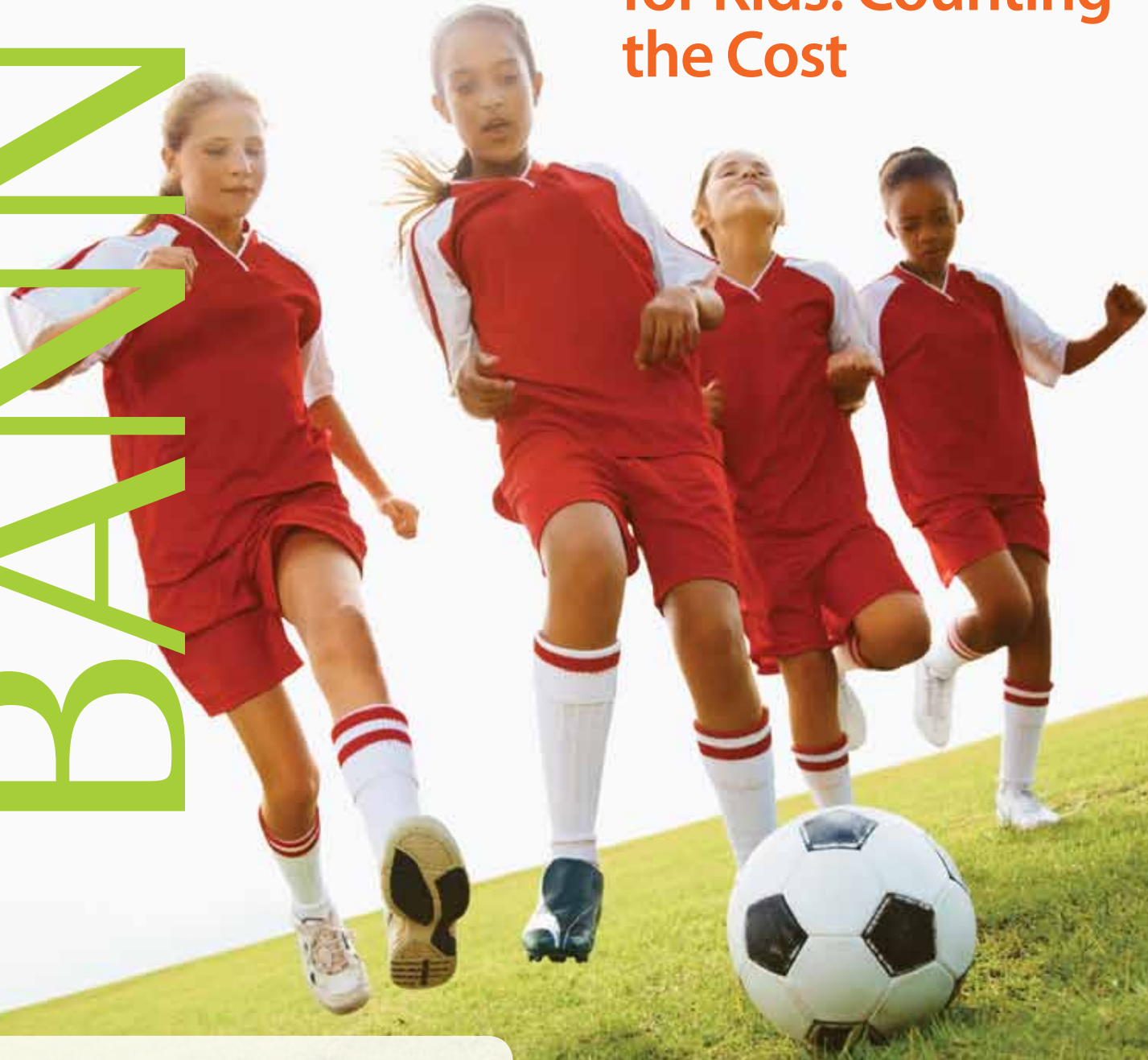


³² **Being Christian and Gay**
³⁶ **Practicing Covenantal
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

TWO RECENT ARTICLES in *The Banner* have caused concern because they argue for a modification of present Christian Reformed doctrinal and ethical understandings: notably of doctrinal formulations related to human origins and of our ethical position regarding sexuality and marriage. We allowed these articles first of all because we believe that the authors represent more than just a few voices within our denomination and so, rather than ignoring these voices, we believe that they should be heard and responded to in truth and love (Eph. 4:15). We also allowed them because in both instances they address serious challenges that many of us face, such as pastorally dealing with those who attend secular universities and those who live in common-law relationships. We were convinced that, whether we agreed or disagreed with them, the authors genuinely seek to apply their Reformed understanding to difficult issues.

