

# MINISTRY REPORT TO CLASSES AND COUNCILS

MAY 2011



CHRISTIAN  
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CHURCH

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## From the Director of Denominational Ministries

As we share these updates with you, we are watching the events in Japan. We are monitoring the situation for our staff, hearing from many of our churches, and working closely with the Reformed Church of Japan and other partners. God has allowed us to work together, within the CRC and around the world and we are humbled to be part of the God's Kingdom work.

As part of our work together, we hope you will take the time to read through the updates that cover ministry from Pakistan to our volunteer youth leaders, from seminarians learning and experiencing ministry in Nicaragua to a grant given to a local church for health and renewal, from 142 listener community groups in Indonesia to a group of pastors gathering for peer learning through an SPE grant. Our prayer is that you

sense our desire to be the church with you locally, regionally and globally. God leads us into His Kingdom work and asks us to trust Him. May you be encouraged in your ministry today to be part of something bigger than anyone one of us, any one of our churches or any ministry. To God be the Glory!

## Chaplaincy and Care Ministries

Military chaplain endorsers met in January at the combined COMISS/NICMAF/ECVAC Conferences in Alexandria, VA (just south of Washington, DC. This gave me a chance to become more familiar with military and veteran chaplain endorsement protocol while getting acquainted with other military chaplain endorsers, and with the three Chief of Chaplains (Army, Navy, Air Force).

Two of our Amy Chaplains (Timothy Won and Scott Koeman) were recently promoted to Major (now 6 out of 24) and one of our Air Force chaplains (Charles Cornelisse) was recently promoted to Colonel (now 5 out of 24, plus 2 Lt. Col.) and will be re-assigned from Randolph AFB in TX to be the Senior Chaplain at Arlington National Cemetery in Fort Myers, VA (just south of Washington, DC).

We recently initiated a meeting of western Michigan providers and users of the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) process to discuss and help shape the future of this important chaplaincy training tool. One of our civilian chaplains in Canada (Philip Weaver) was recently granted certification as a Pastoral Care Specialist and is being interviewed soon to qualify as a CPE supervisor.

We are currently wrapping up plans for our 2011 Chaplains Conference on the campus of Calvin College in June that will feature a workshop on the importance of telling our stories, to be lead by a life-long musician, song writer and performer (Michael Blanchard) and a board certified chaplain in the Reformed Church of America tradition (David Blauw).

## Disability Concerns

Disability Concerns produced a variety of new resources for churches in their ministry with people with mental illnesses including

- A bulletin insert that encourages conversation about mental illness

- A section on our website, Mental Health Resources, that includes sermons, articles, a mental health ministry toolkit, and links to other resources
- A free study series for small groups, *Let's Talk! Breaking the Silence around Mental Illness in Our Communities of Faith*.

Disability Concerns continues to expand mental illness ministry resources.

- Several volunteers in Alberta are developing an evening workshop for churches on companionship with people who have a mental illness.
- Disability Concerns is working with Pathways to Promise ([www.pathways2promise.org](http://www.pathways2promise.org)), in developing a network for helping churches.

In other news, with the Reformed Church in America we released a new edition of our quarterly newsletter, *Breaking Barriers*, which tells the stories of people with visual impairments and offers ideas for ministry.

Also, we are pleased to report that several volunteers have stepped forward to serve churches in their classis as Regional Disability Advocates: Classis Quinte - Bill Buwalda, Pacific Northwest - Don Recker, Pella - Ivan Mulder, Greater Los Angeles - Tonya Dantuma. Regional advocates assist the churches in their classis with inclusion of people with disabilities in their ministries. Most classes have a Regional Advocate. If you would like to be in touch with the Advocate in your classis, you can find out that person's name and contact information in the classis information section of the *Yearbook*.

