



Lux Mundi

37:4 December 2018

Jesus said: "I am the light of the world." John 8:12

In this Issue

Coordinating Committee Press Release
Mission Conferences reports
More overviews of various broadest assemblies
Mission in India, Africa, and Haiti
URCNA Marriage Affirmation

Magazine published by the
International Conference of
Reformed Churches



BLESSINGS IN THE NEW YEAR

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Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:16-20 ESV)

No New Year's resolution should be more important than faithfulness to the calling of Christ. His command to His disciples summarizes it all: Go out and make people His disciples.

God has always desired intimate fellowship with people. Even after they had abandoned Him with the Fall into Sin. He promised Abraham: In him would all the nations of the earth be blessed. He chose a people to reach out to the world. When Israel failed, there was a remnant. God so loved the world that in the end He sent His only-begotten Son so that those who believe in Him, could have eternal life.

Here, at the mountain, Christ summarized what He had taught His disciples. They have to go out to all nations ... to make disciples of the nations.

Nothing has changed. Being a church is not a social club or a matter of entertainment. To make disciples continues to

be the primary calling of the church, and that of every believer.

First, to go out, to reach out. This could be at work or school. It is wherever people become your neighbour. Begin with a invitational expression on your face. But also: talk. Through your example testify of God's saving, redeeming grace.

Second, your aim is that people also come to faith in Christ. That those God has chosen, are baptized to confirm the renewal in their heart.

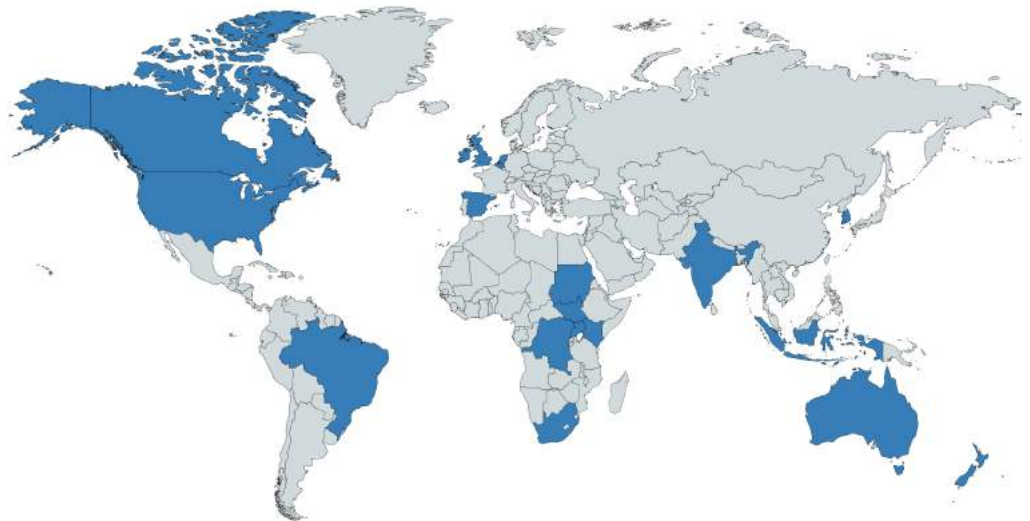
And third, to instruct them further, as they long for fellowship with God, to observe all that God has commanded in His Word.

To be a disciple means to make disciples. We can't do it ourselves. But Christ is with us all every day, all our days...

From *Dagstukkies*, a devotional published by the Reformed Church in South Africa on its website. Used with permission.



The logo combines the ICRC logo with the Lux Mundi monogram, an early Christian symbol combining the initials of Jesus Christ (in Greek I and X), referring to Him as the Light of the World (Lux Mundi).



Front cover picture: An unusually swollen Gooralong Brook in Western Australia, August 2018. Photo: K. Janssen.

CONTENTS

02 Devotional - Blessings in the New Year

04 Editorial - Time's Passage

News and Information

05 ICRC Coordinating Committee - Press Release

06 ARPC - General Assembly 2018

07 RPCNA - General Assembly 2018

09 ICRC World Missions Consultation

11 CanRC - 2018 CRMA Conference

Mission

12 RPCNEI - South Tripura 2000-2018

14 CanRC & RCQ - From Quebec to Africa

16 OPC - Haiti

Statements

18 URCNA - Statement on Marriage

Book Reviews

20 Nancy R. Pearcey, *Total Truth*

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THE PASSAGE OF TIME

“...let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!...”

The end of a calendar year tends to bring with it reflection on the passage of time. As we reflect, many do so with the words of Scripture: *So teach us to number our days*. This is a line from Psalm 90, a psalm many will read or sing on New Year's Eve.

It is a psalm written by Moses. He was the man who at times must have felt more like a funeral director than the leader of the people of life. For the people frequently rebelled against the LORD. Thus they fell in the wilderness.

We are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. (Psalm 90:7-9).

Would this describe us too?

Life is a road that often comes across impassable hindrances. Like the swollen brook on the front cover of this *Lux Mundi*. We may come across things that will hold up what we in our wisdom would consider progress. While not always directly a judgment from God for a sin committed, the hindrances we experience in life do make us stop and think. How does one proceed?

When it comes to that road and swollen brook, one should wait until the water subsides. Obviously the waterway is passable at some moment. If it was not passable, there would be no road. One has to be wise in the actions one undertakes.

One has to be wise. That's the point Psalm 90 makes. *So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom*. In life – also church life – this means seeking to understand God's will and way. Seizing opportunities as the Lord grants them to expand His Kingdom and never straying from His ways.

In this edition of *Lux Mundi* we continue with the series of articles on broadest assemblies that took place in the course of this year. There are also reports on two missions conferences: the World Missions Consultation and the annual Canadian Reformed Mission Association conference. Our focus on mission continues with three reports on projects in India, Africa, and Haiti. The expansion of Christ's Kingdom continues.

First, though, there's a Press Release from the Coordinating Committee of the ICRC. This is the committee where all the operations of the ICRC between conferences kind of “come together”. Committees formally apprise each other of their activities, reports are received from the corresponding secretary and the treasurer, and planning happens with respect to the operations of the ICRC, especially the next conference.

