

CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FORUM

WINTER 2015



RIPPLES

of Global Christianity
at Calvin Seminary

FORUM

Providing Theological Leadership
for the Church

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Ripples of Global Christianity at Calvin Seminary

Articles

3

Emerging World Christianity

by Albert Strydhorst

6

Ph.D. Program Serves the Church Around the World

by Bruce Buursma

8

Country Profiles

- 8 Brazil by John W. Cooper
and Carl J. Bosma
- 9 China by Sarah Schreiber
- 10 Indonesia by Dean Deppe
- 12 Mexico by Mariano Avila
- 14 Nigeria by Albert Strydhorst
- 15 Pakistan by Emily R. Brink
- 16 South Korea by Sarah Chun

Called to Serve

18

What's Transcendent About the Arts?

Jeremy Begbie Delivers Stob Lectures

by Bruce Buursma

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*from the
president*

Julius T. Medenblik

Seeing and Believing

What do you like about being President of Calvin Theological Seminary? My answer to this very frequent question focuses on our students and the privilege to join a world-class faculty and staff in creating a learning environment that prepares persons for engagement in the mission of God.

Calvin Theological Seminary is a seminary that has a global reach and impact. Since being named as President, I have had the privilege of traveling to Nigeria, South Korea and Egypt where I have seen God at work through our graduates. God is at work across the world.

Nearly every semester, students from twenty different countries come together to learn at Calvin Theological Seminary. 30% of our student body comes from outside the United States and Canada. The world is present in the Student Center of Calvin Seminary.

It is while being at Calvin Seminary that I have truly seen and experienced what Philip Jenkins wrote about in his influential book *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (A prior seminal 2002 "Atlantic Monthly" article with the same focus can be found at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/10/the-next-christianity/302591/>).

In this issue, we present a mosaic of stories. These are not all the stories that could be shared, but they are a sample of the larger whole. These stories challenge us about how the Christian faith is foundational for personal and societal renewal.

These stories inform and challenge us to pray for the church. These stories inform, challenge and encourage us about the formative role of seminary education in raising up leaders who as disciples of Jesus Christ will be involved in forming more disciples of Jesus Christ.

We hope that as you "see" these stories, that it will encourage your belief that the God who so loved the world is still at work in loving the world and forming His Church!

Emerging World Christianity

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), which meets at Redemption Camp in Southern Nigeria, has outgrown its worship auditorium. So announced General Overseer Enoch Adeboye during the Holy Ghost Service in August 2013. This is hardly remarkable news—except for the fact that the auditorium already seats over half a million people.

The RCCG is one of the fastest-growing churches in the world. Started in 1952, the church now has a global membership of about 5 million. It is Pentecostal in its theology, emphasizing obedience to the Bible, prayer, fasting, miraculous healing, and material prosperity. Furthermore, it has global aspirations: one of its stated goals is to have a member of RCCG in every family on earth.

The growth and theology of the RCCG give evidence of what church historians such as Andrew Walls, Lamin Sanneh, and Philip Jenkins have been saying for decades: the numerical strength and evangelistic passion of Christianity is shifting to the south.

This article will sketch out some of the highlights of this shift and

then briefly and *very* generally describe three features of this emerging world Christianity. The hope is to spark gratitude for the movement of God's Spirit and initiate informed discussions and action in response.

What Growth, Exactly?

Sometimes rhetoric about the phenomenal growth of the church soars to great heights. To hear some reports, one may wonder why the final trumpet hasn't already sounded.

What is truly remarkable is not that the church is growing so fast but that it is moving from north to south and from west to east. It is all about the shift.

by Albert Strydhorst,
Field Operations
Director, Timothy
Leadership Training
Institute



The church is experiencing amazing growth, but so is the world. A century ago, world population was 1.8 billion, with Christians making up about one third of that.* Today, world population is 7.2 billion, with the 2.4 billion Christians making up *about one third*. The church is not growing any faster than the world.

In these calculations, a Christian is defined as anyone who self-identifies as such—a very broad definition. The rate of growth is different if one is talking about specific expressions of faith *within* Christianity. For example, evangelicals—those

* Most of the statistical references in this article come from two excellent, exhaustive studies: *Christianity in its Global Context* by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity (2013, <http://www.gordonconwell.com/netcommunity/CSGCResources/ChristianityinitsGlobalContext.pdf>) and *Global Christianity* by the Pew Research Center (2011, <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2011/12/Christianity-fullreport-web.pdf>).

who profess a personal relationship with God, recognize the Bible as the Word of God, and believe they are to spread their faith—are growing about twice as fast as the population. As many as 20 percent of all Christians are evangelical.

Pentecostal Christianity is growing even faster than evangelical faith, at about four times the population growth rate. But even with the evangelical and Pentecostal growth, losses in other traditions keep the growth of Christianity on track with the world's population.

What is truly remarkable is not that the church is growing so fast but that it is moving from north to south and from west to east. It is all about the shift.

Christianity Moving South...

The gravitational center of Christianity is moving from the global North—understood as Europe and North America—to the global South, or majority world—understood as Africa, Asia, and Latin America—and eastward. The “gravitational center of world Christianity” is that point on the globe with an equal number of Christians to the north, south, east and west.

Imagine a see-saw going from north to south. Now picture Christians getting *on* the south end and *off* of the north end. The fulcrum, or point on the globe, would need to shift south to keep gravitational balance. That shift is what has happened in the past century.

A hundred years ago, Christianity was centered in Europe and North America, with 4 out of 5 Christians worldwide living there; today, that number is 2 out of 5. A hundred years ago, African Christians numbered 9 million; today they are over 500 million. A hundred years ago, only 1 in 50 Christians worldwide was African;

From its beginnings in the Los Angeles Azusa Street revival in 1906, [charismatic Christianity] has grown to become the faith expression of a quarter of all Christians.

today that number is 1 in 4.

The election in 2013 of the Argentinian Jorge Bergoglio as Pope Francis was also a significant marker of the southward shift. In addition to his other credentials, Pope Francis's mother-tongue is Spanish—already by 1980 the leading language of church membership in the world.

The global South is called the majority world for a reason—over 80 percent of the world's population lives there. So even though only 25 percent of the global South is Christian compared with 70 percent in the North, the numerical advantage clearly goes to the South. What will drive the trajectory south even faster is that Christianity as a percentage of the population in the global North is declining at a dramatic rate, while it is rising in the South.

The situation in China—home to 1.4 billion people—illustrates the weight of numbers. It is estimated that the Christian population is 7 percent of the total. But this still puts the number of Christians close to 100 million, landing China among the top five countries in the world for number of Christians (behind the United States, Brazil, Russia, and Mexico).

While the most remarkable story of church growth in the past century has belonged to Africa, that narrative may soon be ceded to China. African

growth in previous years was predominantly in animist contexts; what largely remains now are Muslim populations among whom Christian converts have historically been meager.

But now consider the story developing in China. Thirty years ago it was unclear if Christianity had even survived the Cultural Revolution; today it is clear not only that it *has*, but that it is growing rapidly. The gravitational center of Christianity has not only moved south; it is also shifting east.