In both articles we sought to alert you, the reader, to the fact that they do not represent an official position of the denomination. We did so by adding a synodical pronouncement to the first article and by running two articles back to back with respect to the second—the lead article in this second instance addressing the issue from our more commonly held perspective.

In coming months we will publish articles by those among us who can respond meaningfully to the concerns and challenges raised. In September we hope to publish an article by a biolo-

gist who cautions us against too readily adopting an evolutionist perspective. In that same issue I hope to offer an editorial that will argue for the strength of our currently prevailing understanding of sexuality and marriage—these in the hope of continuing a respectful and fruitful dialog.

As editors we realize, perhaps too late, that the manner and timing of publishing these articles has led to concerns about the magazine's direction. For this we sincerely apologize. While we believe we must allow many voices to speak around our denominational “kitchen table,” we continue to affirm our love for the Christian Reformed Church, its creeds and confessions, and its commitment to the infallibility of Scripture. As we continue in our communal task of “speaking the truth in love,” we ask for your patience, understanding, and goodwill as we continue these sometimes painful but necessary conversations. ■

Yours in Christ
Bob De Moor, Editor

While we believe we must allow many voices to speak around our denominational “kitchen table,” we continue to affirm our love for the Christian Reformed Church, its creeds and confessions, and its commitment to the infallibility of Scripture.



Why does my church care about immigration?



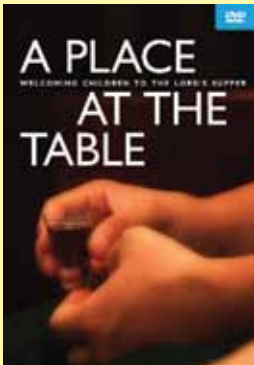
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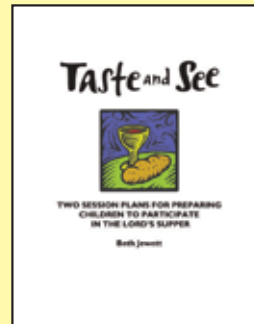
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Tenting

THE GREAT OUTDOORS! Nothing's better than camping the old-fashioned way. You wake up in the middle of the night, look up at the stars twinkling merrily overhead, and think to yourself . . . shoot! What happened to my tent?

An old joke. But as you read this I'll be out there somewhere in the dark—a chubby chunk of bear bait, Bob bobbing on some air mattress trying to keep my feet warm inside the faux shelter of a wafer-thin nylon shell. Not that travel trailers are any safer these days. I hear that grizzlies now equip themselves with can openers. Prefab plywood isn't much of an obstacle to them, is it?

Margo and I started out camping in a borrowed tent (sorry for the footprints up the walls, you guys). Then we bought our own. Next we bought a small pop-up (or "tent-trailer" in the Canadian language). As our family expanded, we traded it for a bigger one and finally graduated up to a Volkswagen Westphalia.

Next our empty nest and a tender environmental conscience meant a smaller, fuel-efficient vehicle, bringing us full circle back to a tent. We're actually fine with that, as long as it doesn't rain much. Then all bets are off.

In good weather we count ourselves truly blessed. Many folks never get the chance to walk up a mountain or paddle a canoe in a teal-colored lake that hasn't even been named yet. By the same token, of course, they don't need to worry about catching Lyme disease from tick bites, blowing their hair off while lighting the camp stove, or waking up to the steady roar of rain pelting a campsite into soggy oblivion—precursor to a day of staring out of the car window and erasing old crossword puzzle entries so they can be solved again. Are we having fun yet?

Tenting definitely has its moments. Rewind a couple of decades to a soggy summer's eve in an Ontario campsite where Margo and I do a "walkabout." We notice one nice young couple who can't get their fire started. Wood's too damp. They finally throw in the towel, venting words that could make a raven blush.