### Faith Alive Christian Resources

#### Editorial

DWELL is a full graded Sunday School curriculum that turns the noise and distractions down to enable kids to enter fresh into God's big story. Unashamedly Reformed, quietly engaging, it invites kids and teachers to imaginative wondering, honest faith-sharing, and deep engagement with God's story. DWELL is scheduled to be released in July 2011 and used in churches for the first time in the fall. DWELL joins two other curricula from Faith Alive: Walk With Me ([www.walkwithmeonline.org](http://www.walkwithmeonline.org)) and Kid Connection ([www.kidconnectiononline.org](http://www.kidconnectiononline.org)). WE is an exciting new resource inviting congregations to gather across the generations to enjoy in ten events that span the biblical story. Here is a new opportunity to see how biblical faith formation can break us out of our age and interest silos into truly intergenerational faith formation

#### The Banner

In our last report we shared our plans to change our paradigm of what *The Banner* is. It used to be a print magazine that was simply mirrored on the website. Beginning with our February issue, however, all that has changed. We are now an interactive e-zine that gathers its best content into the monthly print magazine. Check us out at [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org) – we invite you to engage with us in the conversation. Initial feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and many folks have shown they're engaged by posting their comments. We hope to

continue to expand our Web ministry over the next few months, so be sure to visit often.

### Pastor-Church Relations

In the recent past Pastor-Church Relations has increased partnering opportunities with the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) and Sustaining Congregational Excellence (SCE) programs of the CRCNA. One of these partnerships has been in the area of writing training tools for churches and pastors. Recent titles have been "Toward Effective Pastoral Mentoring", "Evaluation Essentials for Congregational Leaders" and one in the early stages of development focusing on the pastor search process. Putting these resources in the hands of congregations and their leaders is a part of our focus on education.

In addition, P-CR staff members have participated in a number of SPE/SCE learning events in Ontario, British Columbia, South Dakota, Michigan, New Brunswick, New Mexico and Florida. These events are attended by pastors and lay leaders, many times accompanied by their spouses. These times of meeting church leaders and building the foundations for relationship with them are especially valuable. In these partnerships P-CR can foster resilience in pastors and congregations, a key to sustaining ministry effectiveness.

### Safe Church Ministry

Safe Church Ministry is pleased to report that two new regional Safe Church Teams are being formed. Classes Hudson, Hackensack, and Atlantic Northeast are working together to form a regional team that would serve hundreds of CRC members and many communities on the east coast of the US. Presently the classes are identifying and appointing team members.

And discussions are underway to form a regional team that might include Classes Lakota, Heartland, Lake Superior, and Minnkota. Classis Lake Superior has had a team for several years and it is leading the effort to bring the surrounding classes into 1 regional team. This regional team would serve a large section of the midwest US.

Safe Church Ministry is also striving to produce some of the materials requested by Synod 2010.

### Service Link

ServiceLink tried something new this past quarter responding to a request for additional Service & Learning teams from World Missions staff in the Dominican Republic. Generally teams are put together by individual churches who recruit members from within their own congregation, and so it was felt that recruiting people from across North America might generate an increased interest for future teams. As such the DR Open Team was created and marketed to all Christian Reformed Churches.

This past January, a team consisting of members from seven different churches in Canada, formed the DR Open Team and travelled first to Miami for a day of orientation, and then on to the Dominican Republic. There they assisted in the building of a small community

church in a Haitian batey giving opportunity to learn about missions and ministry as well as becoming more aware of the Christian Reformed Church's presence and work in that country. Evenings were set aside for discussion, devotions and prayer – praying for each other, the project and those they were meeting through various interactions.

Having worked side by side on God's house with local people, gave opportunity for this group to see a bigger picture and share in a common faith. In reflection at the end of their trip, many commented on having learned much and wishing to be stronger supporters of World Missions in the Dominican Republic.