And the church in China has room to grow, with more than 1.2 billion Chinese who do not profess to be Christian. A Chinese scholar visiting Calvin Seminary recently noted that the time could be soon when China is the largest church *and* mission field.

A Conservative Faith

The Christian faith that is spreading rapidly and coming to characterize world Christianity is theologically conservative, biblically oriented—even fundamentalist—and marked by traditional social values and morals.

This conservative faith took prominence in the 1998 Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion. While the Lambeth deliberations had traditionally been dominated by bishops from Europe and North America, their names on the 1998 participants list were in the minority. Almost one third of the clerics hailed from Africa—a visual reminder of shifting demographics.

Homosexuality was the hot-button issue of the conference. Some bishops—mostly from the global North—were advocating for greater biblical latitude toward and acceptance of homosexual practice, while their Southern equals passionately resisted. At the end of the day, the conference overwhelmingly voted to approve a statement

that rejected homosexual practice as “incompatible with Scripture.”

Lambeth 1998 was a critical marker of the numerical advantage now held by the Southern church and the conservatism that typifies world Christianity. Pope Francis’s election in 2013 continued this trajectory. Reporters who speculate that his conciliatory remarks on homosexuality mark a movement away from conservative theology neither understand the Roman Catholic Church nor where the pope comes from.

A Charismatic Faith

Charismatic or Pentecostal Christianity is the lively and highly personal faith of Christians who expect to see God’s miraculous power on earth as part of normal, everyday experience. It emphasizes such charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit as speaking in tongues, divine healing, and prophesying.

The language of Pentecostalism can be confusing. “Pentecostals” are Christians who belong to historic Pentecostal denominations. “Charismatics” are those who belong to other denominations and Christian traditions but who believe in and exhibit the charismatic gifts. “Renewalists” is an umbrella term used by some to jointly describe Pentecostals and Charismatics.

The growth of charismatic Christianity has been as remarkable as it has been astonishing. From its beginnings in the Los Angeles Azusa Street revival in 1906, it has grown to become the faith expression of a quarter of all Christians.

The most dramatic growth has taken place in the past 40 years; in 1970, only 5 percent of Christians had a

Pentecostal testimony. The regions of the world that have seen the greatest growth are Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Charismatic faith has become such a part of the Latin American landscape that over 50 percent of Latino/a Catholics are estimated to be charismatic Christians.

A Costly Faith

As the research of Paul Marshall and others has reminded us, Christians are the single most widely persecuted religious group in the world today. In some parts of the world, despite oppression the church has grown. In other places, though, persecution has decimated the church. Iraq has seen its Christian numbers in the past hundred years dwindle from an estimated 35 percent of the population to its current less than 2 percent.

But even from places where oppression has diminished the presence of the church, remarkable testimonies continue to emerge. The recent slaughter of

21 Egyptian Coptic Christians is only one of many acts of violence against Christians in Egypt. However, in the midst of all the violence and grieving—even because of it—there are testimonies of the nation being united.

Furthermore, persecution is uniting the church in witness. Pope Francis spoke of the executed Egyptians as “martyrs who belong to all Christians. It makes no difference whether they be Catholics, Orthodox, Copts, or Protestants. Their blood confesses Christ.”

...And Back Again

The gravitational weight of Christianity has shifted south—but it is venturing north again in remarkable ways. Over 40 million foreign-born residents now live in the United States. Of these, almost three quarters are Christian. They are bringing to America expressions of faith and life that have largely been forged in the global South.

One last observation. About 1 million international students—many from the global South—are currently studying in the United States. Estimates are that 250,000 of them are from China. Remember the 1.2 billion Chinese who are not disciples of Jesus? Might they still meet Him—in the global North?

As the research of Paul Marshall and others has reminded us, Christians are the single most widely persecuted religious group in the world today. In some parts of the world, despite oppression the church has grown.

While Rev. Albert Strydhorst currently serves as Field Operations Director, Timothy Leadership Training Institute, he previously served as Calvin Seminary’s Distinguished Missionary in Residence following 19 years of service in Nigeria with Christian Reformed World Missions.

Ph.D. Program Serves the Church Around the World

Calvin Theological Seminary's worldview and reputation both have been enlarged by the introduction of the Ph.D. program two decades ago—a long-debated initiative that has attracted students from more than a dozen countries and elevated the seminary's image around the globe as a destination for rigorous and winsomely Reformed scholarship.

"I think the Lord has blessed this program lavishly, and that's very gratifying to see," said James A. De Jong, during whose presidency (1983–2001) the seminary launched the Ph.D. program after nearly a half-century of sporadic deliberation and sometimes-fractious debate among faculty and board members.

Looking back now, said De Jong, the merits of the doctoral program plainly have enriched the seminary's mission of being a global community of learning aimed at serving the church throughout the world.

"I've long contended that the Christian Reformed Church does education better than it does anything else," said De Jong. "It's our legacy from Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck and the Christian school movement. It's just part of our DNA to aspire educationally and academically."

The addition of the Ph.D. program at the seminary, added De Jong, has been a logical extension to the educational purpose embraced so wholeheartedly and broadly by leaders in the Reformed expression of Christianity.

"This program is part of a mosaic," he noted. "You've got the college and the seminary on this campus, both serving Kingdom purposes. It's part of a bigger picture, along with the Meeter Center and the Center for Excellence in Preaching and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, and the Timothy Institute, and the Nagel Institute for World Christianity, and the Calvin Theological Journal. All of these pieces are an indication of the maturation and deepening of this vision that the seminary and college have for the Kingdom."

The former director of doctoral studies and current academic dean at the seminary, Ronald Feenstra, observed that the Ph.D. program's development has come as Christianity has flowered in Asia and Africa and Latin America.

"We've witnessed this big story of Christianity growing around the world," said Feenstra, "and that's really the backdrop to why there's been this demand for doctoral studies at Calvin. For decades, we had international students come and do the Th.M. program and very often say to us, 'We wish we could do the Ph.D. with you, as well.' The growing needs of the church worldwide has really been the impetus for the Calvin doctoral studies."





Richard Muller

Since the first graduates of the Ph.D. program were awarded degrees in 1998, the program has produced more than 50 graduates—half of them from outside the United States, including such countries as South Korea, Japan, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Madagascar, Poland, Congo, Nigeria, Uganda, Brazil and Canada.

The Ph.D. graduates currently are serving throughout the globe in stunningly far-flung academic and church leadership postings, and many have published books and scholarly research of note in their specialized fields.

“The breadth and depth of scholarship that has come of the Ph.D. program is just astounding,” said Barbara Blackmore, who serves as an assistant to the director of doctoral studies. They’re adding to the scholarship throughout the world and they add to this community delightfully.”

