

The Monthly Heartbeat

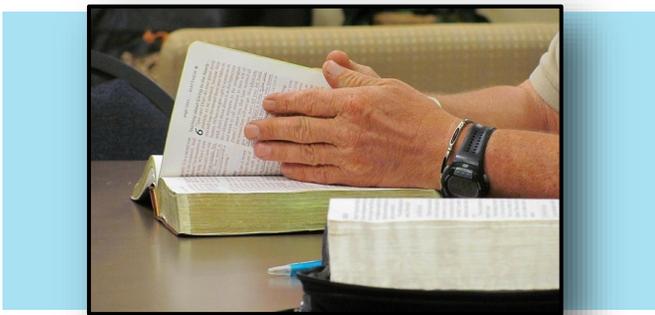
The Hope in Christ Church Newsletter

March 2019 Issue

The Goal of Biblical Counseling

By Pastor Scott

What is the goal of counseling generally? Is it to change a person's behavior? Is it to make a person more content with who they are? Is it to help a person through difficult times? Is it to find a better answer to life's problems than the pathway on which the counselee has been? According to the American Counseling Association, "Professional counselors help clients identify goals and potential solutions to problems which cause emotional turmoil; seek to improve communication and coping skills; strengthen self-esteem; and promote behavior change and optimal mental health."



What stands out to you about this definition and all the questions that preceded it? (Pause to answer before continuing on.) Every one of these questions and the ACA definition are person-centered. At first glance, that may sound good and even seem right, but there is a fatal flaw in an anthropocentric view of counseling: whenever things are human centered then God is an afterthought at best, and ignored at worst.

So, what should be the goal of counseling if the Bible were advising us? The goal of Biblical counseling must

be to encourage people to adopt the Heavenly Father's plan for their lives. Jesus told us that he wasn't doing his own will, but His Father's (Jn 6:38). He told us the 2 greatest laws were to love God and love others with everything we have and are (Mt 22:36-40). The Father's plan will always involve helping people to look beyond their behavior to their heart (Prov 4:23, 23:7, Mt 15:19). When people begin to look at their heart and the skewed desires, longing and yearnings that it produces, they will begin to recognize the idol factory within their person. This in turn will set them up for repentance and new life.

The goal of Biblical counseling, like all of life, must be to glorify God by knowing, living and proclaiming our hope in Christ (1Cor 10:31, 2 Cor 5:9). A person is changed by knowing God's all-surpassing love and forgiveness as well as his holiness and hatred of sin. When these truths are known and applied to the heart, one is able to live a life of confession, repentance and victory in reliance upon Jesus. When one lives rightly, there is hope that more and more of life can be brought into conformity to Christ.

It is tempting to think all of this can be done by human power, will and strength alone. But this is false. People must exert themselves in the pursuit of holiness. People must work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). But part of Biblical counseling is not only helping people to exert their efforts and think in the right ways, it is also about helping people realize that the only hope for real heart change comes from the Holy Spirit. He alone can give the heart of flesh in exchange for the heart of stone (Eze 36:26). God is the one who sustains us, the one who is transforming us, the one who is bringing His good work in us to completion (Jude 24-25, Phil 1:6). We must rely upon God and instruct others to do the same. When this becomes the goal of counseling, it will free us from the burden of needing to find the right solution, and it will help people to rely upon and trust in the only one capable of providing salvation – past, present and future. In short, the goal of Biblical counseling is to make much of God and little of ourselves.

Family Promise of Whatcom County Update

Dear Hope in Christ Family,

In our study book *Believe*, we just completed Chapters 7 (Humanity) and 8 (Compassion). There we learned of God's love and mercy for all of humanity and his desire that we become imitators of Christ by showing love and mercy to one another and especially to show compassion to the poor and needy.

One concrete way to show compassion is volunteering in the *Family Promise* ministry that we as a congregation adopted as an area of outreach.

As you will recall, we elected to play the role of a Support Church to a Host Church. Our Host is First Christian Church on Bakerview Rd. They have agreed, with our help, to host homeless families the **week of March 10-17**. That is just around the corner!

**Sign-up with Ali and Lorraine on February 24 and March 3.
We will be in the foyer right after the service.**

If your schedule doesn't permit participation this time, here are future opportunities to serve:

May 26 – June 2

September 15 – 22

December 8 – 15

If you have not been trained but would like to be involved, let us know so we can arrange training.

Also, to get a better understanding about how people become homeless, please read the accompanying article in today's Heartbeat entitled: **“Even Hard Workers Can Tumble Into Homelessness”** taken from the Interfaith Connection monthly newsletter.