As a new year comes upon us, we continue to pray with the words of Psalm 90: *let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!*

So go with God and may God be with you.



Immanuel United Reformed Church in Jordan Station, location of the 2017 ICRC. Photo: L. den Butter

ICRC COORDINATING COMMITTEE - PRESS RELEASE

Each year, usually in October or November, the Coordinating Committee of the International Conference of Reformed Churches meets with a view to ICRC business. Members of this committee are the members of the Executive Committee, the coordinator, and the conveners of the operating and facilitating committees.

The committee met via conference call for several hours beginning at 4:00pm, GMT on October 23. Grateful use was made of technology for this to connect the members of the meeting from every continent except Antarctica.

After calling the meeting to order, chairman Rev. B. Hoyt invited moderator Rev. Dr. D. Moes to open the meeting in a Christian manner. He read John 5:8b-17 and spoke a few words on how Christ is working towards bringing about the eternal Sabbath rest for God's people. In the opening prayer the health concerns of M. Vanwoudenberg, the ICRC webmaster, were remembered.

The Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Dr. J. Visscher, presented his annual report. Preparations are well underway for the next ICRC, to be in 2021, to be in India. The information on member churches gathered during the 2017 ICRC will be made available for publication on the website.

The Treasurer, Mr. K. Lodder, presented various reports. The ICRC is in a good financial position. Some discussion took place on the costs of having an ICRC in India. Various matters will be looked into.

The Regional Conferences Committee convener, Rev. J. Sawtelle, reported that there had been a successful conference in Europe in May, 2018.

The Publications Committee convener, Rev. Dr. K. Janssen, reported that Lux Mundi was now being published regularly under ICRC supervision. Some discussion took place on what kinds of materials could be published on the website.

The Missions Committee convener, Mr. M. Bube, reported that a Consultation had taken place in 2018, with ICRC and further NAPARC members. A Press Release of this consultation will be published in Lux Mundi.

The Theological Education Committee convener, Rev. Dr. D. Breed, reported that a conference call meeting had taken place, and preparations were being made for a face-to-face meeting in the coming year, probably in the USA. The TEC was asked to propose some topics and speakers for the 2021

ICRC.

The Diaconal Committee convener, Rev. D. van Garderen, reported that the committee meets regularly via conference call. A consultation is being planned for July 2019, probably to take place in The Netherlands.

The chairman thanked each individual and committee for the work that had been done.


Discussion took place on the role of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands in the ICRC, now that their membership has been suspended. It was noted that the RCN continues to

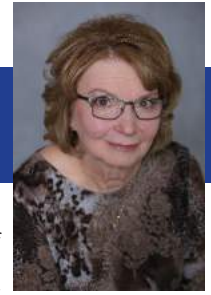


*ICRC Executive 2017-2021. From left to right: Dr. Peter Naylor (recording secretary), Dr. Matthew Ebenezer (vice-chairman), Dr. Dick Moes (chairman), Dr. James Visscher (corresponding secretary)
Photo: L. den Butter*

be involved. The Corresponding Secretary was mandated to send a letter to the RCN general synod via their committee for interchurch relations (BBK), urging the RCN to heed the voices of sister churches and rescind the decision to open the offices to women.

Some preliminary planning took place with respect to the 2021 ICRC. The member churches in India are suggesting the conference take place in Goa and are in the process of ensuring proper registration of the conference. Some discussion also took place on who to invite to the ICRC, and who is seeking to become a member of the ICRC.

The vice moderator, Rev. Dr. M. Ebenezer, led in closing prayer, giving thanks to the Lord for the ongoing work of the ICRC and seeking His blessing over future activities. 



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ARPC 2018 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 214th General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP) met from June 5-7, 2018, at Bonclarken Conference Center in Flat Rock, NC. Several motions adopted by the General Synod related to a variety of issues.

New Presbytery

General Synod took the historic step of establishing a new Presbytery: Eastern North Carolina Presbytery. The area of the existing First Presbytery was divided to allow for the new Presbytery, which includes Stokes, Forsyth, Davidson, Montgomery, Richmond and all NC counties east of them. Maupin Avenue RPC in Salisbury, NC was permitted to be included in the new presbytery, at its request and due to its close proximity to the boundary line. This proposed division had clearly been prepared well as it generated no discussion. The new presbytery transition is to be effective January 1, 2019.

Sexuality and Marriage

A special committee to study if homosexual orientation is morally neutral is to report to Synod 2019.

The Theological and Social Concerns Committee of the General Synod will consider if a civil license "is required for a marriage to be recognized as valid" according to ARP Standards. The Committee will include existing denominational documents as supporting material.

Book of Discipline revision

A draft revision of the Book of Discipline was referred to the Theological and Social Concerns Committee for further revision and refinement.

Songbooks

That Committee on Worship is to prepare a new list of recommended songbooks for use in the ARP congregations.

Denominational Ministry Fund

A statistical report led to a motion, which was approved, regarding churches who have decreased or not contributed to the Denominational Ministry Fund for a least a year. A special committee will study the matter and develop a "best practices" document in the hope of guiding and encouraging congregations to support the denomination's financial needs. This committee may report its findings to the Board of Stewardship.

Erskine Board

While some discussions regarding Erskine College and Seminary in the last decade have proved contentious, a motion regarding the school passed without discussion at this year's Synod. Delegates voted to remove the President of the Alumni Association as an ex-officio member of the Erskine Board of Trustees.

During the course of General Synod, it was reported that the ARP has 17 active chaplains and that 12 new church plants are being developed in seven presbyteries. A Domain Name Study Committee provided guidelines and recommendations to the churches regarding websites. It was recommended that a Special Committee be formed to formulate a new "Directory of Private and Family Worship."

Phillip Malphrus served as Moderator for the 2018 General Synod. Delegates honored Reading Clerk, Charlie Edgar, for 32 years of service and Assistant Clerk, John Cook, for 33



years of service. Prayer was offered for Rev. Andrew Brunson, a former ARP minister who is imprisoned in Turkey. Synod 2019 will be held from June 11-13, concurrently with the RPCNA. Delegates were informed that acapella Psalms will be used during combined worship services.