The current director of doctoral studies, Lyle Bierma, asserted that the program is well-appreciated by its students and graduates for the academic resources it provides—notably its faculty and adjunct teachers, along with the library holdings. “Our theological stance has drawn students, as well,”

said Bierma. “We have a reputation for being a solid confessionally Reformed institution, but we’re not so closed-minded that folks who are not from our tradition can’t feel comfortable here. We don’t try to force a doctrinal grid upon them. We let them operate within their own tradition.”

For example, two of Calvin Seminary’s Ph.D. graduates—Keith D. Stanglin of Austin (TX) Graduate School of Theology and Thomas H. McCall of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School—are themselves rooted in the Arminian tradition and, after moving through the Calvin program, co-authored a definitive study of the theology of the movement’s founder, “Jacob Arminius: Theologian of Grace,” published in 2012 by Oxford University Press.

The program intentionally is intimate—involving about a third of the seminary’s faculty and an admitted Ph.D. class of three to five students each year. Two professors, Richard Mulder and Ronald Feenstra, hold endowed chairs and do most of their teaching in the Ph.D. program.

“We are richly resourced to be able to provide significant funding for

international students,” said De Jong, who spearheaded along with former board leader Norman De Graaf the initial fundraising effort to endow teaching chairs for the Ph.D. program to make sure the program could be adequately supported without using any denominational ministry shares. “Those funds provide full tuition for all the admitted students for four years, plus a modest stipend to help defray living expenses.”

The generosity of seminary donors has made the doctoral studies program possible and sustainable, said De Jong, but through the years the Ph.D. students and families have made their own substantial contributions to the vitality of the seminary community.

“The program has made its mark” on the life of the seminary—“a very distinctive and significant mark,” he said. “Our doctoral students create a sense of esprit de corps—a very continuous, close, caring interaction with the faculty and with each other. They’ve made us better as an institution and as scholars and as stewards of the church worldwide.”

—by Bruce Buursma



Lyle Bierma, Ronald Feenstra and James De Jong



Brazil

Evangelical and Reformed Churches in Brazil

by John W. Cooper, *Professor of Philosophical Theology*
and Carl J. Bosma, *Director of the Institute for Global
Planting and Renewal*



Population: 202,656,788
(July 2014 estimate)

Religious Profile (2010 estimate):

- Roman Catholicism: . . . 64.6%
- Protestantism: 22.2%
- No Religion: 8%
- Other Religions: 5.2%

Brazil has been predominantly Roman Catholic since the 16th century; it was only much later, in the 19th century, that Protestant missionaries—mainly American Presbyterians—arrived. Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism have grown remarkably since the 1970s and now make up 22.2 percent of the population (2010 Census). Traditional spiritism and modern consumerism are also strong influences.

Recently three people at Calvin Seminary from the Presbyterian Church in Brazil reflected on this development. Rev. Carl J. Bosma, retired Calvin Seminary professor of Old Testament, served as a church planter and Presbyterian Seminary professor from 1976 to 1990 and still visits Brazil every year. Rev. Giuliano Cocco is a pastor of a Presbyterian church in the port city of Santos, near São Paulo, and is a Th.M. student in homiletics. He learned of Calvin Seminary through Luz para o Caminho (Light on the Path), an affiliate of Back to God Ministries International. Rev. Thiago Machado Silva is a Presbyterian minister in Rio Preto, in the state of São Paulo. Four of his professors at the Presbyterian Seminary of the South (SPS) in Campinas are Calvin Seminary alumni: Ricardo Agreste da Silva, Adrien Baussels, Dr. Heber de Campos Jr., and Carlos Henrique Machado. Thiago is completing a Th.M. in systematic theology and apologetics.



John W. Cooper



Carl J. Bosma

Giuliano and Thiago appreciate the ecclesiastical and cultural diversity at Calvin Seminary—a real community of the global church. They also value our Reformed but open approach to education—a chance to consider and evaluate different positions from a Reformed perspective rather than simply learning a single authorized position. Calvin Seminary enables them to grow and mature spiritually and intellectually as persons and pastors.

All three men remarked about the growth of Protestantism since the end

of the pro-Catholic police state in 1972. Presbyterian and other Reformed churches have been planted and are growing. There is a great diversity of other denominations and kinds of Christianity as well. The greatest increase is among Pentecostals. Many Brazilians, including some famous and influential people, now identify themselves as “evangelicals” or “believers.” The spread of the Gospel has resulted in spiritual growth for individual Christians and churches, and it benefits Brazil as a nation. In addition, Brazil sends more missionaries abroad than almost any other country. These are reasons for thanks and praise to God.

But the church faces challenges too. Superficial and inauthentic Christianity is a serious problem. People claim to be Christians but do not change their worldly or superstitious lifestyles. Christian public officials do not reform corrupt government or promote social justice but use their power to benefit Christian special interests. The economic downturn makes these problems even worse. Such tensions actually threaten schism in some churches. Pentecostals often lack sound doctrine and disciplined lifestyles. Evangelical and

Reformed people often lack spiritual vitality and do not practice evangelism. These problems are not unique to Brazil, but they are reasons to pray for God’s forgiveness, mercy, and renewing Spirit.



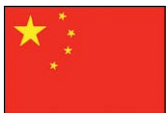
Rev. Ricardo Agreste da Silva

All three men highlighted a particular movement for evangelism and church planting as a clear example of God's Spirit moving among the Presbyterian churches of Brazil. One of its leaders is Rev. Ricardo Agreste da Silva, an alumnus of Calvin Seminary who was featured recently on the cover of a national magazine (see inset). Ricardo is a Reformed pastor who has planted and nourished a number of

congregations. He is part of an international network of pastors and churches that embrace church planting as their main purpose. Carl Bosma is the director of the Institute for Global Church Planting and Renewal at Calvin Seminary, which is part of this network. Carl was Ricardo's mentor and teacher in Brazil, and Ricardo has presented at Institute conferences, so these connections are personal as well

as institutional. It is a blessing that the younger generation of pastors, including Giuliano and Thiago, are committed to this important cause.

God is certainly blessing the Gospel in Brazil. Pray for our students, our fellow believers, and the churches in Brazil. Pray for the country of Brazil, which is large and powerful and which has great potential but is also troubled and spiritually hungry.



China

Chinese Translation Ministry

by Sarah Schreiber, Assistant Professor of Old Testament



Population: 1,355,692,576 (July 14 est.)

Religious Profile (2010 estimate):

- Unaffiliated: 52.2%
- Folk Religion: 21.9%
- Buddhist: 18.2%
- Christian: 5.1%
- Muslim: 1.8%
- Hindu: < .1%
- Jewish: < .1%
- Other: 0.7%

Walk into any major bookstore in Shanghai, China, and with a little help you may find a copy of *Letters to a Young Calvinist* by James K. A. Smith, translated into Chinese by Jin Li and Mary Ma. This husband and wife team began translating academic texts from English to Chinese seven years ago, but it is one of their newest translations, *Letters to a Young Calvinist*, that has been flying off the shelves at record pace. In the first two months alone, 10,000 copies were sold. Recently the book was reprinted for the third time.