At times like that I try to mind my own business, but for once decide to risk it. I amble over and ask if I might give it a whirl, seeing as we come from British Columbia where they call big stands of trees *rain* forests for a reason. Young dude shrugs his shoulders and waves me over to the grate where, by luck or Providence (probably the splash of white gas helped), we get things cooking.

Amazed, he asks me what I do for a living. I tell him I'm a preacher and ask him in turn. "I'm a fireman," he says. It takes me a split-second too long to react, so he hastily adds, "I'm just good at putting 'em out."

Bottom line: tenting is a ton of work. The rewards are real but few and the frustrations are legion. But when it's worth it, it's *definitely* worth it. Jesus knew that. That's why even he "tented for a while among us" (John 1:14—from the Greek). ■



Bob De Moor is editor of *The Banner* and pastor of preaching and administration for West End CRC, Edmonton, Alberta.

I'll be out there somewhere in the dark—a chubby chunk of bear bait.

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Chocolaty Moments

LOVE BAKING. It's a form of art and thus requires a set mood. Personally, when I'm feeling the inspiration for some baked beauty, I turn on the oven and an '80s radio station before going all domestic housewife. I wasn't always this way; it took me quite some time before I learned the real art of baking... that baking powder is not the same as baking soda, that sugar cookies aren't supposed to be quite that brown. It was definitely a learning process.

One time, in my earlier stages as an artist, I decided to attempt to create the picture-perfect chocolate chip cookie. Before baking, I ate half the dough. The few that made it into the oven weren't my best work, but they weren't bad either. I was clearly no Picasso, but these cookies would surely satisfy any sweet tooth. All finished, I was walking away when my dad peered over my shoulder.

"You're not done, are you?"

"No." (I totally was done.)

"Good, 'cause there's a lot there yet."

I peered into the mixing bowl and thought but didn't say: *Obviously vision declines with age. . . .*

He knowingly chuckled. "Here, watch this."

My dad grabbed the spatula and skimmed along the side of the bowl. He had the artist's touch. In a few minutes a small pile of scrapings had turned into a large pile of dough. He sculpted it into a perfect round, plated it, and set it in the oven.

Twelve minutes later I saw the largest, most breathtaking cookie of my life.

He smiled.

I smiled.

He took his portion and left me to the dishes.

Fathers are like that.

Our Father is like that. He swoops in from time to time and in a simple way shows us something grand. I might look at the recipe for general guidance, but



there's nothing like when he comes into our lives and shows us his way. Personally, these moments come at odd times, when I'm least expecting it. He teaches us a lesson, like how sometimes we overlook life's big chocolaty moments because we don't have the eyes to see. ■



Kristin Schmitt is a college student at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Mich., and a member of Immanuel CRC in Hudsonville, Mich.



Most of My Visions
OF THE DIVINE
have happened
WHILE I WAS DOING
something else.

— BARBARA BROWN TAYLOR

Congregational Leadership

There should not be any hierarchy in the church, even if over the years we have let it grow.



BEFORE SYNOD 2013, elders, deacons, and ministers were expected to read the report of the task force looking at the structure and culture of the denomination, study it carefully, and make up their minds about the recommendations presented to synod. The report was then supposed to be discussed in church councils, classes, and finally at synod.

I am wondering who thought of this. Because I don't believe this could happen—for these reasons:

First, the language of the report makes it hard to grasp what it is really saying. I am sure that many elders and deacons, and quite a few ministers too, will put it aside in frustration. For this reason it should be referred back to the committee with the instruction to use ordinary language so that everyone can understand what this is all about.

Second, I remember the day when the new wing of the denominational building was inaugurated. The chairman of the finance committee said: "Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the corporate headquarters of the Christian Reformed Church in North America." Surely the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is not a corporation in the business sense of the

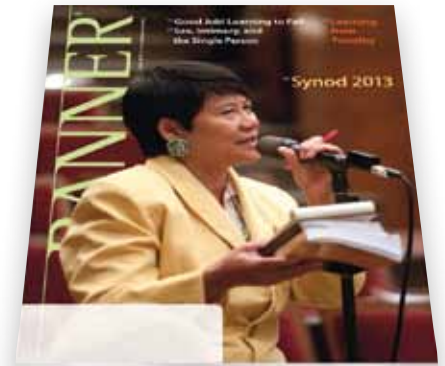
word—even if more and more the headquarters in Grand Rapids act like it. These days proposals and decisions no longer find their origin in the local councils and work their way from the bottom up. Instead they appear in the meetings of the Board of Trustees and are sent down the line to finally end up in the mailboxes of the local churches, where elders and deacons wonder where in the world this came from.