Sincerely,

Ali Laninga, Coordinator

Lorraine Brouwer and *Herman Laninga*, Assistants

Even Hard Workers Can Tumble Into Homelessness

Submitted by Ali Laninga

If you're one of the 14,000 families in Whatcom County known as “working poor,” it wouldn't take much to push you into homelessness.

United Way says 39% of Whatcom County families are below the threshold known as ALICE: asset limited, income constrained, employed. Within Interfaith Coalition's Family Promise program, Linda (name changed) and her children are in this category.

Linda has fulltime employment, but an eviction coupled with this area's housing costs delivered the one-two punch that spun her into homelessness.

“Without the shelter of Family Promise, I don't know what she would do,” says Trudy Shuravloff, executive director of The Whatcom Dream, a local nonprofit that teaches financial literacy to low and middle-income people. Shuravloff counsels folks in Family Promise every week. About Linda's family, she says, “They needed Family Promise so they could save up; they were spending all their money on hotels. Being in Family Promise is

giving them a respite. It's support while they save. They have to pay off the back rent. They're almost done with that now.”

Even with fulltime work, if you have a medical emergency or car accident and are off for a month, you'll be behind in rent yet not qualify for government services, Shuravloff says. Your account goes to a collection agency, you wind up with a judgment or eviction, and no one will rent to you. “You can see how a family, even employed, can end up homeless,” Shuravloff says.

Living for a few weeks within Family Promise, Linda's paycheck can now go to pay off debt. “She's cleaning up the financial wreckage,” Shuravloff says. “She's doing everything right.”

After graduating from Family Promise, one of Linda's long term goals is owning a home, within a zero-down program designed for low-income folks. That will take Linda three or four years to achieve. “We work with clients long-term,” Shuravloff says. Home-ownership is an incredibly stabilizing factor.” The partnership between Interfaith Coalitions Family Promise and The Whatcom Dream is making it happen.

*This article is reprinted from Interfaith Connection,
January 2019.*

Commemorating the Canons

Submitted by Don Recker, Reprinted from “The Banner,” December 17, 2018

Written by Suzanne McDonald

Will your church be commemorating the 400th anniversary of the Canons of Dort? For some, the answer might be “Why would we want to do that?” Others might respond with an enthusiastic “yes,” perhaps eagerly anticipating an exposition of TULIP (total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and preservation of the saints).

The Canons have a mixed reputation, and because many of us haven’t read them, that’s how we know them—by reputation.

It doesn’t help that they deal with the doctrine of election, a topic we often prefer to avoid. The Canons remind us that sin’s effects run so deep that, left to ourselves, we could not possibly turn to Christ. But this reminder points us to the sheer grace of salvation. Only by the gift and work of the Holy Spirit are we set free to respond in faith to Christ and his saving work. We could never deserve this, and we could never muster up saving faith by ourselves. The Canons make clear that from eternity past to eternity future, salvation is entirely by God’s grace. This is foundational to our Reformed understanding of how God relates to us and we to God.

The Canons teach that not all will receive the gift of saving faith, but they speak of this with caution and restraint. In particular, we must never make assumptions about who might not be saved. Dispelling the myth that Calvinism dampens evangelism, the Canons strongly encourage us to proclaim Christ indiscriminately to everyone. Who knows whether the Spirit will lead someone to faith through our testimony? Even so, the writers of the Canons realize that this can be a troubling doctrine, so they offer considerable pastoral comfort, including for those going through times of doubt or even apparent loss of faith.

That said, because the main task of the Canons is to refute opposing views, the tone is sometimes harsh. It helps to explain this (if not excuse it) when we remember that disputes about election played a role in bringing the Netherlands to the brink of civil war in the years before the Synod of Dort.

Context also helps us understand the structure and purpose of the Canons. For example, have you ever wondered why they include five points of doctrine? It’s because they respond to five issues raised by the Arminians. This means we should never imply that the Canons are a summary of Reformed theology as a whole. The framers of the Canons would direct us to the Belgic Confession for that! The Canons simply clarify five disputed points about one doctrine.

We should also be rather wary of the memorable but flawed acronym TULIP. Just like the Canons, TULIP does not sum up all of Reformed theology. It doesn’t even say all that needs to be said about election! TULIP greatly oversimplifies the content of the Canons, and common misunderstandings of many of the terms—especially total depravity, limited atonement, and irresistible grace—distort what the Canons actually teach. Without explaining at length what TULIP does *not* mean, it can do more harm than good.

So, yes, let’s commemorate the Canons. But let’s do so in a way that properly respects their content and intent. Let’s actually read them rather than just reciting TULIP. And let’s recognize them for what they are: not a summary of Reformed theology, or even a full account of election, but a crucial clarification of some key issues that matter as much now as they did 400 years ago.