### **Sustaining Congregational Excellence**

Behind the scenes in all agencies and ministries are a group of people making decisions and giving guidance to the ministry work. While most wouldn't consider meetings exciting events, they really can be. Recently the SCE Implementation Team met for a face-to-face meeting (done only twice a year) in Grand Rapids. The agenda was very full and much was accomplished. Eleven Technology & Equipment (TE) grants and 12 Health & Renewal (HR) grants were awarded. This brings the total number of TE grants awarded to 349 and HR grants awarded to 124. (The first grants were awarded in July 2007.)

A report was given on the SCE Learning Events held in Ontario and British Columbia. To date 25 events have been held with 251 churches attending. The events are opportunities for church leaders to learn, share best practices, be encouraged and refreshed, and hear about SCE programming.

A lively discussion was held on coaching in the CRC and how SCE coaching fits into that. SCE currently has two coaching grants—*Coaching for Churches* and *Coaching for Pastors*. To date, twenty seven churches have been working with SCE coaches.

A fair amount of time was spent in strategic planning for the next five years. The team identified what changes are needed to current programming, where the gaps exist, fresh ideas for new programming, and explored where SCE is headed.

The team consists of 11 members who are passionate about healthy congregations.

### **Sustaining Pastoral Excellence**

All churches, at some point in their history, have gone through the process of searching for a pastor. It can seem like an overwhelming task and leave committee members scrambling for assistance. The folks involved have a very important task and doing it "right" benefits all involved. Up to this point, there hasn't been a publication that specifically addresses the work of search committees. Increasingly requests are being made of the denomination to help committees do it "right".

In response, SPE will be publishing a tool that will do just that. The staff of Pastor-Church Relations is doing the research for, and the writing of, the tool which will be available to churches in early 2012. It will offer practical, gleaned wisdom for the entire process—beginning with

the current pastor leaving and determining who the congregation is to protocols for candidates visiting the church and the letter of call.

The tool will include topics such as getting the right people on the committee, where the candidate's spouse/family fit in when he/she visits the church, and the importance of good etiquette and communication.

As with SPE's existing tools (Toward Effective Pastoral Mentoring, Effective Leadership in the Church, Closing Well—Continuing Strong, Marriage and Ministry, and Evaluation Essentials for Congregational Leaders), a free copy will be sent to all pastors and clerks of council. Additional copies will be available, at no cost, from Faith Alive. (1-800-333-8300)

### **CRWRC**

In January, CRWRC reached the six-month mark in a response to floods in Pakistan caused by torrential rains in July 2010. Two thousand people were killed, 650,000 homes were destroyed, and 20 million Pakistanis were displaced.

CRWRC's response to the worst flooding in 80 years, funded by \$6.1 million in disaster funding, entered Phase 3 in the second quarter of the ministry year. Working through the Interfaith League Against Poverty, CRWRC provided emergency food aid to 14,000 Christian and Muslim families in the northwestern and Punjab provinces, and distributed non-food items such as tents, hygiene kits, and cooking supplies.

CRWRC also provided clean drinking water, installed water purification systems, and distributed storage containers and Life Straws. A mobile clinic is providing medical support and trauma counseling. As winter approached, nearly 60,000 mattresses, coats, blankets, and wraps were distributed, along with heating fuel.

In Phase 3, CRWRC continues to address access to water, such as sanitation and hygiene concerns, as well as ongoing shelter and counseling needs. Current programming also includes training in disaster risk reduction and animal husbandry, which accompanies distributions of livestock to help people restart their livelihoods. These interventions also include ongoing efforts at peace-building between Christians and Muslims in Pakistan.

During a visit early this year, Wayne DeJong, CRWRC director for disaster response, said that "CRWRC's presence in Pakistan is a testimony to the Christian faith as we demonstrate the Gospel by sharing the mercy and peace of Jesus Christ to all people in need."

### **Calvin College**

For I know the plans I have for you...plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11).

This text is etched on a huge rock placed in the West Lobby of the newly renovated Covenant Fine Arts Center (CFAC) as a gift to the campus and community from the major donor of the renovation project.