Third, giving local churches at best a few months to look at this report and make up their minds is ridiculous. Synod was supposed to take a vote to adopt a report that a large part of the membership has not even been able to study and discuss. This is the way it may be done in a business corporation, where the CEO decides anyway, but this is not the way we should deal with matters in the church. I know we have an executive director and a powerful executive committee in the Board of Trustees, but the executive director is simply one of the ministers in the church. He is not of higher rank, nor are the members of the Board of Trustees. There should not be any hierarchy in the church, even if over the years we have let it grow.

Synod ought to instruct the committee to tell us how we can get back to an ecclesiastical structure and get rid of this cumbersome and very expensive corporate structure. ■



Martin D. Geleynse is a retired pastor in the Christian Reformed Church.



Tomorrow's Theology

Retired pastor Edwin Walhout says theologians will have to find a better way to understand the biblical doctrine of sin and salvation ("Tomorrow's Theology," June 2013).

With all due respect, Rev. Walhout, when you served churches in the CRC did you not preach the story of sin and salvation? The question could be asked, especially to those in leadership roles who have signed the form of subscription, to either stand behind those confessions or else form [another denomination].

Praise God that the church does not save; Jesus does (1 Cor. 15:13-14). Like Job, who am I to question God? I have only to trust in his promises.

I would hope *The Banner* would run an article that would stimulate your readers in their personal faith relationships with the God we trust.

—Hans Visser
Taber, Alberta

Mr. Walhout's piece ("Tomorrow's Theology") is unfortunately symptomatic of a spiritual malaise in the denomination, extending from the upper echelons down to the local congregations. While diversity exists in the scientific theories on the world's creation, which can be safely debated, subsumption of first-order doctrines like the resurrection and atonement

TTERS

into “scientific theory,” not provable fact, as Walhout suggests, is effectively an invitation to heresy, patently unhelpful in these times of immense spiritual confusion, supporting those who have lost their first love and would seek to undermine and render ineffective the church and its vital witness to the world.

—Wesley Kwong
Portland, Ore.

I want to voice my support for Walhout’s bold statement (“Tomorrow’s Theology”). I especially appreciate his format of presenting questions without presuming to answer them for everyone. This is exactly the kind of conversation the church must have. Christians simply cannot turn away from scientific evidence, or worse, try to bend scientific principles to fit a particular theology. As God reveals more and more of the natural world through the tool of our perceptive minds, we must seek to understand the unalterable Truth of the Bible without resorting to dogmatic literalism.

We have and will make mistakes, but this is why we must continue to dialogue about and with our Lord, not blindly or purposefully calcify the attitudes of previous generations.

—Jim Baker
Grand Haven, Mich.

Yes, Virginia

“Yes, Virginia, There Is a Holy Spirit” (May 2013)—and he is working in and with the Christian Reformed Church. We are a hands-on denomination, and that is OK. The world needs a church that is looking after the needs of people, and we are comfortable doing so.

I believe that in these last days we are living in a world that is lost and bound in sickness and addictions. Our Lord and Savior gave us the Holy Spirit to be a light and power in this age we live in. But we are not so comfortable with the gifts of

the Spirit. As our pastor said, God has many gifts for his church but when we get to heaven we will see that we didn’t always unwrap them. Let’s pray that this may change.

—John Voordenhout
Burlington, Ontario

The opinion piece by Jay Knochenhauer (“Yes, Virginia, There Is a Holy Spirit”) misses the mark, I think. Knochenhauer was critical of a church leader who addressed the recent prayer summit, lamenting, “The CRC has historically not made much room for the work of the Holy Spirit.” He went on to provide evidence of the Holy Spirit’s existence and work throughout the ages. However, that church leader at the prayer summit was not denying the Holy Spirit, or even commenting on the Holy Spirit. He was commenting on the CRC.

