

## Medenblik Appointed Seminary President

**R**ev. Julius Medenblik came to Synod 2010 as a delegate from Classis Chicago South—and left as the next president of Calvin Theological Seminary.

Synod approved Medenblik's nomination at the end of an hour-long, wide-ranging interview before delegates, members of his congregation, family, and many other observers.

He will take office in August 2011.

Medenblik, 49, is founding pastor of New Life Christian Reformed Church, a congregation he planted in New Lenox, Ill., that has grown to 700 members with three worship services.



Before entering the ministry, he had a brief career in civil law in Florida. He is a graduate of Trinity Christian College, the University of Florida Law School, and Calvin Theological Seminary.

During the interview, which was conducted by Rev. Cal Hoogendoorn and included questions from delegates, Medenblik spoke about his life, his family, his ministry, his law background, and his vision for the seminary.

"My greatest hope is that we would train leaders and pastors who are committed to the history

**Rev. Julius Medenblik (r) was appointed to be Calvin Theological Seminary's next president, effective August 1, 2011.**

of Christianity, who are theologically astute, who are warm in their hearts, and who are mission-oriented," he said.

The health of the Christian Reformed Church and the health of the seminary are directly related, Medenblik said, and they need to be in constant dialogue and conversation.

One great challenge facing the denomination and the seminary,

he said, is staying rooted in a strong Reformed heritage while effectively reaching out to a world that needs to know God better.

"God is seeking to build communities of faith that reflect his heart," Medenblik said.

Delegates gave Medenblik a standing ovation as the interview ended, then rose again to shout their unanimous approval as the motion to affirm his nomination was made.

Following a benediction and prayer, Medenblik was joined on the floor of synod by his wife, Jackie, for greetings from delegates and friends.

"This is a joyous moment—to see the Spirit of God at work," synod president Rev. Aldon Kuiper said.

—Henry Huisjen



**Rev. Jerry Dykstra: "I know and trust that God will take us where he wants us to go."**

## Executive Director Cites CRC's Joys, Challenges

**W**hile the Christian Reformed Church has much to be joyful about, its executive director, Rev. Jerry Dykstra, told Synod 2010 the denomination is also facing serious challenges.

Alive, vibrant, and well, the CRC is transforming lives worldwide with the gospel of Jesus Christ and the "cup of cold water," Dykstra said, in what has become known as the annual State of the Church address. Dykstra also said the CRC provides thoughtful ecumenical and theological leadership that is much appreciated in the larger Christian community.

"I'm proud of the Christian Reformed Church in a humble sort of way," he said, expressing joy at

seeing church members of all ages "living in harmony with God and his creation."

The greatest challenge facing the CRC, Dykstra said, is diversity at all levels—and he used synod as an example.

"I'm extremely disappointed that this year we have half the number of ethnically diverse delegates that we had a year ago," he said.

Dykstra identified an increasing distrust of institutions and leaders as another problem the church must overcome.

"We need to find a way as brothers and sisters in Christ to support each other, to support our leaders, and to trust one another," he said.

Other challenges facing the CRC, Dykstra noted, include a tendency toward congregationalism—"more allegiance to causes outside the church than to what we do together as a denomination"—and the danger of allowing political perspectives to take precedence over biblical ones.

But we can face the future without fear, he said, because the church serves a God we can trust for the future.

"We are on a journey together," he said. "I don't know exactly where it's going to take us, but I know and trust that God will take us where he wants us to go."

—Henry Huisjen