Discussion Questions

- 1. What kind of “reputation,” in your mind, do the Canons of Dort have? For what reasons do you think this confession has such a reputation?**
- 2. How does the Canons’ assertion that salvation is entirely by God’s grace give you comfort and assurance?**
- 3. How does the doctrine of God’s election motivate us to evangelism?**
- 4. How does recognizing the Canons’ limitations—for example, that its five points are not meant as a complete summary of the doctrine of election—help you better understand and appreciate its teachings?**

Whatcom Community News

MAKE PLANS FOR INSPIRE 2019: Inspire 2019 will again bring together people from across the CRC for a time of inspiration, connection, and encouragement on Aug. 1-3 in Windsor, Ontario. Designed for ministry volunteers and leaders from across our denomination, Inspire 2019 is a chance to discover new resources, connect with people in similar types of ministry, share your stories, and learn from others. Get the details at www.crcna.org/inspire.

CRC TOURS: Travel to the following locations:

- Southern Spain and the Andalusia region in March. For details, visit calvin.edu/go/travel.
- The paths of the Exodus from Egypt to Israel, March 15-April 1. For details, visit www.resonateglobalmission.org/exodus.
- Italy, March 28 to April 9. For details, contact weimje@calvinseminary.edu or (616) 328-3110.
- Egypt, April 2 to 10. For details, visit www.resonateglobalmission.org/Egypt.
- Israel and Jordan, Oct. 10-22. For details, contact wemje@calvinseminary.edu or (616) 328-3110.

THINK CHRISTIAN PODCAST: Think Christian has a new podcast. Editor and film critic Josh Larsen and popular Think Christian writers talk pop culture and how movies, music, video games, and TV can resonate with our faith. Listen at thinkchristian.net/podcast.

CONCERT TO BENEFIT LIGHTHOUSE

MISSION: The King's Men of Song will perform on March 24 at 3 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 1031 N. Garden St., Bellingham. The concert is free, and a love offering will be taken at the end to support the Lighthouse Mission's programs. For details, visit

<https://www.thelighthousemission.org/news-and-events/events/>.

LIGHTHOUSE GALA, AUCTION: Tickets are on sale for the Lighthouse Mission's annual "Light in the Night" Gala and Auction on Saturday, March 2, at 5 p.m. at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Bellingham. Enjoy live entertainment, dinner, a silent auction, raffle and inspiring stories of transformation among men, women and children who have experienced homelessness. To order individual tickets for \$70 or reserve a table of 10 for \$650, visit www.auctria.com/auction/missiongala. For more information about the event, including how to be a sponsor or donate auction items, contact Alissa at (360) 733-5120, ext. 109, or alissa.lmm@gmail.com. For more information about the Mission, visit www.thelighthousemission.org.



GEMS Baked Potato and Bunko Event



The GEMS will be hosting their annual Baked Potato Dinner and Bunko Night fundraiser on Friday, March 8 beginning at 6 p.m.

They will be serving baked potatoes with all the trimmings, chili, salad, and dessert followed by Bunko.

Invite your neighbors and friends for an evening of fun and fellowship - you may even win a prize!

The girls will be accepting donations for the dinner to help pay for GEMS ministry expenses.

Happy March Birthday!

02 John Koning

04 Anthony McConnaughey

10 Ruth Stadt

19 Caleb Roberts

22 Esther Vanden Bos

25 Miriam Speyer

26 Terry Vander Woude

29 Alice Skovron

31 Nathanael Cunningham

Getting to Know Our Church Family

By Elaine Snapper

Steve and Gina Nicolaas have been attending our church the past few months. You may have noticed the couple sitting near the front center of church. I'm featuring them this month.

Gina was born in Inglewood, California. She was adopted by Oscar and Jolois De Vries. Every two years the couple would adopt another child, and Gina is the second oldest of the four adopted children. There are two boys and two girls. The children are all of different descent--German, Irish, Dutch and English. Their mother made them all feel special telling them they were a prize in a cracker jack box; they were the toy in the bottom of the box. In 1968 the family moved to Sumas since their father wanted to be a farmer in order that he could be home more with his family. They purchased a dairy farm there. Previously he had been a truck driver.

The children attended Sumas Christian School. Gina attended there until sixth grade. At that time the Sumas school closed, and the four children all attended Lynden Christian, from which they all graduated. They worshipped at Faith Reformed Church in Lynden.

After graduation Gina attended college one year at Skagit Valley College, and then she worked at Peoples State Bank in Everson. In 1986 she obtained a job with the County in the Building Dept., and that is where Gina is currently working as a building inspector.