Smith's book, along with other Christian works translated by Mary and Jin, are welcome in Chinese bookstores since they are classified as academic texts and shelved in the history section. Other authors whose writing the couple has translated or is currently translating into Chinese include D. A. Carson, John Piper, Geerhardus Vos, Tim Keller, Eric Gregory, Eric Voegelin, Joel Beeke,

Richard Muller, John Cooper, Herman Bavinck, Herman Dooyeweerd, and Richard Mouw. It was through their publishing connections that Jin and Mary first heard about Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the Lord used the

Reformed theology they were reading and translating to prompt them to consider further education at Calvin Theological Seminary. Mary already has her Ph.D. in sociology from Cornell University, and Jin was a Ph.D. candidate



Jin Li and Mary Ma with their son, Calvin

in economics at a Shanghai university. At Calvin Seminary they are enrolled in the M.T.S. and M.Div. programs, respectively.

The couple's translation ministry responds to what they identify as one of the greatest needs of the church in China, the need for Christian literature. In the 1950s Protestant churches began to go underground, and persecution contributed to pietistic and individualistic expressions of faith. In recent years the Chinese government has relaxed control on religious groups, but to some degree Christianity is still privatized. Many leaders are passionate but lack theological training. Jin and Mary see a need for catechesis and polity in order to unite Christians and root them

theologically. Christian literature is essential for building this infrastructure for future growth in the church.

Jin and Mary feel a sense of urgency in their work because they have seen signs of stricter censorship on the horizon. Recently, for example, a Chinese newspaper disallowed any mention of the biblical figure Moses. Since it is difficult to predict what may be censored next and when, the couple devotes much of their spare time to translating crucial Christian resources while they are still relatively free to do so. The Chinese translation of Smith's *Letters* was born around the same time as their firstborn son, Calvin. In the two days leading

Sarah Schreiber



up to the birth in the hospital, translating proved to be a good way to pass the time (at least for Jin).

Pray for Mary and Jin as they continue to devote themselves to the ministry of translation alongside their studies

at Calvin Seminary and their growing family. Pray also for the church in China. Give thanks that many are coming to Christ and joining those who model faithful endurance to the worldwide church in the face of long-term persecution. Pray too for the Spirit to equip Chinese leaders with the resources needed for the next generation of discipleship.



Indonesia

Friends in Indonesia

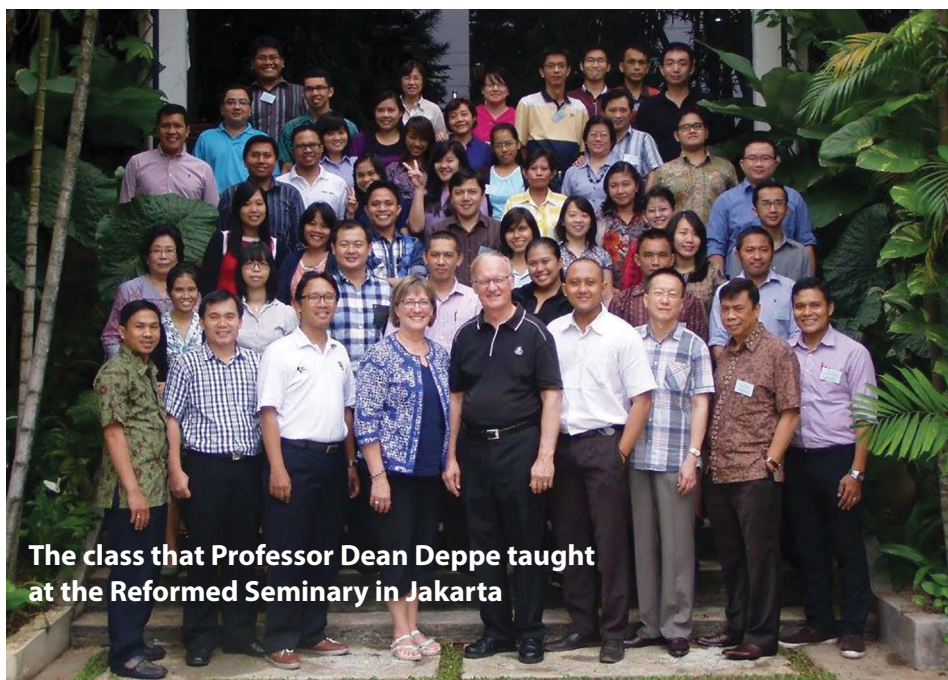
by Dean Deppe, *Professor of New Testament*



Population: 252,812,245 (July 14 est.)

Religious Profile (2010 estimate):

- Muslim 80.3%
- Christian 15.9%
- Hindu 1.3%
- Animist 1.2%
- Chinese religions 0.9%
- Buddhist 0.4%



The class that Professor Dean Deppe taught at the Reformed Seminary in Jakarta

What does a country of 17,500 islands, 700 languages, and the largest number of active volcanoes in the world—a country on the exact opposite side of the world—have to do with Calvin Seminary? What does a country like Indonesia, which the government proclaims is 87 percent Muslim, have to do with Reformed Christians here in North America? I have discovered that the connections are surprisingly strong. I spent the month of January 2015 teaching at two Reformed seminaries in Jakarta and Malang, Indonesia, where I received an overwhelming welcome and observed a heart-felt loyalty to Calvin Seminary.

The faculty of the Reformed Seminary in Malang thanking Professor Dean Deppe for coming to the Philippines to teach



Religion is a core value for Indonesian people. Hindu priests and traders brought Hinduism to the country in the first two centuries AD, while Islam began taking over the country in the 13th century. Portugal brought Roman Catholicism to Indonesia, whereas the Dutch introduced Protestantism at the beginning of the 17th century. Accordingly, the history of the Protestant churches goes back to the change in colonial rule, when the Reformed Dutch drove the Catholic Portuguese out of the Moluccas in 1601–1605. The result was the founding of the oldest Protestant church in Asia. Today, the government recognizes six religions, and the law states that every citizen must hold an identity card specifying which of these religions he or she belongs to. Furthermore, the threat of prison holds sway over any atheist.

Present Blessings

Today 85 percent of the Protestants in Indonesia belong to the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia [PGI], founded in 1950), which has

75 member churches, 62 percent of which belong to the Reformed tradition. Christian Indonesians report that the seminaries in Indonesia have a strategic position in shaping the future of Christianity in that country. Over the last years, Calvin Seminary has sent visiting professors every year to teach at a Reformed seminary in Jakarta and recently in Malang as well. These seminaries have their roots in ministry to ethnic Chinese Indonesians dating back to the early twentieth century, when many Chinese migrated to Indonesia around the time of the Boxer Rebellion. Each campus is growing in students and in its building projects—growth that indicates the vitality of the church and the support of its constituency.

The Challenges Ahead

Probably the largest challenge to Indonesian Christianity is that Christianity is weakest in the most highly populated and fully developed regions, such as Java and Bali (where



at most 1 percent of people are Christian). Furthermore, Indonesia is home to 779 people groups, of whom 226 are still unreached by the Gospel. But consider these personal reflections from Indonesian graduates from Calvin Seminary about what they consider to be the

challenges facing the church in their country.

