

# ALT

## REFORMED CHURCH

### ARTICLES

#### I Could Never Do That

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

I remember well, years ago, when I was called upon to step into a ministry area I was not equipped for. Earlier in the year, I'd been challenged to go on a mission trip. I figured about the only thing I had to offer was that I played trumpet, so I searched for mission groups I could join. So, for only about \$3500, I was allowed to play trumpet with the [Celebrant Singers](#).

After a couple weeks of rehearsing in California, we split into four teams and headed out. I still felt inadequate on playing the trumpet part and felt totally shoved out of my comfort zone. (FYI the [music hasn't changed](#) much, but the musicians certainly have gotten older.)

We played through our first set of songs, one team member shared their testimony, the director asked people to stand if they wanted someone to pray for them, and then he turned to the team and said, "Go pray with people." I very slowly got up from my chair, hoping the team would get to everyone and I would be off the hook.

Nope, there were plenty of people standing, and so I stepped up. I guess God equipped me in the moment for this ministry. I quickly learned how to pray for others.

“God equips the called” is a great slogan. It’s often connected with “God does not call the equipped.” However, both can be misleading.

The first refers to anyone stepping into a ministry who doesn’t feel ready. No doubt, many of us feel ill-equipped to do new things. We need the encouragement that God can and will use us anyway.

Susanna, Ian’s girlfriend, recently left her car with us for a bit and as she explained how to start her car, I pretty quickly concluded I was not going to try moving it. I needed some encouragement, even with some equipping. It just seemed way more complicated than turn the key. I never moved the car.

Others seem to have an inner confidence that they can do anything. Our kids were pretty cautious, but I’ve heard plenty of parents lament the overconfidence of their child. Some youth feel completely ready to drive, yet they do not understand the laws or quirks of the particular car.

In ministry, whether it’s greeting, serving coffee, teaching Sunday school, praying publicly, or preaching, some feel ill-equipped and others are blissfully confident. I believe God is always working to stretch us so that we grow in our ability to serve others.

**We need hearts, hands, and heads that are fully equipped to serve God’s people.**

When I was in seminary, I was confident in directing worship teams. I was learning to teach the Bible, but needed more experience with people. So, the “teaching church” stuck me on the greeter team. They paired me up with a

rock-star greeter, and I learned the trade (not that it's a strength of mine, but just imagine how bad I was 25 years ago.)

**We cannot limit ourselves to ministry we are comfortable with! The kingdom will never grow if we say "I could never do that."** We must remember these two truths:

**1. God does equip us.** No doubt, we can trust God to guide us and lead us as we serve others. He is the source of wisdom (James 1:5). He is our guide (2 Thes. 3:4-5). He is our strength (2 Thes. 3:3). We cannot live in fear and insecurity (2 Tim. 1:7). God will equip you for whatever He calls you to do.

**2. We must be learners.** God uses the disciples to equip disciples. We must be willing to learn from others. Do you want a pastor, elder, or Sunday school teacher touting that they will be fine in spite of never really reading the Bible or praying much? After all, "God equips the called." No, you want someone who wants to learn, someone who wants to grow to maturity, someone with competency in the ministry they do.

Paul was not content to have a crowd. He raised up mature, Christ-like leaders. *"We proclaim him by instructing and teaching all people with all wisdom so that we may present every person mature in Christ."* (Col 1:28 NET)

I am thrilled to see the [Alliance organize pathways](#) toward ordination. I get it, most of you have no desire to be ordained, but you should have a desire to be mature, and the pathways to pastoral ordination lay out the [foundational competencies](#) for ministry leadership. In the coming months, I hope to walk through the major areas of spiritual maturity outlined by the Alliance. (Check out other updates on the Alliance below.)

**I pray you will surrender yourself to the Lord for whatever ministry he calls you to.** Join me in pursuing spiritual maturity.

**Pray:** Lord, I confess that fear too often limits me in serving you. Forgive me and move me to step up when you call. Open doors for me to serve in new ways that help me grow in faith and to be more like you. Mold me, make me, fill me, use me. Amen.

## Speak Life

By Jessa Ter Beest

I can't believe it's been a decade since beginning a youth ministry career at Alto. What a blurr and a blessing it's been! I never could have imagined when Gwen Loomans wrote to me in my sophomore summer journal 17 years ago that she thought I'd "make a smashing youth pastor". I don't think she knew at the time that God would use the memory of those words to change the direction of my life a few years later. God has grown me and shaped me into the person I am today because of this ministry, the prayers of our congregation, and of course the many kids I've been able to grow with through this ministry.

I want to use this story to encourage you to speak life into the preteens and teens in your life. Celebrate their successes, call out their strengths, and most of all disciple them in their relationship with Jesus. These years are some of the most confusing in their life. It's hard to know what direction God is calling them. It's hard to know their purpose. It's hard to find their identity. Be present with them in this confusion. Encourage them to ask the questions, express the doubts, and ultimately to find the answers in God. Read the Bible with them, pray for them and with them, and bless them! God is raising up an incredible generation - let Him bless you by being a part of it!