Gina has two daughters, Darcy and Wendy, both of whom are married, and she has three grandchildren.

Steve was born in a hospital in North Bellingham. He has five siblings-- three brothers and two sisters. He originally lived on the Smith Road and Everson Goshen Road, and then the family moved near Parberry's in Old Town in Bellingham. Steve attended Roeder Elementary School. In 1974 the family moved to Ferndale, and then Steve attended Vista Middle School. He graduated from Ferndale High School. He wasn't interested in college, but he was interested in entering demo derbys, and he raced cars for several years at the Hannegan and Deming Speedways and even at the Lynden fair,

Steve's mother was employed in the fish cannery in Bellingham and later worked at Sea K Fish Company in Blaine. His father, Elmer Nicolaas, had a wrecking yard on the Axton Road, and also raised pigs and sold hog fuel to farmers.

Steve's last name, Nicolaas, which is Dutch, is a pretty common name and is highly honored in Holland. Interestingly enough, the family was previously known as St. Nicolaas. However, they had to drop the "St." because of Santa Claus. A cousin of the family, Joe St. Nicolaas, from Holland won some event in the Olympics about 12 years ago. Steve's family is from Montana. The De Vries name is also pretty honored in Holland. There are two dialects. A lot of the De Vries family also settled in Montana, and the De Vries name is very common there.

Steve and Gina met when he had a problem with the County Building Dept. His son knew Gina's daughter and they were friends. Gina's daughter, Darcy, gave her friend, who was Steve's son, the personal phone number of Gina, who worked in that department. He contacted her, and she gave him advice. From that they got acquainted and dated for several years. They got married about three years ago. Steve has two sons, Matt and Gary. He has two grandchildren, so between him and Gina they have five grandchildren, three boys and two girls.

When I asked the couple about hobbies, Gina said she likes to read and swim, and she enjoys beaches--especially with the weather we have been having, she realizes she really likes beaches. Steve enjoys bowling and playing pool. They don't travel much because they are pretty tied down with the pigs, but they hope to go to Hawaii one of these days and also travel to California to see Disneyland and Knotts Berry Farm. Steve has never been to the latter two places before.

When I asked the couple how they happened to come to our church, they said it was through Mark Ruiter. Steve raises pigs. Mark at one time tried to get Steve to work for him. Jen Roberts came at one time and picked up 13 - 20 pigs from Steve, and they have been getting pigs ever since. Pastor Scott showed up the second time the Roberts went to the Nicolaas farm.

Steve and Gina were searching for a smaller church. They had attended Sunrise Baptist Church and tried the Cornwall Church of God, but it was too big for them. They were invited to come to our church, and they like it, and they are talking about joining.

We're glad that Steve and Gina have come to Hope in Christ Church. They have already served as greeters once, and they'll be doing that again sometime soon. Say "hello" to them and welcome them to our church.

Writer's note: Steve and Gina are a very interesting couple. Although I did not know them before they started attending our church, we found we knew several people in common. We realized it really is a small world!

Hospitality Team News

By Ruth Stadt

March has five Sundays - that means we will be enjoying a potluck lunch together on March 31 after Sunday school.

Hospitality Team wants to put a different spin on the menu. This month our potluck menu will have Mexican dishes and salads.



Look for more information in upcoming bulletins!

REGISTER FOR *NEW WAY* FUNDRAISER

Author, pastor and teacher Gary Thomas will be the guest speaker for the New Way Ministries annual fundraiser — “Spread the Love” — on March 22. Thomas has written 19 books, regularly appeared on Christian television shows and radio programs, and been a speaker at national conferences. He and his family lived in Whatcom County for a number of years, and he is excited to return to support what he considers to be an “amazing local ministry” that offers hope and healing to homeless women and children. For more info, contact Suzanne Olson at (360) 354-9930 or suzanne@new-way-ministries.org. To register, contact Edi at (360) 354-9930 or Edi@new-way-ministries.org or go online at christianhopeassociation.org.

Deacon’s Digest

By Elaine Snapper

By the time you read this article, our movie night will be past. Hopefully you were able to make it to see “The Greatest Showman” at our church on Fri., Feb. 22, and you enjoyed the movie and the snacks provided by the deacons.

Our church is continuing to bring chili or soup and rolls to Fountain Community Church for the homeless through the month of February, but this program does end at the end of February. Our church has done a wonderful job of providing meals each Wednesday for the past three months.

Lisa DeSalvo has done a great job of collecting items for two baskets for the fundraisers and auction for both the Lighthouse Mission and Interfaith. These events will take place in the month of March.

