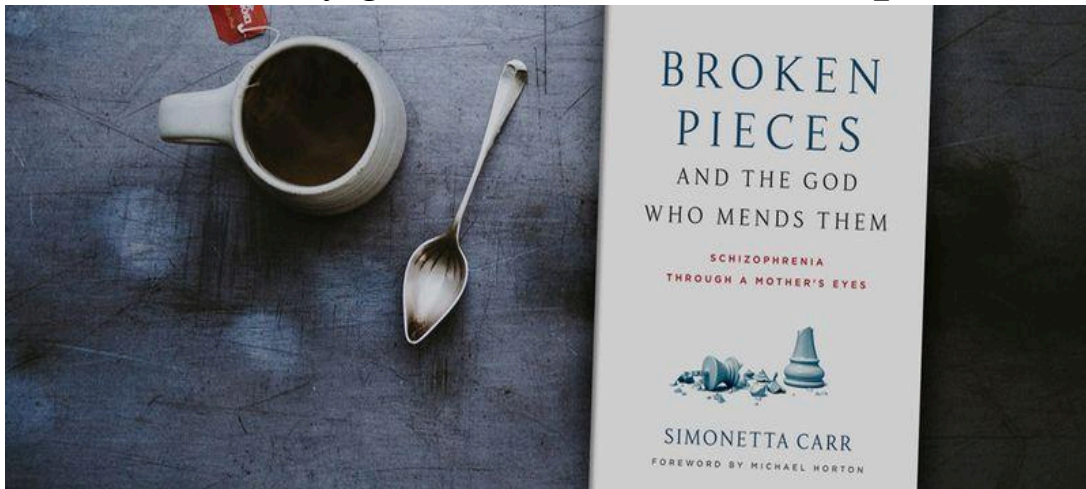


Mini-Conference:
“Christianity, Mental Illness, and the Church”
Saturday, June 22, 9:30am - 3:30pm



Q. What is the purpose of this conference?

Our prayerful aim, by God’s grace, is to provide encouragement from a Christian perspective to individuals, families, and communities impacted by mental illness; and to equip the church to more effectively minister to those affected by bringing truth and love to bear. We hope to not only present helpful, informative sessions, but offer an environment where people can fellowship with one another, listen, and talk through what they are hearing and all the issues involved.

Q. What do you generally believe about mental illness and a proper response to it?

We believe in the supreme authority of Scripture, and adhere to Reformed theology as best summarizing the Bible, as its storyline and teaching center on the gracious, gospel (“good news”) message of Jesus Christ. In addition, we believe that the gospel and biblical principles are to be practically applied to all the issues of life. While there are a variety of beliefs held by the broader Christian community, all the speakers and panelists at this event believe that God also works by his “common grace” through medical experts and other specialists in the field of mental health. We wish to pursue a life-giving pathway forward between the extreme ditches of “medication is the solution to everything,” “everything is a purely physiological problem,” etc., on the one hand - and, on the other hand, “everything is purely a spiritual problem” and “medicine is never to be utilized in these situations,” etc. There is also a common acknowledgement among the speakers and panelists that the church, like the rest of society, has a lot of room for growth in the area of addressing mental illness, and yet that she has as well the resources as the core expression of God’s kingdom to do this in a uniquely healing, redemptive way.

Q. Who are the speakers and panelists?

*Simonetta Carr is a member of Christ United Reformed Church, in Santee, CA. She has much experience as a mother and homeschool educator; is an author of books focusing on biographies of Christians from church history; and has written *Broken Pieces* as a very personal memoir and reflection on her experience with her late schizophrenic son and the many valuable lessons she learned through it all. Her addresses promise to be very case-specific and yet will help flesh out principles that can be applied to a wide variety of instances involving the mentally ill and those seeking to compassionately, firmly love them.

*Mike Kearney is the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Cedar Falls, IA, where he has lived and served with his family since 2015. Within his family and among his parishioners (past and present), he has experience ministering to those troubled by mental illness, directly or indirectly. Over the years, he has developed a burden and heart to educate the church to more faithfully minister to those in need, and those seeking to care for them.

*Jim and Renee Veenstra are a married couple who are members of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Cedar Falls, IA. Within their family and extended families, they have a broad range of experience loving and serving those afflicted with mental illness. Jim was recently trained through a seminar offered by our denomination entitled "Disabilities and the Church," espousing a point of view which can helpfully frame how we think about and treat those with mental illness (and others) who we welcome into our church contexts. Renee has made it one of her passions to study the topic of mental illness so as to proactively respond in a Christian way.