Agung Gunawan, Calvin Seminary graduate and president of Aletheia Seminary reports, “The challenge of the Reformed Church in Indonesia is preparing the future leaders for the church. The problem faced today is that so few young people in the church give their lives to be God’s servant.”

Amos Oei, a Ph.D. graduate from Calvin Seminary, reflects, “Upon the completion of my study at Calvin Seminary, I serve as a professor and dean of students at the Church of Christ the Lord. Our dominant Chinese background is both a strength and a weakness. We

Friends of Indonesia

are strong in fellowship but weak at adapting to changes in the culture and bridging the generational gap to our youth and teenagers.”

Yohanes Budhi, a visiting scholar at Calvin Seminary, adds, “The real struggle of Christianity in Indonesia is for Christians to live side by side

with the poor in a country with one of the fastest rising rates of inequality in the world.”

Yuzo Adhinarta, now a professor at a Reformed seminary in Jakarta, emphasizes that “to an alarming extent, freedom of thought, conscience, and belief is being curtailed,

often threatening the safety and survival of innocent persons, especially members of religious minorities, since constitutional rights have been abrogated and violated through government inaction.”

Certainly our prayers go out to the churches and seminaries of Indonesia.



Mexico

A Growing Church in the Midst of Violence and Fear

by Mariano Avila, *Professor of New Testament*



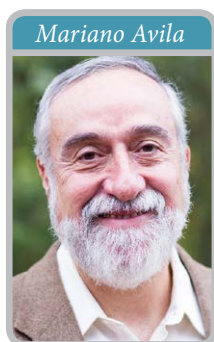
Population: 120,286,655 (July 2014 est.)

Religious Profile (2010 estimate):

- Catholicism:82.7%
- Other Evangelical Churches: .. 5%
- None:4.7%
- Unspecified:2.7%
- Other:1.9%
- Pentecostal:1.6%
- Jehovah's Witnesses:1.4%

Present Context

As a result of wrong decisions and corrupt administrations in Mexico over the last 14 years, 80,000 people have been murdered and disappeared. People live in fear, and life has changed for the common citizen in significant ways. For us in the north it is hard to imagine what it means for people to face such a reality in their everyday lives. The people of Mexico are no longer able to distinguish between criminal organizations and their own government (43 students disappeared three months ago in Ayotzinapa by local authorities), and they do not have many alternatives to turn to.



Mariano Avila

evangelical and other Protestant denominations) are tangible, and the Gospel can still be good news for people who need it urgently.

The religious composition has changed in significant ways over the last decades. Catholicism has been decreasing, and people have changed

their affiliation to evangelical and Protestant churches, as well as to other beliefs. The number of people who declare themselves agnostic or atheist is also growing.

Catholics in Mexico				
1895	1970	2000	2008	2009
99.1%	96.2%	88.0%	84.7%	80.5%

Protestants and evangelicals make up 7.6 percent of the population, other religions make up 2.5 percent, and 4.6 percent have no religion. Reformed/ Presbyterian churches have a total membership of 437,690.

Most Presbyterians are located in the southeast part of Mexico, in the

states of Chiapas, Tabasco, Veracruz, and Yucatan.

Challenges

While the churches are growing in Mexico or people are changing their religious affiliation (from Roman Catholic to evangelical), it is important to take a closer look into such growth and consider it closely.

Prosperity gospel.

Large numbers of converts to the evangelical faith follow closely the dominant paradigm of most mega-churches and independent churches, the so-called *prosperity gospel*. The belief that by becoming Christian you will eventually become rich is popular, and many people have come to believe that it is the Gospel of Jesus. This poses significant questions in terms of the seriousness and depth of such faith and the permanent membership in the church. There is a significant floating population in such churches, and people move from one to the other and frequently out of them.

Church Growth

Nevertheless, Mexican churches are growing, thriving, and keeping their faith and hope under such circumstances. Expressions of love and solidarity by churches (including Catholic,

Strong proselytizing but weak discipleship.

If there is a permanent mark of Latin American evangelicals, it is the strong sense of duty toward converting people to faith in Jesus. That is something clear and firm, and it is very much in their DNA. The belief that we in the north need to go and evangelize in Latin America belongs to the colonial times. It would be much more accurate to think in terms of what we can learn from Latinos/as about how to evangelize our neighbors. The zeal for and commitment to evangelism has been present in Mexican churches since their establishment in the late 19th century, and their extraordinary growth in the last decades is a demonstration of their vitality.

What is needed is the deepening and broadening of the faith of new converts

in order to build them up and establish their belief in God and the Bible. Some churches do this well, but most do not.

Growth of dark religious alternatives.

During the last two decades, two cults have grown significantly in Mexico. One of them, the worship of the *Santa Muerte* (Holy Death), has become very popular, and some scholars believe that it has close to 10 million devotees. Many of them worship Death without leaving their Roman Catholic faith, since such worship does not have exclusivist claims. It is a worship that mixes ancient indigenous beliefs in Mictecacihuatl (the goddess of the infraworld) with Roman Catholic rituals. One of the reasons for the popularity of this recent cult is that in a country where more than 80,000 people have been murdered or disappeared

in recent decades, it seems that Death is really powerful and that people need to be on good terms with her.

Living and articulating our faith in the context where we live.

A faith that is only for the religious life but that does not speak to everyday realities is a dead faith (James 2). In light of the growing poverty in the nation, violent criminal organizations that have created a situation of fear and deep suffering, a lack of opportunities that forces people to look in the north for a better way of life (leaving behind desolated towns and families), and the growth of other dark religious alternatives, it is urgent to present the Good News of the Kingdom with clarity and compassion to a suffering country. Let us pray for Christians in Mexico!

Prof. Avila interviewed Calvin seminarian José Polanco about his ministry and about the strengths and challenges of the church in Mexico. José is a Master of Theological Studies student from Maxcanu, Yucatan, Mexico.

How did you come to know of Calvin Seminary, and why did you come to study here?

I knew about Calvin Seminary through one of the trips of Prof. Arie Leder to our Presbyterian seminary in Yucatan, Mexico, and I ended up at Calvin Seminary for two main reasons. First, I was looking for a Reformed theological education, and second, Calvin offered me housing.

What is the state of the Christian church in your country?