Giving in January 2019

	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Designated Fund Offerings:	\$ 2,035	\$ 12,323
General Fund Offerings	\$21,079	\$ 42,079
Rent / Utilities Income	<u>2,885</u>	<u>5,269</u>
Total Undesignated Income	23,964	47,348
General Fund Expenses	<u>(20,399)</u>	<u>(37,471)</u>
Income Over(Under) Expenses	\$ <u>3,565</u>	\$ <u>9,877</u>
Total 2018 budget, including ministry quotas		\$ 234,133
Year-to-Date Budget for 12 months		\$ 39,022
Total Undesignated Income		<u>47,348</u>
Income Over (Under) Budget		\$ <u>8,326</u>

Loan Balances:

Classis: \$ 15,000

March 2019

Sermons

- 3/3 **Stewardship**
Matthew 25:14-30
Believe Chapter 9
- 3/10 **Jesus is Coming Back**
Revelation 22:12-13
Believe Chapter 10
- 3/17 **The Sound of Worship**
Psalm 95:1-7
Believe Chapter 11
- 3/24 **Prayer: A Way of Life**
Philippians 4:4-7, Colossians 4:2-4
Believe Chapter 12
- 3/31 **Bible Study Practicum**
1Peter 1
Believe Chapter 13

Greeters

- 3/3 Herm & Ali Laninga
- 3/10 Lou & Ev Kooistra
- 3/17 Don & Elaine Snapper
- 3/24 Del & Pat Bosman
- 3/31 David & Ida Richards, Junior Johnson

Cookies

- 3/3 Karen Smith, Elaine Snapper
- 3/10 Christine Speyer, Terry Vander Woude
- 3/17 Ruth Stadt, Megan Speyer
- 3/24 Donna Van Beek, Jenn Boer
- 3/31 Barb Zylstra, Pat Bosman

Serving Assistants

- 3/3 Zeke, AnaMaria, Abee
- 3/10 Brenna, Chantel, Caleb
- 3/17 Amber, Grace, Michal
- 3/24 Micah, Faith, Amariah
- 3/31 Kylie, Clara, Abee

Prayer Room

- 3/3 Lanny Speyer
- 3/10 Len Vander Woude
- 3/17 Denise Doezema
- 3/24 Chuck Dean
- 3/31 Lorraine Brouwer

Offerings

- 3/3 Kingdom Advancement Fund
- 3/10 Kingdom Advancement Fund
- 3/17 Outreach Fund
- 3/24 Kingdom Advancement Fund
- 3/31 Benevolence Fund

*Ushers/*Foyer*

- 3/3 Barb & *Joe Zylstra
- 3/10 Don Knutson, *Joe Pruitt
- 3/17 Gina & *Steve Nicolaas
- 3/24 Helen Bowman, *Lou Kooistra
- 3/31 Hildred & *Clair Abee

Children & Worship

- 3/3 Jen Roberts, Ali Laninga
- 3/10 Dan Obbink, Zeke
- 3/17 Marjie Herold, Mattea
- 3/24 Jen Roberts, Kylie
- 3/31 Marjie Herold, Amber

Sunday School

- 3/3 Aaron, Christine, Darlys, Joe P. (observer)
- 3/10 Aaron, Darlys, Diane, Ida (observer)
- 3/17 Aaron, Darlys, Diane, Lisa D. (observer)
- 3/24 Aaron, Darlys, Diane, Rockelle (observer)
- 3/31 Aaron, Jenn B., Terry V (observer)

*Unable to serve on your date?
Please call someone else on the list and trade days.*



March 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 9:30 a.m. Worship & Communion 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	4 6:00 p.m. GEMS	5	6 9:45 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Elders / Deacons	7 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Practice	8 6:00 p.m. GEMS Bunco & Dinner Fundraiser	9
10 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 4:30 pm Roberts' Group 4:30 Jesus Gathering 7:00 p.m. Laninga Group	11 7:00 p.m. Friendship Class	12 6:00 p.m. Richards' Study 6:30 p.m. Boer's Study	13 9:45 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Council	14 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Practice	15	16
FAMILY PROMISE MARCH 10-17						
17 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	18 6:00 p.m. GEMS	19	20 9:45 a.m. Women's Bible Study	21 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Practice	22	23
FAMILY PROMISE						
24 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 4:30 pm Roberts' Group 7:00 p.m. Laninga Group	25 7:00 p.m. Friendship Class	26 6:00 p.m. Richards' Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Boer's Bible Study	27 9:45 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Worship Planning Team	28 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Practice	29	30 NW MINCON 2019 Bellevue
31 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School Potluck Lunch						