## Keepers of the Kingdom

By Lynnae Loomans

What a great week we had at Vacation Bible School learning about putting on the armor of God. We averaged 130 kids per day and were able to raise a total of \$4,000 for the MVP Access for Recess. That total included Sunday School and Bible Class offering from the year. Thank you to every single person who donated items and to my guides who were in groups with the children and leaders.

## Library News

The new books are in so come in and browse to find a good book to read on a hot day! When we can't find the truth from our government, when we are horrified about what is happening daily in our country and when our Christian faith about who we are and our beliefs is being laughed at, read the greatest book there is - the Bible or come to the library to build up your faith and help us put on the armor to meet each day with love, truth, and understanding for everyone.

## MESSAGES

Whether you prayed for me, sent a card, called me on the phone, or stopped by with some goodies during the time of my brother Glen's death, I want to thank you for thinking of me.

-Marilyn Kamphuis

MVP Access for Recess would like to thank all the kids, along with their families, for your beautiful hearts and VERY generous donation. The money you gave will soon be used to build a beautiful playground that will benefit ALL kids who are so very precious in his sight.

# EVENTS

**Mark your calendar...**

**Alto Reformed Church**  
**July 2023**

**Summer JAM**  
**July 9 & 23**  
All 3 year olds - incoming 5th graders are invited to join us for Summer JAM (Jesus and Me) during the service. Kids will be invited to the basement before the sermon starts for games, activities or crafts focused around a Bible lesson just for kids (split into PreK & elementary groups).

**Summer Celebration**  
**July 16**  
Join us at 5-7pm at McCune Park. Invite your friends and join us for food, fellowship, bounce houses, kickball, and a homerun derby! If you would be willing to bring a pan of bars, please sign-up at the Information Center.

**Men's Golf Outing**  
**July 23**  
Join us for a fun afternoon of golf on Sunday, July 23rd at 3:30pm at The Rock Golf Club in Waupun. 9 holes of golf (including cart) + meal = \$40. Sign-up individually or as a group at the information desk or by contacting Joel by July 16th. If you'd rather not golf, but still want to join in you're invited to join us for the meal, just talk to Joel Bruins.

For detailed information:  
Call 920.346.5505 or email [office@altoreformedchurch.org](mailto:office@altoreformedchurch.org)

# NEWS

## Alliance Governing Board Updates to the Churches

**June 19, 2023**

Appreciation was expressed to governing board members Dale Ringerwole and Barbara Yandell, whose terms as members of the "launching governing board" will be complete June 30. Two new boards members will soon come on.

Two new congregations have been approved to be received, upon their release from their classes. They are First Ref. Church of Palisades, Ft. Lee NJ, and West Copake Ref. Church of Copake, NY.

An update on the planning of the Alliance Gathering in August notes that a few over 200 have registered to attend. This reaches the goal that we had hoped

for. Funding has been secured for almost the whole budget. A late addition to the budget of approx. \$3,500 to record and make available the sessions of the Gathering for others to view later on pushes us to secure approx. \$2,500 additional funds for this expense. The board believes this will be money well spent.

Funding matters were discussed. Originally for the year 2023 only \$10,000 was budgeted for the work of setting up a credentialing system. The work of Nathan Hitchcock is taking shape and moving ahead. Regional networks have also hired him for work specific to their networks. The work Nathan is accomplishing for the Alliance as a whole will be approximately additional \$40,000 for the rest of 2023. This budget gap reflect the reality that the cost of this new credentialing system was not fully understood in the early stages of development. But the progress that has been made, and the attractiveness of this model, justifies the cost in the long run.

Funding for the Alliance's share of promised financial support to regional network staff positions amounts to \$68,000 for the year 2023. This is actually less than budgeted. This financial support will need to be distributed before the end of the year.

Some of the funding difficulties are attributive to the reality that many congregations who have completed their financial commitments to the RCA have not yet begun to send in their gifts (1% commitment) to the Alliance. We hope these congregations will soon send in their contributions.

Documents pertaining to CEO Expectations and Job Description were approved by the board.

An orientation process for new Alliance Governing Board members was also approved.

The Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRC) General Synod unanimously approved "the Alliance as a "church in cooperation," working toward being a "church in communion." By way of exception, Synod allowed ARC churches or ARC officebearers with previous dual CRC-RCA credentials to maintain their CRC affiliation. Synod directed the Office of General Secretary to appoint a team of staff and experts to work with ARC on its communion

status, orderly exchange of officebearers, and other related matters.” The CRCs will set up a team to meet with Alliance delegates (Alliance board members Joel Baar and Gary Hegstad) to move ahead with this recognition of ministry. This would be the same status the RCA presently has with the CRC.

Many pastors and congregations have been in contact the last two weeks with Joel and Tim in regard to information about the Alliance and their consideration of applying to join.

Tim Vink shared with us the registrations for the Gathering. It is exciting to see so many Dakota Network members planning on attending!

Our next governing board meeting is scheduled for July 10. My reports may drop off the next two months as the summer schedule becomes busier, but I will be trying to keep you all in mind to keep you as best updated as I can!

Keep praying for the Alliance and the work of the Kingdom of God that He has called us to!

Pastor Gary Hegstad  
Alliance Governing Board Member, Dakota Network