The CFAC reflects God's covenant by inviting community. The October 20-23, 2010 dedication weekend modeled covenant with multiple events: a dedication worship service on Wednesday and Sunday evening LOFT worship (auditorium); a "Flight of Words" (new recital hall) with English Department guest, Walter Wangerin; the Calvin Music Festival featuring ensembles and soloists (auditorium, recital hall, new Center Art Gallery, numerous classrooms and studios); the Center Art Gallery Opening Exhibition and lecture (gallery and recital hall). All events included receptions in the West Lobby and hour-long guided tours of the facility.

The CFAC has served in only five months as the site of sell-out evenings of Handel's Messiah, the January Series, concerts, travelogues, films, lectures, the annual Symposium on Worship, a campus Regathering service, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion of the Calvin Capella, a documentary film premiere, the Grand Rapids Bach Festival, the Artist Series, and much more.

We pray that you may join us in the future as we share this tremendous gift of God's covenant plan – a blessing for Calvin and for the generations of students to come – our ministry since 1876.

### **Calvin Theological Seminary**

Calvin Theological Seminary was able to offer some intriguing courses and experiences to students in the January Term this year. First year students stayed in Michigan for a "Pastoral Identity" course that included an overnight retreat by frozen Lake Michigan. They learned about themselves and lived into their future as pastors, led by Prof. Ron Nydam and Pastor Ruth Boven. Other students lived into ministry possibilities by traveling to the San Francisco Bay area for a course with church planter Kevin Adams in "Gospel Preaching." Prof. Mary Vanden Berg accompanied the group as a fellow learner. They were immersed in various urban contexts and challenged to consider how to reach people there with the gospel. Yet another group traveled to Nicaragua with Prof. Mariano Avila to visit ministry sites and experience the church's outreach in that country through a course titled "Seeds and Models of Shalom."

These unique courses show CTS's increased efforts to connect students with ministry opportunities early on as they discern their own path into ministry and begin to discern the contexts of ministry that will be most fitting for them. Of course, CTS also offered more traditional courses in the J-Term right at the seminary—studies in the New Testament parables and the Sermon on the Mount with Profs. Deppe and Van Reken, immersion in Bavinck's theology with John Bolt, review of Greek and Hebrew languages with Profs. Bosma, Weima, and Williams; and reflections on the history of missions with Missionary-in-Residence Paul Bergsma.

### **Urban Aboriginal Ministries**

The Urban Aboriginal Ministries located in Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg continue to offer culturally appropriate ministries for those living in lower-income areas of the three cities.

With the addition of staff person Steve van de Hoef in Burlington, more connections are being made between various classes, churches and UAMs. For instance the Blanket Exercise, which helps those who are not of Aboriginal descent understand some of the challenges and effects of colonization in a graphic and participatory manner, is being offered to churches and classes.

Plans for a cross-Canada showing of an art exhibition, reforming Relationships, which features the work of artist Ovid Bighetty as commissioned by the Indian Metis Christian Fellowship are underway.

Leadership development of Aboriginal Christians is a critical part of the ministries and so Indian Family Centre in Winnipeg has partnered with the Prairie Leadership Development Network to train and encourage Aboriginal leaders.

Edmonton Native Healing Centre continues to increase the number of opportunities for spiritual growth in the lives of their participants by offering ceremonies such as Standing Stones. These ceremonies are designed to help people express their faith in God in a manner that is culturally appropriate.

Thank you for your continued support of these ministries.

### **Back to God Ministries International**

Faithful support from churches and individuals enables Back to God Ministries International to engage in evangelism and discipleship worldwide through media missions. Over the past few months God has blessed us to make an impact on people's lives.

- Thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the "Help Haiti" fund, BTGMI ministry staff in Haiti hired additional local staff to do pastoral counseling and discipleship among those still hurting following the January 2010 earthquake. Volunteers from Fremont, MI helped build a new recording studio in Port-au-Prince, from which Haitian staff can record translations of our French broadcasts in Creole, the language most commonly used by Haitians.
- In partnership with the Indonesian Christian Church we have established 142 listener community groups throughout Indonesia. Each group includes anywhere from 50-150 people, many of whom are former Muslims who have embraced the Christian faith and seek ongoing discipleship and Christian fellowship. Twenty local leaders are receiving training to establish an additional 20-25 of these groups in other places of need.
- A new blog, launched in January 2011, on a popular secular website inside China received more than 1000 visits within the first two weeks. This opens new doors for seekers from mainland China to engage in conversation about current cultural issues while connecting them to biblical answers through our other media resources.
- A research firm in Brazil reported that each Saturday an average of 2,000,000 people watch

our Portuguese television program, *Truth and Life*. Praise God for this Gospel impact!

### Home Missions

The biggest ministry highlight of the last quarter was the appointment of a new director for Christian Reformed Home Missions!

Rev. Moses Chung will be Home Missions' next director, starting on May 1. Chung has been described as a bridge, not simply among ethnic cultures, but cultures of generation, liturgy, theology, and between genders. "People who know me say that one thing I have is a deep, passionate love—love for people, the church, and God," says Chung. "I rejoice in what God is doing in North America and the world today. I am convinced that Home Missions, with its long history of being a 'leading prophetic voice and cutting edge' agency in the CRC, has important contributions to make."

From 2007 until now, Chung has served as an associate pastor at Sooyoungro Presbyterian Church in Busan, Korea, which attracts 30,000 worshippers each Sunday. At Sooyoungro, Chung preached regularly and was an executive administrator of a staff of 200.

As Home Missions' director, Chung eagerly anticipates focusing on the agency's new strategic priorities, which include multiplying new churches and campus ministries, cultivating diverse missional leaders, and helping churches discern their place in God's mission. "We are called to witness Jesus and his power and love by showcasing nothing less than the authentic community of people rooted in unchanging truth," Chung states. "The three priorities rightly put the entire focus of our energy and resources on creating new and helping existing churches and on their leaders as the instruments of God's mission today."

Born in Incheon, South Korea, Chung and his wife Eunae have two children. In his first pastoral role, Chung served as minister of discipleship at First CRC of Bellflower, California from 1999-2003. In 2003, he became associate pastor at New Life Community Church (Reformed Church in America) in Artesia, California, where he served until he was called to Sooyoungro in 2007.

For more information, please visit [www.crhm.org](http://www.crhm.org).

### World Missions

Transformation doesn't happen overnight. It takes time, patience, and a willingness to invest in people to help change come about. Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) and its ministry partners are excited about the seeds of transformation they see taking root in the world.

In Merida, Mexico, CRWM missionaries John and Shirley Wind are guiding law enforcement, military, government, education, and business leaders through training materials on character-based, principled leadership. People with no ties to Christianity are being drawn to the training's scriptural truths, and wanting to know more about the God behind them. Transformational seeds are being scattered.

In Abuja, Nigeria, a group of leaders meets together every Tuesday night to pray and discuss how faith

impacts actions. Recently one Christian lawmaker said, "I want you to know that these Tuesday evenings inform my activity in the House, my conversations in the House, and my vote in the House. There isn't a week that goes by that I do not remember how God spoke on Tuesday."

Transformational seeds are being watered.

In West Saitama, Japan, Sakado Reformed Church in Japan is leading a second church-planting project, this time in Niigata. Niigata is one of the largest cities in the region; yet, most of its population does not know Christ. Now Sakado, once a church plant itself, is praying God will use the church to bring more people to Him.

Transformational seeds are bearing new life.

God's Spirit is opening hearts around the world, preparing lives and communities to be transformed by His grace.

