



# Connections

## WESTERN CANADA REGION

Report to Classes in Western Canada

Fall 2008

*Following Christ. In Mission Together*



Christian Reformed

## Home Missions

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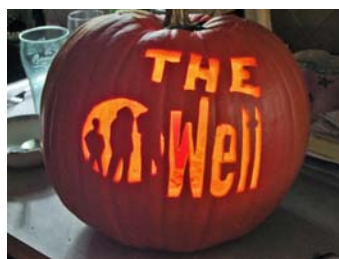
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### CHURCH PLANTING

**NEW CHURCH:** Victor and Eunae Ko have completed their first year of residency at The River. They have launched a new church called, **Mosaic House in Edmonton**. This new church is designed to be a cluster of house churches, in which launch team members will begin to meet with neighbors in their various neighborhoods, with all the house churches gathering together for corporate worship. One of the values of this new church is that it will be multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. Currently four families have joined the Ko's in this new work. The River continues to be supportive in a variety of ways, including encouraging their members to consider joining this new work, providing financial and other resources designed to help this new work flourish. A site for corporate worship has yet to be determined.

**NEW POSSIBLE SITES:** **Lethbridge** continues to be a city where there is considerable interest in a new plant, with Maranatha CRC acting as parent church. **Airdrie**, a fast growing community just north of Calgary has a significant number of CRC members and some have expressed interest in developing a church plant in that community. Feasibility studies have been conducted for both communities, documenting significant missional opportunities in these communities. Huge commercial and residential development in **south Surrey, BC** also offers significant opportunities that are being explored.

**ON-GOING WORK** in a number of church plants in various stages of development reveal the challenges and blessings of our mission as CRC in Western Canada. Yaletown, an urban plant in the heart of Vancouver is trying many ways to reach the thousands living in high rise condos. **Downtown Friends**, reveals a deep need many residents have for significant community in their lives. Mary-Lee Bouma has joined a variety of community organizations, and the group seeks to invite people for meals and bible study, all in an effort for the church to go out into the community. **The Tapestry** in Richmond has added a full time staff person focused on Discipleship and Congregational Life, joining Albert Chu in this growing ministry that regularly sees over 300 people in worship. **West Coast Community** in Delta, BC continues to reach out in word and deed. Pray for Joan Berry, the pastor's wife, as she will be submitting to knee replacement surgery this fall. **Cariboo Community** in Williams Lake remains a vibrant church focused on discipling people and growing leaders. **The Well**, in



Kelowna is working hard to reach the community of Rutland. One Sunday a month the church 'leaves the building' in an effort to take the love of Christ to the streets in a variety of service projects. The church has built many solid connections with the community, but it has been a slow process for folks from the community to also come to worship services, another reminder of the challenges of this work. **The River** in SW Edmonton continues to be a vibrant place of worship and ministry. The church has two morning worship services, and had done a number of creative things to engage the community.

A growing staff, and a vision to expand its ministry and the challenges of acquiring permanent facilities are challenging the congregation to focus its growth into multiplying new churches. Mosaic House is the first daughter church.

**The Lantern** in Calgary continues to bless the community of Inglewood with innovative ways of using its building and its people to serve the community. Besides the monthly Sunday morning service projects which have blessed the community for over 4 years already, the church also ties into local community events like a large summer festival. All these contacts are now leading to significant numbers of new people coming to check out this church that is so much part of its community.

*Hillside* was forced to relocate out of the Catholic school in which they were meeting and out of the immediate neighborhood in NW Calgary. This move caused some losses in attendance but the new location in Bears Paw, offers new opportunities. *New Hope, (Calgary)* is now an organized church, focused on intentional discipleship as well as continuing to offer creative ways of using the realities of daily life (the book of creation) to connect people to the scriptures.

**COCHRANE:** *The Annex*, a three year old plant in Cochrane closed its doors this past May, after struggling to build a viable congregation in that community. Robin and Anjanette Bailey and their family have returned to Ontario, and are seeking God's direction for their future. It is always disappointing when a new plant fails to take root and grow into a new worshipping community. We are using the experience to help us discern lessons to be learned, as well as be reminded that the work of church planting is difficult, demanding and needs to be bathed in continual prayer for the planters, the launch team as well as the community being reached.

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## COACHING

The Regional Ministry Team provided for coach training to 15 pastors and leaders in Western Canada this past year, in an effort to raise up a group of credential coaches to work alongside pastors and ministry leaders. "Coaching is about focusing, supporting and challenging an individual to clarify their goals, reach their potential and move to greater levels of effectiveness and fulfillment" as they live out God's calling in their lives. Phase 2 of the training will happen in October and 8 people are continuing their training, which will lead to becoming a credentialed coach. Conversations are underway to link our coaches with the denominational Sustaining Congregational Excellence (SCE) initiative which also would like to offer coaching to congregational leaders, as another way of encouraging local congregations to greater health and vitality.