—Arie Hoogerbrugge
Souris, Prince Edward Island

Roman Catholic and Reformed Baptism

With a great deal of interest I read the news item “Catholic, Reformed Churches Agree on Baptism” (April 2013), especially the last sentence: “The agreement, which applies solely to churches in the U.S., is unusual elsewhere.” To the best of my knowledge, ever since the Reformation, Reformed churches in Europe, particularly in the Netherlands, have always recognized Roman Catholic baptism as legitimate. I believe that the CRCNA continues this long-standing tradition.

When the Mission Board of the CRC decided in 1966 to work together with the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, Rev. Henry Evenhouse made it abundantly clear that CRC personnel would not rebaptize Roman Catholic baptized persons unless specifically requested. That tradition is continued today by the Evangelical Reformed Church

of Brazil. Ever since we have had a mutually beneficial relationship with the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil.

—Simon Wolfert
Surrey, British Columbia

Beer in The Banner

The Banner highlights a brewery in Colorado (“New Beer Named After Colorado Farmer,” April 2013). When I was 25 I became a widow with two children, the result of a drunk driver hitting the gas tank of my husband’s truck.

Someone please tell me the good versus the evil of alcohol. Doesn’t it make more sense to publicize and face the hazards of alcohol?

—Shirley Bareman
Jenison, Mich.

Don’t Be So Sure

I agree that concepts like the Trinity, the incarnation, and God’s purposes in election are ultimately shrouded in mystery (“Don’t Be So Sure,” April 2013). However, I was puzzled to see justification included in these mysterious concepts. Surely the Bible is clear enough about the concepts of divine wrath against sin, substitutionary atonement, and imputed righteousness that we can have a sufficiently clear picture of the contours of the gospel.

Of course to study the richness of the biblical text takes some effort, but to substitute claims of “mystery” for this hard work far too conveniently fits the politically correct mood of our times that regards polemic as close-minded, doctrine as a four-letter word, and an open-minded ecumenical spirit to be pursued at almost all costs. Is the way of salvation a mystery in the Bible? Don’t be so sure.

—Randy Stadt
Edmonton, Alberta

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NEWS

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Are Christian Schools Worth the Cost?



Parents who choose Christian day school education to encourage faith formation and family values in their children are getting what they pay for.

That was one of the findings of a survey of thousands of high school graduates in the United States and Canada, the largest-ever survey of its kind. It was conducted by Cardus, a Christian

think tank located in Hamilton, Ontario.

Graduates of both government (public) and non-government (private) schools were asked to rate their education and whether it has an impact into adulthood—spiritually, culturally, and academically.

Ray Pennings, a senior fellow at Cardus, said the most encourag-

ing results in both Canada and the U.S. show that “there is a significant positive effect of Christian schooling in the family, spiritual, church, and community lives of graduates.”

Ellen Freestone, principal of Vancouver Christian School in British Columbia, was encouraged to see that graduates emerge with a strong commitment to family and community. “Clearly, graduates are contributing to society through service and strong values,” she said.

However, the survey showed that Christian school graduates are more reluctant to engage the culture in areas such as politics and the arts or to pursue leadership opportunities that have high impact.

“Many Christian schools talk about ‘the lordship of Christ over all of creation,’ yet there seem to be some obstacles in having our

NOTEWORTHY

- **Joel Adams**, chair of computer science at Calvin College, was named one of six 2012 distinguished educators by the Association for Computing Machinery, the largest professional association in the world for computer scientists.
- **Harro Van Brummelen** received the Special Award for Lifelong Service to Education from the Association of British Columbia Deans of Education.
- **Margaret Kromminga** of Grand Rapids, Mich., received the prestigious Mansbridge internship established by Peter Mansbridge, chief correspondent for CBC Television News.
- **Nicole Michmerhuizen** won the 10,000 meters race in the Division III NCAA track and field championship.
- **Jim Zondag** took his team, the Killer Bees, to the FIRST Robotics World Championship, where it placed second.
- The **girls' soccer team of Calvin Christian High School, Grandville, Mich.**, won its second consecutive state championship.
- The **boys' golf team of Grand Rapids (Mich.) Christian High** took home its division's state championship.
- The **boys' baseball team of Grand Rapids (Mich.) Christian High** took home the state title.
- The **girls' soccer team of South Christian High School, Grand Rapids, Mich.**, took home its division's state championship trophy.
- The **girls' softball team of Kalamazoo (Mich.) Christian High** took home the state title for its division.