### Dynamic Youth Ministries

**Youth Unlimited:** The past few months have been exciting at Youth Unlimited (YU). In January we held our first Youth Worker Soul Care Retreat for the year and since have held four additional ones. These retreats have been a blessing to nearly 200 volunteer and paid youth workers as evidenced by the experience of this youth worker, "*I value these youth worker retreats greatly as I don't always feel like I have a strong support network through my church. I often feel like the church just leaves me to 'do my thing' so having support and being able to bounce ideas off others was fantastic.*"

Youth Unlimited continues to prepare for a spring and summer full of events that will minister to, equip, encourage and inspire youth to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and live a life that reflects that relationship. The Where U At? Urban Youth Conference is in its sixth year and has grown in attendance every year. We expect the same again this spring and eagerly anticipate the testimonies of renewed hope, healing and decisions for Christ! The YU SERVE mission program has 31 churches equipped and prepared to use over 1,600 students to be the hands and feet of Jesus this summer...awesome! The new YU large youth event *Live It!* is ready to embrace over 1,000 students this summer in Marion, Indiana. Through this event students will see how their gifts and passions can be used to reflect Christ's love wherever they are. Look out Marion, Indiana - Christ's army of youth is being equipped and mobilized to love on you this summer!

**GEMS Girls' Clubs:** Last quarter brought continued work on *GEMS Girls' Clubs International* — our new effort to reach women and girls in developing countries around the world. Downloadable curriculum plus training videos and other resources will be available through a new website separate from our existing North American site.

Our focused efforts to help girls become activists for Christ are bearing fruit as stories of GEMS girls involved in making a difference in their communities and around the world continue.

Plans continue to go forward for the first work team of 16 to go to Zambia, Africa in June of 2011. This

bi-national team will help in the construction of the Esther School.

**Calvinist Cadet Corps:** The annual board of directors met in early January and faced a number of issues, only three of which really challenged our status quo. Those three were: (1) Allow a new Cadet Hymn, (2) Sell merchandise to non-members, and (3) Offer uniform options. The first one was amended, the second passed, and the third was defeated.

The new song will not replace the official Cadet Hymn, "Living for Jesus," which remains the official Cadet Hymn. However, we will publish the new song's sheet music and make the MP3 music available on our Website, alerting clubs that it's there. The new song is an updated version of "Living for Jesus." The wording has replaced the old King James English with modern (you and your for thou and thy, etc.). And the music is peppier and more singable for today's youth.

### **Partners Worldwide**

As a strong global network of Christian businesspeople, Partners Worldwide is empowering thousands of business owners and entrepreneurs to fulfill God's call to business.

From February 16-18, 2011, Partners Worldwide co-hosted three business conferences based in Managua, Nicaragua; Manila, Philippines; and Monrovia, Liberia for business professionals to network and learn, utilizing business as a sustainable tool to overcome poverty.

Christian businesspeople in the Philippines are thirsty to utilize business as ministry. At the conference, over 1,800 attendees tackled concepts like social entrepreneurship and business as mission, connecting business solutions as a tool to address social challenges in local communities.

In Nicaragua, 280 people from throughout Latin America attended the conference, "focusing on relationships and understanding how their business is a long-term way to help our countries," said Roberto Espinoza, leader of the Partners Worldwide business affiliate in Nicaragua. "Through business, we're reaching out together, and have been called by Christ to create places for people to work."

Business professionals from Mozambique, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, and the U.S. attended the conference held in Monrovia where over 300 Liberians also attended. Following a session led by Ghanaians in the agricultural industry, one Liberian raised the question, "Can we partner with you to sell your juice, your mushrooms and distribute locally your products?" The response was shared by Africans and North Americans throughout the conference and following: "We'd be glad to partner with you, but instead prefer to teach you how to process this here in Liberia."

Instead of feeding a man a fish for a day, through business, the global network of Partners Worldwide teaches a man to fish. He and his employees, their families, and communities then eat for a lifetime. Thank you for partnering in this ministry of Partners Worldwide.