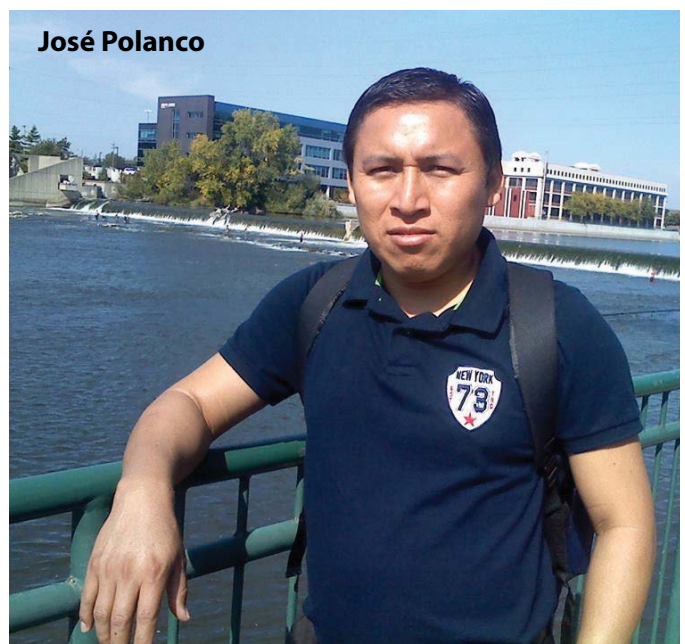
The dominant religion in Mexico is Catholicism; however, there is a large community of Protestant churches. Among the Protestant churches, Pentecostal and Charismatic are the

leading denominations currently.

What can the global church learn from the church in your country?

The Mexican Christian church is a living testimony to the global church of how the Gospel becomes incarnate in a specific culture. The rich spirituality of the Mexican indigenous people built bridges for the Christian church to promote the devotion of the Christian life. The idea of having a sacred space to worship God in the

Mexican culture did not come from the Jewish practice of the Old Testament but from the practice of the indigenous people of Mexico. Today, Catholic temples are considered



Mexico: A Growing Church in the Midst of Violence and Fear

sacred at any time. Protestants preach that God can be worshiped anywhere, but there is always an altar that identifies that place as sacred. There are many other examples in the Mexican church of how the Gospel was indigenized, as Andrew Walls calls it in his book *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*.

What are you gaining, or did you gain, at Calvin Theological Seminary for your ministry calling?

Calvin Seminary has given me a

theological education and tools that will help me to have a position as a professor at one of the seminaries of the Presbyterian Church and thus to contribute to the formation of future church leaders. It has also enriched my Christian life with its Reformed Dutch tradition and its multicultural community of students.

What is the biggest need of the Christian church in your country?

It is difficult to say what the biggest need of the Christian church in Mexico

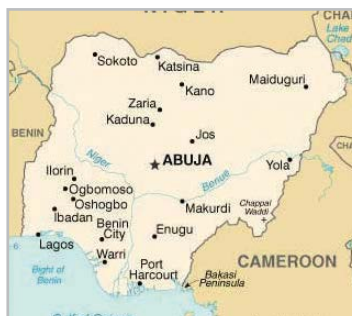
is, but I think that one of her needs is to have scholars who can help the church play a better role in Mexican society. The lack of influence by the Christian church on how society can overcome the injustice and corruption of the government is making the church irrelevant.

What is your biggest need and/or personal prayer request?

I dream and pray that God uses me to make a significant change in the life of marginalized communities.

Nigeria Nigerian Calvin Seminary Graduates

by Albert Strydhorst, *Field Operations Director,*
Timothy Leadership Training Institute



Population: 178,516,904 (July 2014 est.)

Religious Profile (2011 estimate):

- Islam50.4%
- Christian 48.2%
 - Protestant35.6%
 - Roman Catholic 12%
 - Other Christian......5%
- Other.....1.4%

The church in Nigeria is facing two large threats: violent Islamists from *outside* and superficial disciples *inside*. This is the assessment made by several Nigerian graduates of Calvin Theological Seminary when asked about the state of the church in their country.

Regarding the violence, **Rev. Dr. Caleb Ahima**, a 1998 M.A. graduate and the current president of the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRC-N) said, "Persecution against the church is increasing through the devastating attacks of the Boko Haram and other Muslim fundamentalists, mostly in the northern part of the country." Late last year a congregation of the CRC-N was attacked, and the pastor and many church members were killed.

One of the urgent prayer requests of the Nigerian graduates is for the church's faithfulness to Christ in the midst of persecution, for an end to violence and fear, and for peace and justice to prevail.

The second threat is one that is directly linked to the phenomenal expansion of the Nigerian church. Churches are growing faster than leaders are being trained. People flock to the churches in great numbers, but then fail to be disciplined.

Preaching is often biblically suspect or shallow. Unorthodox teachings, such as the prosperity gospel, are common fare in many of the fastest growing, Pentecostal-type churches. "Many church leaders lack theological training,

Albert Strydhorst



so they either deliberately or ignorantly teach heresy to the members," observed current M.T.S. student **Rev. Darshak Toma**. "Nigerian pastors need sound theological training."

This is what brings some of them to study at Calvin Seminary. Financial costs are a great challenge for most,

and separation from family is a common hardship and sorrow. "It's not easy," is a common refrain, "but we thank God."

Theological study abroad is not the only option. There are also a number of solid seminaries in Nigeria. One of these is the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN). A Ph.D. graduate of Calvin Seminary, **Rev. Dr. Tersur Aben**, is the provost (president)

of the college. Student numbers at TCNN have recently climbed higher than those of Calvin Seminary.

Nigerian Calvin Seminary graduates look back with appreciation for their time at the seminary. “It gave me an environment that was peaceful and with good resources so I could concentrate on my studies,” said 2014 graduate **Rev. Emmanuel Bileya**. **Rev.**

Sagarga Nuvalga, a 2007 graduate, testified, “Calvin Seminary helped me to rediscover myself and the purpose of my life as a child of God and shepherd in the church.” Dr. Ahima commented, “I enjoyed the simplicity of the faculty members and their honest and friendly socialization with the students.”

Rev. John Eigege, an M.Div. graduate of 2012 now ministering in a

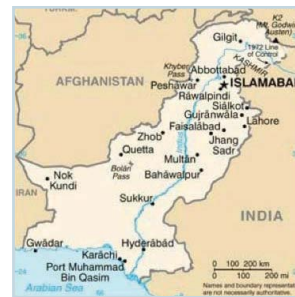
diverse community in Houston, Texas, summarized what is to be learned from the Nigerian church: “It truly embodies and lives in the reality that nothing can separate us from Christ’s love. In the midst of widespread persecution, the faith of her members remains strong. The Nigerian church is a genuinely and perpetually joyful bride of Christ.”



Pakistan

Psalm-Singer from Pakistan

Emily R. Brink, *Adjunct Professor of Worship and Church Music*



Population: 196,174,380 (July 2014 est.)

Religious Profile (2010 estimate):

- Muslim (official).....96.4%
 - Sunni85–90%
 - Shia10–15%
- Other (includes Christian and Hindu):3.6%

Eric Sarwar did not come to Calvin Theological Seminary in 2014 to begin his study of theology. He had already graduated from a Presbyterian seminary with an M.Div., earned a second master’s degree in Islamic history, planted a church, founded a school of church music and worship, translated two books into Urdu (including John Witvliet’s *The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship*), and produced national psalm-singing festivals—all in his native country of Pakistan. He has also produced CDs of psalms and children’s songs that are known widely throughout his country. So what brought him to Calvin Seminary? Therein lies a story.