Women's Ministries

The time frame of the ARPC Synod provided multiple opportunities for women's fellowship. Delores McDonald reported on a breakfast for the wives of church planters, the annual Women's Ministries' Oasis meeting, and a brunch for pastors' wives.

Vicki Marsh, president of the ARP Women's Ministries, opened the breakfast with prayer, and Rebecca Carson, a missionary in Berlin, spoke from Judges 6-8 on the subject of "Mighty Warriors."

At the annual Oasis, a time of fellowship and refreshment for all women observing Synod, Libby Elder spoke about "The Sting of Rejection," encouraging the women to rely on God, who will never reject them. Attendees also played a game of Bible Trivia.

Pastors' wives at the brunch, co-hosted by Kristen Casteel and Melissa Atteberry, broke into small groups and explored questions based on Ephesians 4:1-16. The theme "Too Many Hats?" aimed at helping the women appreciate their


calling, despite its competing demands.

Pre-Synod Conference

A pre-synod conference on June 4 featured Lon Allison, who is the honorary director of the Billy Graham Center of Evangelism at Wheaton College. Allison worked with Graham for 15 years and has written a book about Graham's life.

World Focus

"Come, See, Engage" was the theme of World Focus 2018, a two-day denominational conference held after Synod on June 7-8. The event highlighted ARPC's international missions with ministry booths that demonstrated life in different countries. Breakout sessions allowed adults to learn about leadership and evangelism, while programs and activities occupied children of all ages.

Laura Story, who wrote and recorded the Grammy Award-winning song "Blessings," led attendees in worship and presented her personal testimony. Author Scott Thomas, who is also a ministry trainer, offered meditations on Matthew 9 and Ephesians 6. 

Based on information gleaned from the ARP News website and the July/August 2018 issue of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian magazine.

RPCNA 2018 ASSEMBLY

The 187th Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) met at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, IN, on June 26-27, 2018. The most time-consuming issues for this year's Synod were an appeal and a related complaint.

The appeal came from a retired minister who had been suspended in 2016 on two charges: 1) "believing and accepting a stance on women in the eldership, which is contrary to Query Four of his official vows of ordination and a violation of the moral law as understood in the RPCNA Book of Discipline," and 2) "Not having abandoned his belief and acceptance that women ought to be able to hold the office of elder, [the minister] is charged with having contempt for [the] court in refusing to respect the authority and discipline of the church."

Prior to dealing with the appeal itself, Synod extensively debated procedure. According to the RPWitness.org daily reports by Drew Gordon, "Perhaps the biggest debate was over whether the Presbytery...which is being appealed against, would be permitted to vote on the appeal." Eventually, delegates determined that only the prosecutor, appellant, and his counsel would be excluded from voting.

Appeal

According to Mr. Gordon's report, debate continued through the afternoon and early evening. The first of the appellant's 15 specifications summarized the case's history. The remaining 14 specifications were voted on individually. Only one, dealing with the charge of contempt, was sustained. The court agreed the minister had "willingly

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participated in the regular presbytery meetings since the judicial process began” and “was respectful and kind in all his actions.”

Synod upheld the first charge that the minister's stance on women in office is contrary to his ordination vows and violates the moral law as understood in the denominational Book of Discipline, but Synod reversed the presbytery's decision on the second charge regarding contempt of court. Synod confirmed the presbytery's action of suspending the pastor from ministerial privileges. It additionally appointed a committee to meet with the suspended minister to discuss his paper and report to next year's Synod.

Due to the complexity of the case and the lengthy judicial process, a committee presented a document explaining the rationale behind the decision. Among other things, this statement noted that Synod 2017 had not successfully adjudicated the appeal, which was “a delay of justice for which the Synod has repented, requested forgiveness, and received it from both parties.” That same document described the court proceedings as characterized by “sobriety and prayerfulness” with “respect and love” expressed for the appellant, who was affirmed as a believer and communicant member of the RPCNA.

Complaint

The complaint came from a minister who had been threatened with discipline after submitting a written request for an exception on the doctrine of male-only eldership. He had also co-signed the suspended pastor's study paper. Mr. Gordon wrote, “Both sides agreed that he was not being accused of teaching a contrary position from the RPCNA.”

The minister's complaint accused the presbytery of two errors: 1) stating that he denied the “authority, perspicacity, and sufficiency” of Scripture and 2) abusing the parliamentary and judicial process. Synod deliberated for several hours.

Based on constitutional directives regarding complaints, the presbytery being complained against was not permitted to vote on the matter. Synod denied all points of the complaint,

which means the matter remains under the presbytery's jurisdiction.

Procedure

In a matter related to procedural aspects of the above cases, Synod voted to create a study committee to examine “the issue of recusal in church courts” and report to Synod 2019.

Other business

Synod approved adding a tenth question to ordination and installation vows: “Do you make these promises in the presence of God, in humble reliance upon His grace, as you desire to give your account with joy at the Last Great Day?” This change, which conforms to the questions for baptism and membership vows, must be ratified by the sessions.

A Special Study Committee on Divorce and Desertion presented a report that aimed to define and clarify the term “departing” in a denominational advice paper. This report was recommitted to the study committee for further work.

Synod passed a recommendation from the Study Committee on Tithes and Offerings that “the precise manner of presenting tithes and offerings is not prescribed by the Directory

and therefore is at session discretion.”

A joint proposal from the RP Global Mission Board and the Home Mission Board generated a response from the Japan Presbytery. Both documents were tabled until next Synod to allow for further communication among the three bodies.

Synod passed a recommendation to invite the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC) into a fraternal relationship.

Synod formed a five-member committee to study church membership in relation to “repentant inmates whose sentences involve significant further time.”

Rev. J. Bruce Martin served as Moderator of this year's Synod. Appreciation was expressed to Stated Clerk Jim McFarland for 20 years of service.

The 2019 Synod is scheduled for June 11-14 at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, PA, and will be held concurrently with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Each denomination will present its view of psalmody at a pre-Synod seminar.



WORLD MISSIONS CONSULTATION 2018

Representatives of world mission agencies of ICRC member churches met recently for a consultation on global mission projects. The meeting was held September 18-20, 2018 at the offices of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Willow Grove, PA. Fifteen member-churches of the ICRC were represented.