—Banner correspondents

Please visit our website at thebanner.org for all these stories.

graduates live this out beyond their own community," said Freestone.

James Marsh, head of school at Westminster Christian Academy in St. Louis, Missouri, agreed. "[Our graduates have a] tendency to be more critical of the secular world and less likely to be engaged in changing it," he said.

So how can Christian schools use these survey results to improve their effectiveness? Dave Koetje, president of Christian Schools International (CSI), based in Grand Rapids, Mich., believes the focus should remain on the things that make Christian schools different from public schools.

"Biblical worldview is a key point of distinction for CSI schools. We are always looking for tools that help us measure [how that mission penetrates] our schools," he said.

Marsh says that Christian schools are changing already. "Christian parents today are not making the choice for Christian education out of a sense of loyalty like many did in the past," he explained. "Today's Christian parents are more concerned with the value of their investment in the education of their children, and they want validation for their choice. Christian schools are more committed today to ask and answer the question 'How do we know?'"

The Christian Reformed Church has a long history of support for Christian day school education; the study's findings indicate that local churches are one of the main beneficiaries of Christian education.



SUSAN VANDEN BERG

Church signs in Holland and Zeeland were covered in a display of Christian unity.

One Lord, One Church in West Michigan

A sign can convey a lot about a congregation. But for two Sundays in June, the church signs of more than 30 churches in Holland and Zeeland, Mich., showed no name and no denominational identification. Instead they were covered in burlap bearing only four words painted in white: "One Lord. One Church."

Similar to sackcloth in the Old Testament, the burlap covers were intended to be a sign of repentance and humility.

Ten Christian Reformed churches joined with several other denominations and non-denominational congregations to declare their unity in Christ in a weeklong ecumenical effort.

"A diversity of theological insights can be good, but it shouldn't come at the cost of our unity," said Scott DeVries, associate pastor of Bethany CRC in Holland.

—Susan Vanden Berg

"Christian school alumni are very involved in their church communities," said Gary Postma, principal of Timothy Christian School in Williamsburg, Ontario. (Postma is the husband of Gayla Postma, the *Banner's* news editor.) "The data shows that if churches support Christian schools, their own future ministries would be enhanced."

Pennings agrees, saying the survey results confirm that Christian school graduates make a larger contribution to the leader-

ship and finances of their churches. "[The results] suggest that, in addition to the inherent benefits of Christian education for students and families, the church as an institution is one of the primary long-term beneficiaries of Christian education."

Survey results for the U.S. were published in 2011, followed by the Canadian report in the fall of 2012. Full survey reports are available online at cardus.ca.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Tracey Yan

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Edward Boer

1920 – 2013

Edward Boer, 93, an unassuming spiritual caregiver, a friend of young people, and a missionary at heart, died of natural causes.

After graduating from Calvin Theological Seminary, Boer entered ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. He served churches in Michigan, Wisconsin, New Jersey, and Utah. He retired in 1985.

Following his retirement he served as a volunteer chaplain for Whidbey General Hospital in Coupeville, Wash.

The strength of Boer's ministry lay in his deep love and concern for people. For him, visiting people was a delightful privilege. Younger colleagues found in him an ever-encouraging mentor. He cared lovingly for his wife after her early-onset Alzheimer's disease, a ministry that was an inspiration to many.

Boer is survived by five children and their spouses, 10 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

Further information on recently deceased ministers is available each year in the front pages of the *Christian Reformed Church's* annual Yearbook.

NEWS

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Harold De Groot
1928 – 2013

Harold De Groot, 84, a seasoned missionary, an accomplished linguist, and a congenial “people person,” passed away as a result of heart failure.

Following graduation from Calvin Theological Seminary, De Groot entered ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in North Dakota. A few years later, his ministry took him to Nigeria as a missionary, where he planted churches in Nigeria’s bush land and trained leaders. De Groot’s linguistic gifts enabled him to be part of distributing the first Tiv Bibles, Tiv hymn books, and gospel literature.

In 1970, De Groot returned to the U.S. where he served churches in Iowa, Washington, and Indiana. He retired in 1992.