The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (CICW) hosts many international participants each year at our annual Symposium on Worship and also develops partnerships with international leaders for the purpose of



Emily Brink

co-hosting worship conferences in their home countries, where we learn at least as much as we teach. In 2009, I represented CICW at two conferences in Pakistan at the invitation of Rev. Eric Sarwar. A familiar Reformed/Presbyterian tradition in a very unfamiliar culture was an ear-, eye-, and heart-opening experience! CICW then invited Eric to speak at our Symposium on Worship, and in January 2014 he stayed on to begin a master’s in worship at Calvin Seminary. While he is learning from us in our North American context, he has been preaching, teaching, and opening more eyes, ears, and hearts to what it is like to be a Christian in Pakistan.

Consider these comparisons between the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC) and the Presbyterian Church in Pakistan (PCP). Both denominations started in the mid-19th century: the CRC with Dutch immigrants in a new culture, the PCP in an

ancient culture by missionaries from the United States and Scotland. Calvin Seminary was founded in 1876; Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS) was founded just a year later, in 1877. Both denominations started out as psalm-singing churches, and the first English-language psalter for the CRC was completed in 2012, with the 150 psalms divided into 410 songs, while the Punjabi Psalter was completed in 1891, with the 150 psalms divided into 405 songs. However, both denominations gradually lost their heritage of exclusive psalm-singing.

But major contrasts exist as well. First, the CRC is part of a majority Christian culture in North America, whereas the PCP, even when combined with all other Christian churches in Pakistan (and there are several denominations there, Protestant and Catholic), is a very small part of the dominant (97 percent) Muslim culture in Pakistan.

Second, the Dutch immigrants forming the CRC were at first rural and poor and then, ▶

► Psalm-Singer from Pakistan

after World War II, often more educated. On the other hand, Pakistan has experienced a huge “brain drain” in the last twenty years, with many very well-educated people leaving (for example, Eric’s in-laws received asylum in the Netherlands), and there are many “Indo-Pak” immigrant communities and churches now in major cities in Canada and the United States. Meanwhile, the remaining Christians (still several million) are often poor and struggling in an increasingly hostile environment under radical Islamic influence.

Finally, North America is a literate culture, and we use musical notation in hymnals. But most Pakistani Christians are illiterate and sing by rote. In fact, the entire rich raga tradition of song, so different in sound from Western music, has no notation; Eric learned the raga tradition from his grandfather as an apprentice. While in seminary, Eric learned about the history of psalm-singing in his country and felt a burden to help revive it for the sake of his brothers and sisters in Christ. The psalms are once again becoming a source of spiritual encouragement and strength



President Jul Medenblik with Eric Sarwar

among Pakistani Christians. What was so amazing to me is that the Pakistanis sing in their ancient, raga-based tradition, not in the Western-influenced, translated hymns or worship songs I so often hear in other countries. They sing out of a deep and ancient heritage of song that speaks to their hearts in ways that Western music cannot. When I heard the Pakistanis sing, my heart was deeply moved by the passion with which they cried out to God through the psalms. I’ll never forget especially

Psalm 18, which I heard sung from memory in a youth group, at GTS, and in the church Eric pastored.

In addition to studying at Calvin Seminary, Eric continues to stay connected with his family, school, and church as well as other worship leaders through Skype. For more information about this gifted servant of God, Google his name or read a two-part interview with him in *Reformed Worship* (issues 115 and 116, available at www.reformed-worship.org).



South Korea

Called to Study, Ordained to Serve

by Sarah Chun, Associate Dean of Students



Population: 49,039,986 (July 2014 est.)

Religious Profile (2010 estimate):

- None:43.3%
- Christian 31.6%
 - Protestant 24%
 - Roman Catholic 7.6%
- Buddhist:24.2%
- Other or Unknown:0.9%

Who would have thought a simple visit to a local bookstore would change the course of a life? That’s

precisely the story of Paul (Byung-soo) Han’s journey from graduate student in economics to assistant professor of systematic theology at the

Asian Center for Theological Studies and Mission in Gyeonggi-do, South Korea. Paul came across Dr. Richard Muller’s *Post-Reformation Reformed*

Sarah Chun



Dogmatics in a bookstore, and upon reading it he felt led to study Reformed orthodoxy at Calvin Theological Seminary under Dr. Muller. Paul completed his Th.M. degree in historical theology in 2006 and went on to receive his Ph.D. in historical theology in 2013.

Paul is one of many South Korean students at Calvin Seminary; in fact, nearly one in five students at Calvin Seminary has come from South Korea to study Reformed theology. About a quarter of South Koreans self-identify as Christian. “My country, South Korea, pronounces religious freedom, so there is no problem with any religion which does not harm the Korean society,” says Paul. Seoul, the capital of South Korea, is home to the world’s largest Pentecostal church, Yoido Full Gospel Church.

Paul grew up in a non-Christian home with six siblings. At the age of seven, both of his parents passed away. This left him wrestling with the “to be or not to be” issue” and what life and death mean. “I kept asking of myself who I am,” he says. Then, at the age of nineteen he recalls experiencing “a kind of divine encounter” between the Lord and himself. This was the beginning of Paul’s journey as a believer, enabling him to identify himself as a child of God and say, “God is my father and my lord.”

Shortly thereafter, in 2004, Paul, with the support of his wife and children, moved to Grand Rapids and began his studies at Calvin Seminary. He spent almost ten years as a student at Calvin Seminary studying under Dr. Muller, and Paul received what he had hoped for and much more. More specifically, he says, “I learned sound doctrine, a well-balanced system of Reformed

theology, harmony of theory and praxis, intimate fellowship among the members of a community, and sincere application of the Reformed confession in the field of the local church.”

In addition to completing the Th.M. and Ph.D. programs, Paul was ordained in the Christian Reformed Church on December 14, 2014, at Church of the Servant in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He, like many students from South Korea, comes from the Presbyterian tradition. Many of these students return to South Korea upon completion of their program and serve in Presbyterian churches. Paul, however, took a different route. Though he was a member of Hapshin Presbyterian Church, he was “unconsciously but graciously getting more familiar with the CRC polity and theological tradition.” In the end, he decided to seek ordination in the Christian Reformed Church. “The CRC has a great theological and ecclesiastical tradition and a good tradition of Reformed theology and faith,” he says. “Especially the church polity is very well organized, and the process of making decisions on very delicate issues is very reasonable and legitimate.”

As a graduate of Calvin Theological Seminary and an ordained pastor in the

CRC, Paul hopes to maintain the connections among the churches in Korea, China and the United States. When asked what the global church can learn from the church in his country, Paul replied, “The Korean church, though having a lot of weaknesses, is indeed strong in evangelism and prayer and preaching. Korean pastors are so passionate and devoted in pastoral care, working from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.” These strengths have contributed to the significant growth of Christians since 1970. “The reasons for this growth, in my eyes, are the emphasis on active evangelism by devoted pastors, spiritual miracles, the economic/religious situation at that time, and most of all, God’s grace upon which every revival of God’s church should rely,” he says. Paul adds that the biggest need of the Christian church in his home country is “church polity based on Reformed faith and the application of sound doctrine in Christian life.”