Participation and Breadth

Organized by the Missions Committee of the ICRC and chaired by Mark Bube, general secretary of the Foreign Missions committee of the OPC, the consultation saw a good representation of member churches from all over the world: 7 from North America, 4 from Africa, 2 from Asia, 1 from Australia, and 1 from Europe. In addition, representatives of three NAPARC churches (North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council) attended the consultation as guests and added significantly to the value of the meeting, among them the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA).

A big part of the consultation was devoted to sharing information about mission projects. Participants were impressed by the breadth and diversity of mission work that

is going on around the globe. Some mission teams work in remote rural areas such as Karamoja, Uganda. Others work in cities in the developing world such as Lae, Papua New Guinea, and Cubulco, Guatemala. Some work in countries that are hostile to the gospel. Still others work in situations that are politically unstable or experiencing civil war, such as South Sudan. During the consultation every member church reported briefly about its mission projects. In each case this was followed by a brief discussion of relevant aspects of the work, and prayer and intercession for the respective church's mission projects.

Missionary care

While each mission project has its unique characteristics, it is striking that many mission fields experience similar kind of challenges. For this reason, the consultation also spent time discussing issues of mutual concern. One such topic was *missionary care*: how to exercise good care (pastoral and otherwise) of missionaries and their families. Several ICRC member churches have expanded their approach in recent years, some even going so far as appointing a special person to offer care to missionary families. It was emphasized that

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care should not just be given when missionary families are *on the field*, but also *pre-field* and *post-field*. An organization that does good work in this regard is Mission Training International (MTI), in Colorado, USA.

Security

A second topic of mutual concern was *security concerns in the use of internet*. Some missionaries work in countries that are hostile to the gospel, and their work should rather remain hidden from the authorities in such countries. This has implications for the way we use the internet. Our supporting constituencies should be reminded to be cautious in what is posted on church websites. For example, it would not be a good idea to post an announcement on a church website that Rev. So-and-so will be speaking on his work in (a country hostile to the gospel) on such and such a date...

Word or Deed? Word and Deed?

A third topic of mutual concern was more theological in nature: *what is the church's mission?* Both word and deed are important in mission work. While there is a focus on gospel proclamation and church planting, educational and medical ministries should not be forgotten. At the same time, missiologists such as J.H. Bavinck and David Hesselgrave have defended “prioritism,” which means that even though all these ministries are important, priority should be given to gospel proclamation and church planting.

More recently, however, there is a trend in the evangelical world to embrace “holism.” It will be important for Reformed churches to keep their priorities straight.


Refugees

The fourth topic was *Ministry to refugees in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa*. The need is huge: there are 68.5 million refugees in the world today. As Christians we ought to have a special empathy for the strangers and the displaced but our church members sometimes find it difficult to show hospitality to refugees (especially if they are Muslims). The needs of refugees were discussed, ranging from physical needs to educational and spiritual needs. Helping refugees is often a complicated endeavor. There may be logical challenges, language barriers, cultural barriers, and trauma to deal with. Bringing the gospel to refugees may be a complex effort as well: they are from different backgrounds and speak different languages. We are still learning what best practices are in this regard.

Diaconal Dependency

The fifth topic was *Dependency issues in meeting diaconal needs*. Aspects that were discussed included the following: definitions of dependency and interdependency, consequences of dependency, factors that contribute to dependency, sustainability, arguments for Western giving, responsibility, three-self paradigm, principles of effective partnership, and pitfalls of partnerships.

Next time

The consultation of world mission agencies of ICRC member churches takes place every three years. The next consultation is slated to be held in September 2021, probably at the same venue. 



2018 CRMA CONFERENCE

On September 8th, 2018, the Canadian Reformed Missions Association (CRMA) held its annual conference at CRTS in Hamilton. Delegates from almost all of the mission boards across Canada were able to attend. It was a day for learning and of getting reacquainted with brothers and sisters with whom we have common cause. The Lord told the church to spread the good news of salvation across the nations of the earth, and all who attended the meetings are in one way or another engaged in that glorious work.



The morning saw two sessions, the first being a presentation by Gilbert Langerak of the Christian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC).

Mr. Langerak spoke on "federal government financial compliance when working overseas." The Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) has rules that we need to be aware of when we fund mission works outside of Canada.

For more information on CCCC please see <https://www.cccc.org/>

The second session featured Dave and Trish Holabeck who spoke about "pre-field, on-field, and post-field care for global mission workers and their families."



How do we prepare the mission workers we send out to live in a different culture? How are we caring for them

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Rev. George van Popta is a minister with the Canadian Reformed Churches.



while they are far away from home working in another land? How do we help them re-integrate into our home society when they return after many years in the field?


It is good to think about these things and learn from people who can really help. Mr. and Mrs. Holabeck work for Mission Training International (MTI). For more information on this organization see <https://www.mti.org/>

This session was ended by a panel discussion with the Holabecks and two recently repatriated missionary couples, Rev. Henry & Rita Versteeg and Rev. Ian & Nadia Wildeboer. They were able to speak about what it was like for them and their children to come back to Canada after years on mission fields. An opportunity was also given to ask the panel questions. All who listened learned important things.

May God bless our missionaries and the boards and congregations that support them. Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:18-19).



After lunch the annual general meeting (AGM) of the CRMA was held. 

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TRIPURA MISSION FIELD 2000-2018

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Tripura is one of the smallest states of India located in the north eastern hilly region of the country. It is bordered to north, west and south by Bangladesh, to the east by Mizoram state and to the northeast by the state of Assam. The state is inhabited by various indigenous people or tribes accounting for a significant portion of the population. The area of the land is 4049 square miles (10486 square kilometers) with a population of 3,671,032 according to 2011 census of India. Hinduism is the major religion, and Muslims constitute the largest minority. There are also small minorities of Christians (4.35%) among the tribal and indigenous people. There are small Buddhist minorities among Chakma and Mogh as well.

