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Gwen Vryhof Bultema  
Bultema Group  
616-617.6284  
gwen@bultemagroup.com



## **Nationally-Recognized Special Educator Publishes New Book**

*Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship* offers practical advice to nurture faith formation in children and adults with disabilities

**GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. (January 2015)** --- Barbara J. Newman, an author and contributor to more than 20 books and resources relating to disability ministry and inclusion, offers practical ideas and advice to churches worldwide in her latest book, *Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship*. The 128-page book, published by CLC Network, encourages churches to introduce the Gospel and nurture faith formation within children and adults with disabilities.

"I heard the mother of a child with autism ask a well-known speaker how she could introduce her daughter to God several years ago," said Newman. "The speaker replied, 'God is too hard for people with autism to understand.' and it broke my heart."

"I'm often asked questions similar to this in my work with parents and church leaders around the country," continued Newman. "In fact, these questions were part of the impetus for starting the Church Services division of CLC Network eight years ago. Though we've published resources on inclusion and specific disabilities, I wanted to give readers of diverse denominations and roles a way to think about how each person in their congregation can use the gifts God has given them to grow in their relationship with God."

Using the Vertical Habits framework developed by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (CICW), Newman provides ideas to foster faith formation among everyone in a congregation through creating an inclusive worship environment. The Vertical Habits framework is a process to connect words used in relationship with people to words used to express emotions to God. There are eight Vertical Habits, including: Love You, I'm Sorry, Why?, I'm Listening, Help, Thank You, What Can I Do?, and Bless You. *Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship* gives readers a set of tools to get to know a person with disability and an in-depth guide to integrate the eight Vertical Habits into their faith practice.

"People of all ages and with all kinds of complementary abilities and capacities who immerse themselves in the practices described in this book will find themselves growing in grace and

knowledge of Jesus Christ,” said John D. Witvliet, director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.

Thanks to the contributions of Betty Grit, former CICW Worship Renewal Grants Program Manager, *Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship* is the first published resource to use Vertical Habits..

“Since 2005, more than fifty schools and churches across North America have adapted the Vertical Habits into their corporate worship,” said Grit. “This resource will provide communities with the tools to create a place where all believers can learn and practice the habits together.”

The book is based on Newman’s thirty years of experience in special education at Zeeland Christian School and consulting with congregations across North America. She has created and contributed to more than twenty books and resources, including: *Autism and Your Church: Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of People with Autism Spectrum Disorders*, *Helping Kids Include Kids with Disabilities*, and *Body Building: Devotions to Celebrate Inclusive Community*. Newman frequently speaks at national church and educational conferences on autism spectrum disorder, behavior management, inclusion, and much more.

“This book was made possible by an anonymous donor who values the relationship between a Christian school, church, and family,” shared Elizabeth Lucas Dombrowski, CLC Network advancement director. “We are grateful for their support and their love for God’s children at all levels of ability and disability. This donor’s deeply rooted conviction that all children are covenant children is a blessing to each individual who receives this book.”

*Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship* can be purchased from the CLC Network Online Store at [www.clcnetwork.org/accessiblegospel](http://www.clcnetwork.org/accessiblegospel). Thanks to a generous gift from CICW, this book is available at the reduced rate of \$10.00 per copy. Attendees of CICW’s Symposium on Worship on January 29-31, 2015 at Calvin College will be invited to receive a free copy of the book when they visit the CLC Network exhibit.

**About CLC Network:**

CLC Network is a national non-profit committed to promoting the development of people with a variety of abilities and disabilities to live as active, integrated members of their communities. The organization partners with families and organizations to more fully understand individuals with disabilities and to build support systems that enable their inclusion in all aspects of life. For more information on CLC Network or a list of available resources, visit [www.clcnetwork.org](http://www.clcnetwork.org).

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