

# NEWS

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## Calvin Profs Say Evolution Evidence Conflicts with Reformed Creeds

Two professors at the Christian Reformed Church's official college have published scholarly articles asserting that strong evidence from both biblical studies and science creates conflicts with parts of the historic Reformed confessions.

Daniel Harlow and John Schneider are religion professors at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich.

In particular, they question whether Adam and Eve actually existed, whether there was a literal Fall, and whether we need to reinterpret the doctrine of original sin as presented in the Reformed confessions.

Harlow wrote that he was exploring from the perspective of



**Daniel Harlow**

mainstream biblical scholarship, which is that "Adam and Eve are strictly literary figures—characters in a divinely inspired story . . . that intends to teach primarily theological, not historical, truths about God, creation, and humanity."

Schneider wrote that the traditional understanding of the Fall does not fit with current science: "[The] narrative of human evolution makes it very hard, if not impossible, to maintain [the position that human and demonic creatures are responsible for evil]. For it seems, on this science, that

not just natural evils . . . but also the disposition for human moral evils, are practically part of God's original design."

Harlow and Schneider were working under authority of the college, according to Harlow. Provost Claudia Beversluis did not respond to *The Banner's* request to verify Harlow's statement.

According to an article in *Chimes*, the college's student newspaper, college president Gaylen Byker said at a faculty senate meeting that the two professors had violated the Form of Subscription, which requires Calvin College faculty to teach and write in accordance with Reformed confessions.

## Ontario Church Once Again a Refuge

For the second time in a year, East Christian Reformed Church in Strathroy, Ontario, was a refuge in a snowstorm for stranded travelers. The same blizzard stranded two CRC employees.

On December 13, the church housed over 50 motorists for 48 hours when a blizzard closed a nearby major highway. The church also sheltered motorists in similar circumstances in January 2010 (see *Banner*, April 2010).

The recent storm stranded John Orkar, an employee of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee who was visiting North America from Jos, Nigeria.

Ben Vandezande, director of Christian Reformed Home Missions, was stranded as well. He spent 20 hours either in his car or

checking on occupants of cars stopped around him. Both Orkar and Vandezande were eventually brought to warm places.

Throughout the 20-hour wait, noted Vandezande, he felt secure. "I felt an amazing sense of calm

. . . a profound sense of the personal presence of God."

—Anita Brinkman

**Stranded motorists found a steady supply of food and company in the gym of East CRC.**





John Schneider

In response to Byker's public statement, biology professor Stephen Matheson wrote in *Chimes* that "members

of our faculty are being attacked for taking particular positions, perceiving threats against their jobs."

In May 2010, the college adopted new rules for resolving disputes about the confessional integrity of faculty or their work. Byker told *The Banner* the college is following those guidelines.

Byker said, "It is our hope and desire that our constituency will be patient with us as we walk this deliberate path. Please be assured of our commitment to the creeds and confessions of the Christian Reformed Church."

Calvin physics professor Loren Haarsma co-wrote a book on Christianity and evolution with his wife, Deborah Haarsma. He said that a conversation between academic disciplines about hominid/human evolution is overdue on the campus.

"The fossil evidence does not point to a single pair of ancestors for the human race," he said. "We feel we have to ask these questions because our study of God's world has forced us to ask these questions."

For much more on this story, including links to the professors' articles, please visit [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).

—Roxanne Van Farowe



SARAH BOONSTRA

Ronald Chase served communion to Jay Niebur at a Boulder Christmas Eve service that incorporated people from a local homeless shelter.

## Colorado Church Makes Room on Christmas Eve

When Crestview Christian Reformed Church in Boulder, Colo., discovered that its turn to be an overnight shelter for people who live on the street coincided with its Christmas Eve service, they planned a service that would include their guests.

More than twenty people who live on the streets or in shelters participated in the service, with more at the potluck dinner following.

The church functions as an overflow facility for the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless on Friday evenings through the winter.

Dinner after the service was crowded as people mingled over casseroles, fried chicken, and Christmas cookies.

—Sarah Boonstra

## Michigan Man Elected to House of Representatives

Bill Huizenga, a lifelong member at Haven Christian Reformed Church in Zeeland, Mich., was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in November.

Huizenga said he ran for the office for five main reasons: his five children. "I'm not satisfied with the world they are inheriting, and I am adamant about cleaning up the mess that has been created," he said.

Huizenga's number one goal in Washington will be to stop out-of-control spending. "We cannot borrow our way to prosperity," he said.

—Karen Gorter

Bill and Natalie Huizenga with (left to right): Alexandra, Will, Sieger, Garrett, and Adrian



## British Columbia Man Wins National Research Award



JENNY DEGROOT

Joel Pel, winner of an Innovation Challenge Award

You might not understand what Joel Pel does, but you might well see the results of his research on a future episode of "CSI."

Pel, 27, a member of First Christian Reformed Church in Vancouver, British Columbia, won a Canadian Innovation Challenge Award.

Pel developed a new technique and instrument for purifying and extracting DNA from previously too-small or contaminated samples.

"It certainly is an honor," reflected Pel. "I have worked with a great supervisor and team at [University of British Columbia], without whom this would not have been possible."

—Jenny de Groot