Census of Religion in Tripura

Sl No	Religion	Percentage
1	Hindu	83.40%
2	Muslim	8.60%
3	Christians	4.35%
4	Sikh	0.03%
5	Buddhist	3.41%
6	Jain	0.02
7	Other religions	0.04%
8	Not stated	0.14%

Source: Tripura Religion Census 2011

The Reformed Presbyterian Church, North East India entered Tripura in 2000 in response to the invitation of a groups of Christians from North Tripura. Since then, RPCNEI launched her first mission field in Bagbasa (North Tripura) as its mission center, covering three Political Districts; Dalai District, Unakoti District and North Tripura. Initially the main tasks of the missionaries were to gather professing believers, but who doesn't have any formal organization or a church to fellowship with. Within a short span of time churches were organized into a local congregation and new churches were established as well. With these handfuls of Christian communities the mission work was initiated. By December 2017 there were 9 local churches, 267 households and 1058 members. With this the general Synod of 2017 held at Lamka was pleased to organize the said local churches into a new Presbytery in the name of 'DUN Presbytery.' The Synod praise the LORD for what the LORD has done in this land.

1. N.G. Para – Dalai District
2. Kuchuchera – Dalai District
3. Tangbual - Dalai District
4. Duigang - Dalai District
5. Jamtuli – Unakoti District
6. Sorojini - Unakoti District
7. Hamsapara - North Tripura
8. Tongchera – North Tripura
9. Bagbasa – North Tripura

With the formation of the mission field into new Presbytery the Synod of Lamka 2017 decided to open a new mission field in the Southern District of Tripura.

New Mission Field Open-2017 and beyond: Getting Started

With the establishment of a new Presbytery in the North Tripura, RPCNEI decided to adopt the southern part of Tripura as its main mission field was. Rangrang Autonomous District Council (ADC) colony, where few Christians already exist was adopted as the center for operation. Through this center 9 other mission fields were opened with 1 pioneer missionary assigned in each locations. There are other local





helpers who serve as the Soldier of the Cross (literally translated from the local language). These two are the link between missionaries and the local people. To Coordinate the activities of the missionaries and overall management of the mission field 1 Field superintendent is stationed in the Rangang ADC colony. Needless to say that much work

is needed in this initial stage. Housing the missionaries is the most urgent need of the time since houses are not available for rent. By God's grace almost all missionaries have a place (temporary) to live by now, and some houses are under construction. Besides building of houses for the missionaries, church buildings were erected as well wherever possible. Till date 2 concrete building, 3 mud and Tin church buildings were constructed with 2 missionary residence which are under construction. The remaining 5 locations are used as preaching centres. There are 374 believers during the time of writing this report.



The Ministry

Regardless of many inconveniences in the field, the zealous missionaries are not hindered from preaching the gospel. They preach the love of Christ through words and deeds. For the cause of the gospel, they volunteer themselves to clean the houses of the non-believers. They mop their floor, wash their cloth, wash dishes, do some repairing works, and even use carpenter works as an entry point for sharing the love of Christ. We praise the LORD for His blessing by opening the hearts of 21 new believers during this year 2018.

Prayer Requests

1. Pray for the financial and material needs; for construction of church building and houses and volunteers who will go and help in construction work.
2. Pray for the Field Superintendent (Coordinator) Pastor Ditlongir and his wife Sangita and their 10 year old son Meshach.

3. Pray for the ministry of missionaries: Vasty Ramhlimpui, Tharlawnmthang, Lalchawnghmun, Zairemmaw; and soldier of the cross: Nogendro Uchoi, John Rieng, Rangkhuirai Rieng, Sanjit Rieng, Biakzuala Bru, and Propoingno Rieng. ✱



FROM QUEBEC TO FRENCH SPEAKING AFRICA

For many years now, Rev. Paulin Bédard has been working quietly on producing Reformed resources for French speaking part of the world. A minister of Église chrétienne réformée de Beauce, St. Georges, Quebec, Rev. Bédard's work is supported by the Canadian Reformed Church of Owen Sound.

Along with his wife Claire, Pastor Bédard has been creating French resources since 1998. This includes translating material for catechism, Bible studies, training of office bearers, as well as pre-confession and pre-marital courses – all of which has been made available to the entire ERQ federation and churches in other French-speaking countries. Although their home church has also another pastor, Rev. Mario Veilleux, Rev. Bédard preaches monthly and leads some Bible studies.

Our Quebec friends' passion to learn and live for their God, their deliberate combat with the flesh and world, and their excitement to share the Gospel is inspiring. We can only praise God for the work of gathering his people through his Spirit and Word from all the ends of our country and globe! May we stand in awe of his powerful Gospel that converts souls and transforms lives.

One of the important works to come out of Rev. Bédard's efforts is Ressources Chrétiennes (www.ressourceschretiennes.com), a French online library overseen by Rev. Bédard. The preparatory work for this service was begun in 2014 and presently there are about 3,500 articles on the website. Ressources Chrétiennes is a website that can provide users with information on a wide variety of biblical, confessional, doctrinal, pastoral, liturgical, and ethical topics. It provides courses and sermons, and links to helpful and trustworthy information on the Internet. Rev. Bédard also brings out a newsletter every month to introduce some of the new material available on the website.

For this initiative Pastor Bédard cooperates with the Reformational Study Centre in Pretoria (RSC, www.refstudycentre.com), a project of the Free Reformed Churches in

