

Rutherford Centre for Reformed Theology

Newsletter AUTUMN 2018

We announced in May that the work of Rutherford House is being taken forward by a new centre, called the Rutherford Centre for Reformed Theology (RCRT). We are now able to provide some more details.

The Director of the RCRT will be the Rev Professor Andrew McGowan. He will take up his new position at the end of January 2019.

The RCRT will be based in the Highlands of Scotland and, as a Research Centre, will work in partnership with the University of the Highlands and Islands.

The work of the RCRT will have three core strands. First, research and writing; second, education and training; and third, the promotion and development of Reformed Theology.

The Three Strands

Strand One: Research & Writing:

The RCRT will engage in academic research in partnership with the University of the Highlands and Islands. This will involve drawing together a group of researchers, some full-time and others part-time, to work in the general area of Reformed Theology, covering Biblical Studies as well as Systematic and Historical theology. The RCRT will also continue the tradition of academic conferences, which have taken place every two years since Rutherford House was formed. These conferences have drawn scholars from all over the world. The last one was in 2017 and papers were given by scholars from the UK, France, the Netherlands, the USA, Australia and Hong Kong. In addition, the RCRT will seek to build relationships with institutions in different parts of the world to work together on conferences and writing projects and also to encourage scholars to come to Scotland for sabbaticals and study leave.

Strand Two: Education & Training

One of the most enduring aspects of the work of Rutherford House over many years has been the engagement with church members, elders and ministers. In earlier days, this included the publication of Christian books and pamphlets on key issues (as well as the publication of symposia following the bi-annual theological conferences). The mission statement of RH was 'To help people to think biblically and theologically'. Most recently, this led to a DVD for elders' training being produced and conferences for elders were held around Scotland in the lead-up to this production. Another ministry is Under the Rainbow which is a web-based resource for those who have experienced infant loss, miscarriage and infertility. There have also been conferences, reading groups and local gatherings of ministers, to help promote theological thinking. The RCRT will continue to engage with churches, providing education and training for members, elders and ministers. Perhaps the most significant contribution in the near future will be the education and training of elders to lead worship and to preach. This has been identified as a significant need, not least because of the shortage of ministers, particularly in rural areas. The RCRT intends to work with churches to help with this need.

Strand Three: Promotion & Development

Reformed Theology which arose out of the 16th century Reformation is a school of thought which has taken a number of forms and produced many confessions and catechisms. Despite this rich theological heritage, many people in our churches are unaware of their history and ignorant of their own theological tradition. Part of the work of RCRT will be to promote and develop Reformed Theology, and to remind people of our biblical and theological roots. At the same time, we believe we must move forward. Theology did not end in 1647 and the issues we face today are not the same as those faced by our forebears in the 16th and 17th centuries. For that reason, we must develop our Reformed Theology to make it fit for purpose in our day and generation. There are various ways in which this can be done. For example, Professor McGowan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Theological Commission of the World Reformed Fellowship, led an international group of scholars in writing a new 'Statement of Faith', applying our Reformed theology to the issues of today. That same Theological Commission is now working on a document seeking to define what Reformed Theology is and what it means to be 'Reformed' in the 21st century.

DIRECTOR PROFILE

The Rev Professor Andrew T B McGowan is Minister of Inverness East Church of Scotland and Professor of Theology in the University of the Highlands and Islands. He was Principal of Highland Theological College UHI, from its inception in 1994 until 2009.

Professor McGowan is Vice Chairman of the World Reformed Fellowship and serves as Chairman of its Theological Commission. He is President of the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society and a member of the Tyndale Fellowship.

Professor McGowan will step down from his position as Minister of Inverness East Church on 30th January 2019, to take up his new position.

Professor McGowan has been involved with Rutherford House since its inception. He was a member of the Council when RH was first established and was the first secretary of the Research and Publications committee. He served on the Council throughout its existence. Later, he became a Trustee of RH and also served for a number of years as Chairman of the Trustees.

Professor McGowan's main publications are: *The Federal Theology of Thomas Boston* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997); *Always Reforming: Explorations in Systematic Theology*, ed., (Leicester: IVP, 2006); *The Divine Spiration of Scripture: Challenging Evangelical Perspectives* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2007); *The Person and Work of Christ: Understanding Jesus* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012); and *Adam, Christ and Covenant: Exploring Headship Theology* (London: Apollos, 2016).

He is currently working on a book on the biblical and theological doctrine of the Unity of the Church.



Andrew is married to June and they have three married sons and one grandson!

From RH to RCRT

Rutherford House emerged from discussions in 1981 between The Rev William Still, minister of Gilcomston South Church, Aberdeen and the Rev Dr Sinclair Ferguson, a Church of Scotland minister and well-known theologian. The vision was to establish a centre for evangelical scholarship, which would seek to engage the Church and the divinity faculties, from a Reformed and evangelical perspective. Dr Nigel Cameron was appointed the first warden of the House, and he occupied the post for approximately ten years. One significant emphasis during this period was medical ethics. The Rev David Searle became the second warden. One significant emphasis during this period was providing support and encouragement to young ministers, as well as organising conferences and training for ministers, elders and others. Mr Searle retired in 2003 and the Rev Dr Bob Fyall became the first 'Director' of the House, a post which he held for four years. During Dr Fyall's tenure, there was a re-emphasis on the House as a centre for evangelical scholarship. In June 2008, Dr Jason Curtis was appointed. During Dr Curtis' tenure, one of the key emphases was on church revitalisation. After Dr Curtis left there was a period without a Director, as the Trustees worked on the vision, finances and future shape of the work. This has now led to Rutherford House becoming the Rutherford Centre for Reformed Theology and relocating to the Highlands of Scotland.

Fundraising Appeal

As we begin this new stage of our work, we are looking for those who share our vision to contribute financially. There are various ways you can do this. If you would like to make an online donation you can click on the 'Donate' button on our website www.rutherfordhouse.co.uk. This will take you to our secure PayPal page. Cheques made out to 'Rutherford House' can be sent to our postal address: Rutherford House, 10 Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, EH12 5AA. If you wish to set up a standing order or qualify for Gift Aid please email info@rutherfordhouse.org.uk for more details. We are able to receive gifts from the UK Charities Foundation, for those of you who have chosen to channel your charitable giving through this route. Simply identify Rutherford House as the charity to receive a donation from your CAF account.