As for Paul, his personal prayer request is “to learn more about how to harmonize Scripture and theology and the Christian life and to learn how to inculcate the church polity of the CRC in Korean churches.” Many blessings to you, Paul, and your family as you faithfully respond to God’s calling and serve His people around the world.



Paul Han

Source: CIA—The World Factbook

What's Transcendent About the Arts?

Jeremy Begbie Delivers 2014 Stob Lectures

Jeremy Begbie's flying fingers are an instrument of his spirituality, flitting as they do over the keys of a piano, producing temporal chords that nonetheless evoke a holy hankering for the mystery of the eternal and ineffable Composer of all things.

"Where do we take our ultimate theological bearings," Begbie asked during one of his two Stob Lecture presentations on a pair of snowy November evenings. "My concern is that we do not lose our nerve, that we never forget how distinctive our biblical texts are, how arresting is the Person who lives at their center, how strange is this God he knows as Abba Father, and what a stunning vision of transcendence is unveiled through his journey from birth through death to exaltation.

"Lose this orientation and we cut ourselves off from the only really transforming hope we have for the arts, or indeed anything else," he declared in an appearance cosponsored by Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin College.

For Begbie, a professor of theology at Duke Divinity School and a member of the music faculty at the University of Cambridge in his native England, the Stob Lectures provided a hospitable stage for him to explore the question, "What's Transcendent About the Arts?" in a familiar setting.

Begbie has been a frequent visitor and speaker on the campus, both at the Symposium on Worship organized by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship and at the celebrated lecture/cultural arts January Series at the college. His scholarly specialty is deeply personal, in many ways autobiographical. It is the intersection of faith and the arts, the crossroad at which his life's course changed when he was early in his college years and "came to faith" at the age of 19.



Jeremie Begbie

"Before that, I had relatively little interest in religion," he said. "I'm sure I believed in some kind of God, but it didn't really make much difference to my life. It was music that gave me meaning and purpose, a social network and engulfing emotional experiences. But after taking leave of high school, I began studying philosophy and during that time I got to know better a school friend who came from a dynasty of Scottish Presbyterian pastors. He introduced me to his father (James B. Torrance, a professor of systematic theology at the University of Aberdeen), who in turn introduced me to the New Testament."

Dr. Torrance was an accomplished man of letters and patience, recalled Begbie. "He treated me with nothing but grace," said Begbie. "My questions were crass, stupid and sometimes aggressive. But however silly the questions may have been, he took them and made something of them, with great kindness. At the deepest level, I sensed he had something I didn't have. So I came to the father through the son (in both senses!), and

that was the big turning point in my life."

Still enraptured by music, Begbie now was attracted to a new path. He felt a keen call to ordination and the ministry, and undertook a degree in philosophy and music at Edinburgh, went on to study theology at Aberdeen, and then trained for ordination at Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

Throughout his professional life as both a theologian and musician (pianist, oboist, conductor), Begbie has sought to reflect upon the ways in which faith and the arts inform and inspire each other. He's published a number of books, including *Voicing Creation's Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts*; *Theology, Music and Time*, and *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music*, the last of which won *Christianity Today's* 2008 Book Award in the Theology/Ethics area.

"At the time I entered this field, there had been relatively little written on the interface of faith and the arts," said Begbie, who credits Calvin-connected philosophers Nicholas Wolterstorff and

Calvin Seerveld with giving initial shape to his thinking about Christianity and the arts. “I appreciated their vision and appeal for an integrated mind that makes connections between disparate fields.”

Begbie has come to believe that the arts are essential in “helping us understand our culture very deeply,” and that the “strongest theological resources for furthering the theology and arts conversation come from the Reformed tradition.”

In his Stob Lectures, Begbie took his audience on a far-flung, multi-media journey into the realms of transcendence with flights of musical reverie and elegant oratory.

His main argument in the lectures centered on encouraging Christians to have the courage of their convictions, and understanding “transcendence” strictly out of the trinitarian Gospel, and not in terms of an unnameable, amorphous deity of the 19th Century.

Among the highlights:

- When then-Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams visited the seminary in Cambridge where Begbie once taught, he was asked, “What above all else would you like our trainee ministers to learn when they’re here?” To which he replied: “I’d like them to sense the pressure out of which Christianity burst.” The Archbishop, said Begbie, “wanted our students to remember that the New Testament was not written in the calm, collected atmosphere of a library, but in the midst of a rush of unstoppable divine energy.”
- “Christian contemplation, at its profoundest, is about being caught up in the pressure out of which Christianity burst, when God dethrones our egos (we can’t do that ourselves), and as we are changed into the likeness of the Son through the Spirit. True *perception* of the divine requires the *action* of the divine in us, specifically the Holy Spirit (a very Reformed stress).”

- “As we turn our faces to Jesus Christ, the one in whom transcendence has been decisively acted out in our midst—or rather let him face us—and begin to sense the pressure out of which Christianity burst, we’ll discover very quickly that our thinking and our speaking are part of what God came to redeem. God doesn’t let us stay as we are.”
- “By their very nature, the arts can testify to a truth witnessed to in the language of Scripture: that the world is always beyond our complete grasp and control, that there’s an excess of meaning in the world which always eludes our complete grasp. And in this way,

the arts, including the verbal arts like poetry, can witness to the origin and ground of this uncontainability—the God of Jesus Christ, a God of uncontainable generosity.”

- “No one put it better than G.K. Chesterton in his hymn: *‘From all that terror teaches/From lies of tongue and pen/From all the easy speeches/That comfort cruel men.../Good Lord, deliver us.’* Yes, from ALL easy speech. The arts at their best deliver the pastor (and the theologian) from easy speech, from finding words and then settling down in them like a warm blanket.”

—Bruce Buursma

FACULTY OPENING

Calvin Theological Seminary invites applications and nominations of qualified individuals for the faculty position of

Director of Mentored Ministries

Anticipated start date between July 1, 2015, and July 1, 2016

Duties include the following:

- Nurturing and assessing the personal, spiritual, and ministry formation of students
- Supervising internships and the mentoring program
- Helping students discern their gifts and calling
- Helping students and recent graduates find placement in suitable positions
- May include teaching, serving alumni, or assisting in other ways

We especially encourage applications from women and members of ethnic minority groups. Applicants must be committed to the confessions and mission of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

The Search Team will begin reviewing applications by May 1, 2015.



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- The new CEP website is more visually appealing and easier to navigate from a variety of computer and phone and tablet devices.
- New to the redesigned website is a section of sermon starter articles for biblical texts that are not covered anywhere in the three-year Lectionary cycle.
- New to the redesigned website is a "Reading for Preaching" section in which juicy quotes and nuggets of insight are posted by topic from the popular CEP seminar "Imaginative Reading for Creative Preaching."
- The CEP website continues to feature 4 new sermon starter ideas every Monday as featured on the new CEP homepage as well as an archive of materials covering hundreds of key biblical preaching texts.