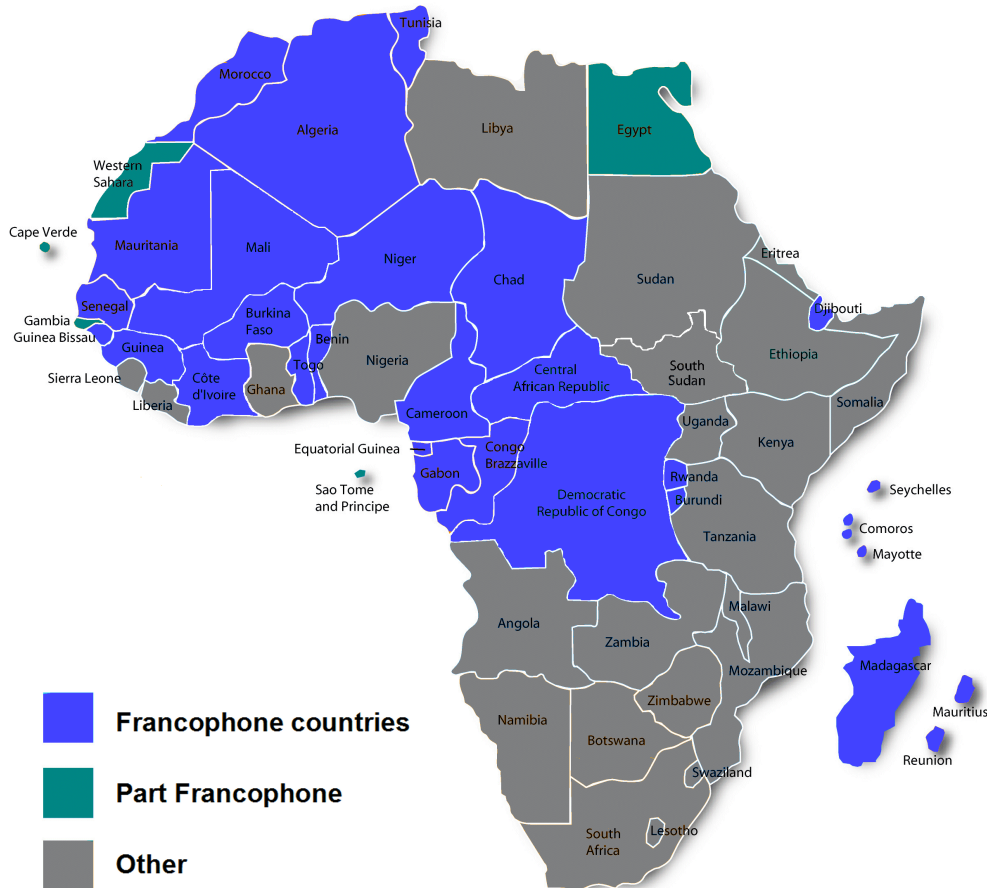
South Africa headed up by the Rev. Jopie van der Linden. The RSC has amassed, organized, and catalogued a massive physical and online library of thousands of books, articles, sermons, and audio files meant to serve especially the African and Asian pastors, teachers, and elders who have very little resources, often little more than the ability to connect their smart phones to the Internet. Via this service African and Asian pastors, indeed, anyone in the world, can access solid commentaries and articles to help them in their sermon development. Rev. Bédard's Ressources Chrétiennes is the French language counterpart to what the RSC is doing in English. The RSC provides technical know-how, manpower, and infrastructure for Ressources Chrétiennes. All praise to God for the harnessing of the power of the Internet for the cause and the promotion of the gospel of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ!

A very special occasion this year for Rev. Bédard was his visit to Cameroon. There he experienced firsthand what the website means for many Christians in French speaking Africa. There are about 300 million French speakers (first and second language) in the world, half of whom are spread across twenty-four Francophone countries in Africa and many are beginning to use Ressources Chrétiennes.



The Bedard Family

Cameroon - Conference Participants



French speaking countries in Africa

MOVING TOWARD A PRESBYTERY IN HAITI

During his third missionary journey, the Apostle Paul, after visiting several cities and churches, stopped at Miletus in Greece and asked the Ephesian elders to meet him. When they came, he prayed with them, encouraged them, and warned them against false teachers who would come after his departure and who would not spare the flock. He reminded them that, during his ministry among them, he had declared the whole counsel of God to them. The Holy Spirit had made these men overseers to care for the church of God, which Jesus Christ had bought with his own blood. Therefore, they had tremendous work to accomplish in feeding the flock with sound teaching and in remaining alert to guard the church against twisted teaching.

The Work of the Elders

The work of the elders is still essential to the health of the church today and to the overall good of the people of God.

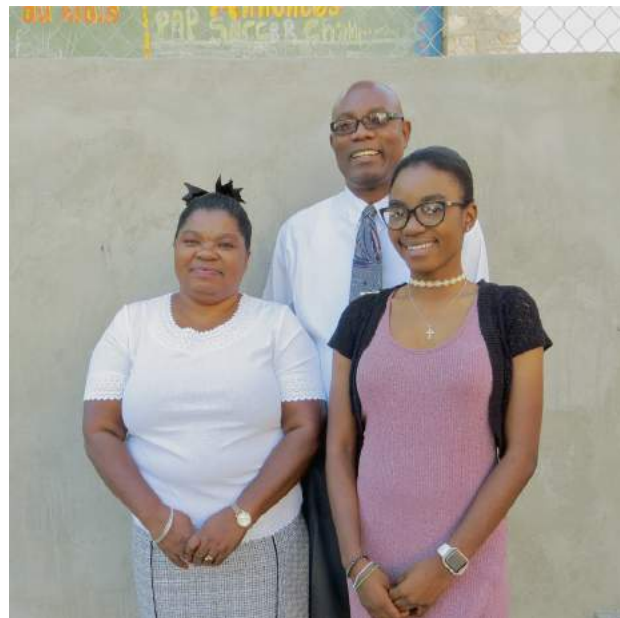


Men working on the Book of Church Order for the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Haiti

Whenever it is possible and when the time is appropriate, the local church has an obligation to train, elect, and appoint elders as overseers. It is similarly part of the missionary's prayer, work, and hope that faithful indigenous churches be planted and self-governed with ordained elders. Furthermore, it is the elders' duty to unite in sessions and presbyteries to serve the church under the great Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Author: Octavius Delfils

Rev. Delfils, a missionary of the Calvary Presbytery of the PCA, is an associate missionary of the OPC, laboring with the OPC Haiti Mission and serving as pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Delmas, a church plant in Port-au-Prince.



Octavius and Marie Delfils with their daughter, Farah

This goal of having a self-governing and self-propagating church has been a major focus of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Haiti. We have never envisioned remaining as individual, independent churches. Rather, since the beginning, we have sought to form a presbytery and an indigenous denomination that is biblically oriented and solidly Reformed. We have been praying for this since the beginning of the church-planting endeavors on La Gonâve and in Port-au-Prince and have worked to join the efforts of all of the Reformed missionaries.