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## MISSION FOCUSED CHURCHES (used to be called Established churches)

Within the denominational structures, Home Missions used to offer more financial grants to Mission Focused Congregations than it does today. Significant funds have been redirected from Home Missions to **Sustaining Congregational Excellence**, which to date serves primarily smaller churches. Churches of 150 members or less are able to apply for Technology and Equipment grants which offers up to \$1000 in matching funds to churches seeking to upgrade technology to enhance ministry and worship. A simple application form available from the denominational website is easy to fill out. Health and Renewal Grants which can exceed \$10,000 are available to churches who have innovative ideas for ministry within the congregation and also for outreach. Representing our Western Canada region, Karen Wilk (Edmonton) and Andrew Vanderleek (Vernon, BC) are both on the the SCE committee that administer these grants and would be able to answer questions. Home Missions together with SCE work collaboratively to support healthy congregations. Martin Vellekoop of Maple Ridge CRC is offering several Healthy Church seminars this fall in the region, which are focused on developing healthy systems within the body of Christ, to facilitate better communication, ways of dealing with conflict and preventing destructive behaviors from derailing the mission.

In addition, the Regional Ministry Team is available to provide consultation to congregations who would like to engage in strategic planning, assistance in leading Council or congregational retreats, or struggle with issues of viability, conflict or leadership dynamics.

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## CAMPUS MINISTRIES

Our region is blessed with 3 vibrant campus ministries that challenge students with the claims of the gospel, and help them integrate faith and learning. Rick Van Manen has completed his first year at **University of Alberta** and is building relationships in the university community and among students and faculty. He has had a good first year. Paul Verhoef at **U of Calgary** recently presented a paper at the international conference for campus ministers in Finland. A recent review of the work shows great appreciation among the university administration and staff, as well as students for Paul's work. Neil and Virginia continue a very effective ministry at **University of Northern BC** in Prince George. Cutbacks at the university, and turmoil in upper levels of university administration have all provided significant opportunities for our chaplains to minister in ways that are deeply appreciated. Neil has taught a course in Kenya this summer to university students there.



## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT NETWORKS (LDN)

Over 35 participants this past year were part of 3 lay leadership training networks. Billed as '*Reformed theological education for the whole people of God*', LDNs are happening again this fall in 3 locations: Surrey BC, Kamloops, BC and Calgary, AB.

Wilma Vanderleek, a former Christian school teacher and Regent College grad provides overall leadership and curriculum development based on guidelines provided by synod and coordinates the 3 year program for all three sites. Henry De Vries leads the Kamloops network and Curtis Kovers gives leadership to the Calgary network, called Chinook Mentoring Ministries, and Wilma leads the Surrey network. Among recent graduates of the three year program, two were ordained as ministry associates and serve on staff in local CRCs. The training involves participation in a-day-a-month interactive teaching forum, reading books dealing with biblical, theological issues, practicing ministry skills, writing reports and interacting with a personal mentor. For more information check out our website [www.bcldn.ca](http://www.bcldn.ca).

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## MISSIONAL TRAINING NETWORK

The Regional Ministry Team is proactively involved in learning more about innovative approaches to reaching the community. Much has been written recently about the missional church, where the emphasis is on the local church going out in intentional pro-active ways, to be the presence of Christ in the community. The goal is seeing communities and neighborhoods that are being transformed by the power of the gospel. While this is not new, some of the missional practices of incarnational churches are new. In the past the church has often been a 'come to us' kind of church in which we seek to bring the community into the church, where as the approach of the missional church movement is to join with what God is already up to in the neighborhood, and taking the church more directly into the community. Obviously these two approaches are not opposed to each other, but rather complement each other. Karen Wilk is giving leadership to a Missional Training Hub in Edmonton this fall, where pastors and leaders will explore what this means for our contextualized communities. Contact Karen for more information [kwministry@shaw.ca](mailto:kwministry@shaw.ca).

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**SMALL GROUPS** continue to be effective ways to enfold people into supportive communities of love and care. The Regional Team can provide training and consultation in this area of ministry. Contact Karen Wilk.

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## REGIONAL MINISTRY TEAM

The Regional Ministry Team is here to serve your congregation. If we can't deliver the service ourselves, we might be able to refer you to other denominational and regional resources. Our goal is to work alongside other denominational agencies, helping congregations engage people in ministry, assist leaders to navigate in changing times, and exploring ways to help the local church connect more directly to its community. Call any one of the team members listed or myself as team leader [martincontant@telus.net](mailto:martincontant@telus.net) (604)574-0669). Thanks for your continued support of Home Missions as we seek to partner with you for more fruitful, effective kingdom service.

Blessings,  
Martin Contant

Regional Leader- Western Canada