report, and thank the Board for its work, especially the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
2. The General Assembly express their thankfulness to God for the ongoing work of the College. They commend the work of the College, its staff and students, to the prayers and support of the Church. They especially welcome Miss Joan Maclennan to her post as College Secretary, and as Secretary to the College Board, and wish her God's blessing.
3. The General Assembly thank the Senate for the consistently high standards of delivery of the BTh course, and thank the part-time teachers of practical theology for their input into the life of the College over the past session.
4. The General Assembly receive with regret the resignation of Professor Donald Macleod from the post of Professor of Systematic Theology with immediate effect. They thank Professor Macleod for his delivery of the systematics course for over thirty years, and congratulate him on his publications and on his academic achievements. They wish him God's blessing in retirement.
5. The General Assembly confer on Professor Donald Macleod the designation *Professor-Emeritus* with immediate effect.
6. The General Assembly thank Professor Macleod for his willingness to continue teaching in the College, and appoint him lecturer in Systematic Theology for the coming session on terms to be agreed by the College Board.
7. The General Assembly note the difficulties experienced by the College Board in filling the vacancy in the Chair of Systematic Theology. Recognising that financial constraints and personal considerations may make it difficult to apply current legislation concerning College appointments, the Assembly authorise the Board to review this situation as a matter of urgency.
8. The General Assembly note the oversight regarding the appointing of a Quinquennial Review

Committee to carry out a review of the Free Church College, and authorise the appointing of a committee to report to the 2012 General Assembly.

8. The General Assembly note the continued difficulties experienced by the Free Church College in connection with the UK Border and Immigration Authority, and trust that the situation will improve to allow international students to study at the College. They commend this situation to the prayers of the Church.

9. The General Assembly thank Principal Mackay for his leadership in the College during his first year as Principal, and thank him and the other professors for their faithful discharge of their teaching and professorial responsibilities. They commend the Principal and staff of the College to the prayers of the Church.

10. The General Assembly thank Professor John McIntosh for his continued contribution on behalf of the Free Church College towards the integration of theological provision throughout Europe through the European Conference of Reformed Churches, and encourage the College Board to play a full role in this initiative.

11. The General Assembly thank Professor John A. Macleod for his work in the area of IT equipment, and for his work as disability co-ordinator.

12. The General Assembly thank all those who are involved in facilitating the College part-time course in the various centres in which it is located. The General Assembly commend the College part-time course to the prayers of the Church, and encourage further participation in it by members and adherents within the Church. They also encourage Deacons' Courts to consider making a financial contribution to enable ministers to engage in postgraduate research and study at the College.

13. The General Assembly thank all ancillary College staff, as well as office staff for administrative assistance, and pray God's continued blessing on their work.