After the devastating earthquake in January 2010, the initiative to develop a presbytery in Haiti faltered. However, we praise the Lord that the Reformed churches in Haiti are gathering again to start a presbytery and a project for a Book of Church Order.

Presbytery Planning Meeting

During the last two years, four ordained Reformed pastors and missionaries working in three different ministries in Port-au-Prince, on the island of La Gonâve, and in Gonaïves, have met several times. We have shared information about the churches and set goals toward the formation of a presbytery in Haiti. The Lord has blessed our planning. In December 2017, we had our first meeting in Port-au-Prince with about thirty men from all the Presbyterian and



March 2018 meeting in Port-au-Prince of pastors, elders, deacons, and others

Reformed churches of these three different ministries.

It was the first time the pastors, elders, deacons, and candidates for these offices met together for fellowship and training. The teacher was Arie van Eyk, pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Greensboro, North Carolina, who has trained men in the church in Port-au-Prince since its beginning and is a faithful supporter of the church in Haiti. He taught the doctrine of the church and laid down for the group the biblical foundation for Presbyterian church government.

Four other meetings were scheduled for training, discussions, and fellowship with these men in 2018. The Lord again blessed our plans. The first session of the year was held on March 22–23 in Port-au-Prince as a follow-up to the December meeting. This time, the same churches from the three different Reformed ministries laboring in Haiti sent about forty men to gather for two days to continue to consider the idea of forming a presbytery in Haiti. We had a profitable time in worship and

discussion of church polity.

A Book of Church Order for Haiti

We also began to address the need for a Book of Church Order for the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Haiti. We are mainly adapting the *Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church of Uganda*. It was translated into French for the understanding of the French-speaking brothers in Haiti. What a privilege that the church in Haiti and the church in Uganda—so far apart in distance—can work together in Christ to use each other's resources for the work of the kingdom!

As we work through the translated text, it takes time to make sure that everyone agrees on the terms used and that they make sense to the church in Haiti and the culture around us. We are moving slowly in adapting the Book of Church Order in order to make it easily understood.

We hope to continue with two or three other meetings in the same format of working and worshiping together. The next meeting is scheduled for later this summer. We will meet in Gonaïves, a little more than two hours north of Port-au-Prince. In each session, we are blessed to have representatives from the Committee on Foreign Missions of the OPC as well as from the mission agencies and sending

presbyteries of the other Reformed ministries and churches.

We are praying that the Lord will allow us to complete the Book of Church Order project this year and move closer to the formation of a new presbytery in the beginning of 2019. We are so grateful to the Lord that we are getting close to the goal that we have cherished for a long time. We appreciate your prayers for these important upcoming events and for this key moment in the history of the church in Haiti. ✱

This article first appeared in New Horizons, August–September 2018, and is published with permission.



The three areas of ministry in Haiti: the small city of Gonaïves, the capital city of Port-Au-Prince, and the island of La Gonâve

AFFIRMATIONS REGARDING MARRIAGE UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA (2018)

1. The holy bond of marriage was instituted by God at the very beginning of history.

(Solemnization of Marriage (Form 1); Genesis 2:18)

2. Since husbands and wives are united by the Lord's hand, nothing should separate them in this life.

(Genesis 2:21-24; Matthew 19:6; Solemnization of Marriage (Form 1))

3. Since the Lord forbids immorality, "each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband."

(Solemnization of Marriage (Form 1); 1 Corinthians 7:2, 8-9)

4. God calls us to live "decent and chaste lives within or outside the holy state of marriage."

(Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108; Exodus 20:14; Ephesians 5:3-5)

5. Scripture teaches that marriage is the only acceptable context for sexual union.

(Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 7:1-2; Hebrews 13:4)

6. One purpose of marriage is that "husband and wife shall live together in sincere love and holiness, helping each other faithfully in all things."

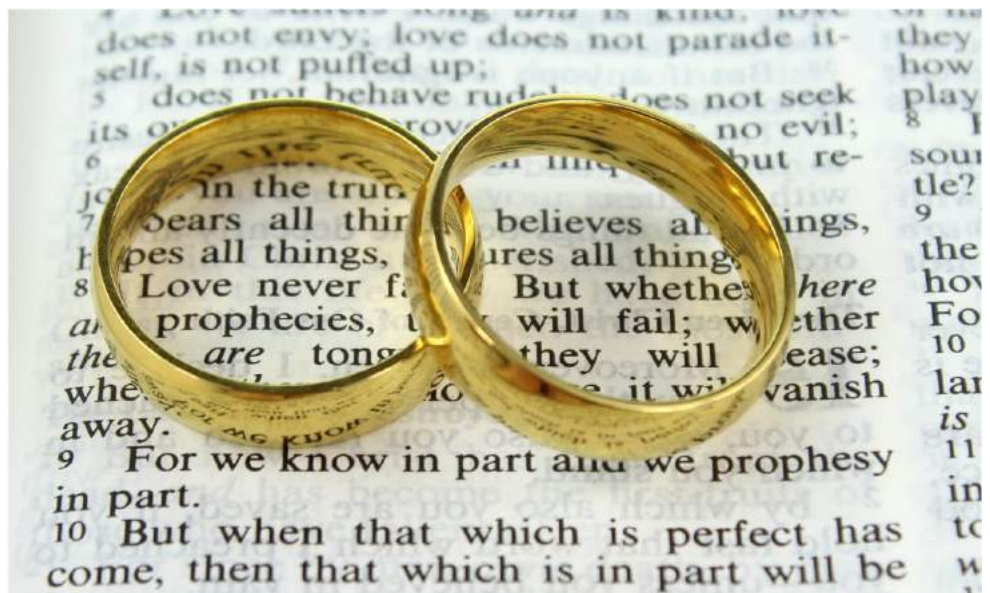
(Solemnization of Marriage (Form 1); Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:21-25)

7. Another purpose of marriage is procreation, that "by marriage the human race is to be continued and increased."

(Solemnization of Marriage (Form 1); Genesis 1:28)

8. A third purpose of marriage is that "by marriage the advancement of the kingdom of God is to be promoted. This purpose calls for loving devotion to each other and a common responsibility for the nurturing of children in the true knowledge and fear of the Lord, which the Lord may give them as his heritage and as parties to his covenant."

(Solemnization of Marriage (Form 1); Genesis 1:28; Psalm 127:3; Ephesians 5:22-6:4; Malachi 2:15-16)



AFFIRMATIONS REGARDING MARRIAGE UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA (2018)

9. "Marriage, then, is a divine ordinance intended to be a source of happiness, an institution of the highest significance to the human race, and a symbol of the union of Christ and his church." Our Lord Jesus declared that the one- flesh union of one man and one woman in marriage is rooted in creation, and the apostle Paul taught that it refers to the mystery of the gospel.

(Solemnization of Marriage (Form 1); Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 6:16-17; Ephesians 5:25-32)

10. Scripture teaches that marriage is designed to be a lifelong, monogamous covenantal union between one man and one woman.

(Church Order of the URCNA, Seventh Edition, Article 48; Proverbs 2:17; Mark 10:6-9; Ephesians 5:22-33)

11. Consistories shall instruct and admonish those under their spiritual care who are considering marriage to marry in the Lord.

(Church Order of the URCNA, Seventh Edition, Article 48; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14)

12. Christian marriages shall be solemnized with appropriate admonitions, promises, and prayers, under the regulation of the Consistory, with the use of the appropriate liturgical form.

(Church Order of the URCNA, Seventh Edition, Article 48; 1 Corinthians 14:40)

13. Ministers shall not solemnize marriages that conflict with the Word of God.

(Church Order of the URCNA, Seventh Edition, Article 48)

14. Members of Christ's precious church must remain faithful to him and his Word above all other authorities regarding God's design for marriage.

(Acts 5:29)

15. Civil magistrates exceed their God-given authority when they attempt to bind a Christian's conscience contrary to these affirmations.

(Acts 5:29; Romans 13:3-4; Belgic Confession Article 36)

16. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again from the dead so that all who believe in him might live. All deviations from the biblical view of marriage are sins from which God mercifully calls men and women to repent. By God's grace and with faith in Christ, sinners can repent, be forgiven, and be renewed to a new life of obedience.

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:1-14)

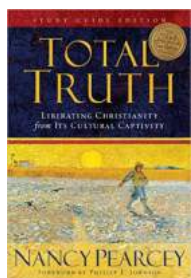


Full text with endnotes can be accessed at https://www.urchna.org/1651/file_retrieve/63166

Author: Rev. Dr. Cornelis VanDam

*Dr. VanDam is emeritus professor of Old Testament
of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary*

Nancy R. Pearcey, *Total Truth*



Is our Christian faith to be kept locked up in church and in the privacy of our homes? Our present culture vehemently and loudly declares yes! Keep your religion out of the science lab, out of the business world, out of politics, out of schools. It has no relevance in the public square. There is the world of religion and beliefs and the real world of facts and reality. These are the convictions of our society today.

How did we get into this situation where such a dichotomy in life is widely accepted? What is the underlying malaise that allows secularism to reign triumphant in our day and God to be excluded from virtually all aspects of public life? Why are so many Christians paralyzed, unable to counter the onslaught of the social and legal retooling of our society that is taking place? In this excellent book, Nancy Pearcey deals with these issues head on.

She shows the critical importance of one's worldview, for it colours one's perception of every aspect of life. Our society's worldview determines their outlook. It is a worldview that splits reality into two separate entities. There are values which are your private business and facts that are publicly verifiable truths; there is faith in God which is your personal preference and there is scientific realism that has no need or use for God. There are many variations of this dualism, but the two parts are never integrated. They are in constant opposition to each other.


Over against this world view, Pearcey repeatedly makes the point that the Christian faith is not just about some personal religious truths, but it is a complete worldview. It is total truth and cannot be excluded from any part of life. Indeed, only within a consistent biblical worldview do all the pieces and aspects of life truly fit together into a proper whole. She correctly affirms that we not only need to equip our children with a Christian worldview, but we must also make them familiar with competing worldviews. Otherwise they will have great difficulty surviving as Christians against the spirit of the times, be it at school or on the job. In her book she therefore exposes the roots of unbiblical worldviews and shows the way ahead to spiritual and intellectual renewal by embracing a consistent biblical worldview.

Like her mentor, Francis Schaeffer, Pearcey is an excellent communicator. This is no dry dusty book of philosophy. She

liberally sprinkles her account with true anecdotes and helpful illustrations so that the material comes alive and hits home. She also involves herself and her own personal pilgrimage back to the Christian faith. This material is real for her and she writes with passion and precision. And her message deserves to be heard, yes it must be heard.

Charles Spurgeon once said: "The gospel is like a caged lion. It does not need to be defended, it just needs to be let out of its cage." Pearcey adds: "The cage today is our accommodation to the secular/sacred split that reduces Christianity to a matter of private personal belief. To unlock the cage, we need to become utterly convinced that . . . Christianity is not merely religious truth, it is total truth-truth about the whole of reality."

The truth of this statement is evident in this book. Within the confines of this review it is impossible to do justice to its rich contents. Pearcey deals with a host of current concerns such as the impact that post-modernism is making on school curriculum, the distinction between spirituality and Christianity, the folly of evolution, and the enormous impact that evolutionism continues to make on virtually every aspect of life today. She also covers such topics as how the eighteenth century revivals fostered anti-intellectualism in evangelicalism and why Warfield and others in Princeton did not fully comprehend the implications of Darwinian evolutionism. Also subjects such as the family, feminism, and the changing role of male and female are addressed.

This book deserves a wide hearing. It should be widely read, especially by teachers, students, and those engaged in public life in whatever form. This edition of the book comes with an appended study guide. This guide comes with questions for discussion and gives additional examples and stories to help apply the message of the book. Highly recommended. 

Previously published in *Clarion*, Volume 56, No. 1, pg. 15,
January 5, 2007.

Book Reference: *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from its
Cultural Captivity*

Study Guide Edition, Nancy R. Pearcey.

Foreword by Phillip E. Johnson. (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway
Books, 2005).

Additional Information: Hardcover, 511 pages