De Groot was a joyful, winsome man of great integrity. His keen, retentive mind enabled him to have a firm grip of scriptural and theological truth and to share it effectively in preaching, teaching, and mentoring.

De Groot is survived by his wife, Marjean, five children and their spouses, 21 grandchildren, and 21 great-grandchildren.

MORE ONLINE

—*Louis M. Tamminga*

Calvin College Cuts Staff

Calvin College announced in the spring that it will be cutting 22 positions from its faculty and staff, or approximately 3 percent of its employees. Most of the cuts will come through attrition and nonrenewal of faculty contracts. But five people have already lost their jobs.

The announcement came from college president Michael Le Roy, following board meetings of the Grand Rapids, Mich.-based college. Calvin College is owned by the Christian Reformed Church.

“While I am pleased to report a great deal of progress on a number of fronts, I am saddened by the recognition that this progress has come with difficult choices and personal sacrifice,” Le Roy said in a letter to faculty and staff.

The staff reductions are part of cost-cutting at the college as it tries to reduce its operating budget by 10 percent by 2017. That is the year when payments of about \$9 million will come due on a \$116 million debt that was taken on in 2007.

Additionally, the college is facing rising health care costs. The board decided to move to a self-insured health care plan. Premiums paid by employees will increase from 12 percent to 17 percent, an increase of approximately \$600 annually for family coverage. There will also be an introduction of co-insurance and an increase in office visit co-pays. Staff and faculty are receiving a modest salary bump to help offset the increased costs for this year.

This round of cuts brings approximately \$4.7 million in savings in the college’s \$103-million annual budget.

The board also approved a plan to appoint faculty advisors to key board committees, starting in the fall.

“Throughout this process, faculty and staff representatives are working together with the

cabinet to put the college on a strong financial foundation,” said Le Roy. “I am encouraged by the community’s shared commitment to making Calvin College sustainable for the long run.”

—*Gayla R. Postma*

Massive Flooding Impacts Christian Reformed Churches in Southern Alberta

Paul Droogers, pastor of High River (Alberta) Christian Reformed Church, escaped “just in time” as unprecedented flooding swept across southern Alberta in late June.

With his wife, Jill, and three young children, ages 7, 5, and 4, along with a couple of hastily packed bags, Droogers fled under evacuation orders.

“As I backed the car out of the garage,” Droogers said, “I saw a massive wall of water coming down the street,” reminding him of images he’d seen of the Southeast Asian tsunami.

The town of High River was completely evacuated. Droogers and many in his congregation stayed with friends and relatives. A firefighter friend on patrol in town informed Droogers that High River CRC had about 11 feet of water in the basement.

Further north and west, Calgary’s downtown became inundated as the Bow and Elbow Rivers rose. Tens of thousands of people were displaced as entire houses and yards fell into swollen, raging rivers. Roads and bridges were damaged or washed away.



Downtown Calgary was underwater as unprecedented flooding spread across southern Alberta.

Neighborhoods for several blocks around New Hope CRC were evacuated.

Maranatha CRC is situated 40 meters away from the banks of the Bow River, where a once-gentle slope became a 20-meter-high cliff. “Portions of our parking lot have fallen into the river,” reported pastor Dale Melenberg.

Melenberg offered the following prayer request: “Please hold the whole city and province in your prayers as we all discover ways of living into our new realities. The sun broke through this morning, reminding us that God’s mercies are new each day!”

—*Janet Greidanus*



Baldwin's anniversary display table features an original Dutch Bible and church building portrait.

Wisconsin Church Celebrates 125 Years

It's a summer of celebrations for Baldwin (Wisc.) Christian Reformed Church. April marked the church's 125th anniversary. It's a lot to celebrate, especially in today's ever-changing culture, said pastor Anson Veenstra.

"Each generation has had their specific challenges within their context," Anson noted, "and we're celebrating God's faithfulness through the years, which is the only reason the church has been here this long."

The congregation has been overflowing with excitement for their anniversary events. On April 17, the church hosted a "Retro Service" that consisted of congregants dressing in old-fashioned clothes and council members sitting strictly in the front row. The service followed the oldest order of worship on record; only songs from the *Psalter Hymnal* were sung.

The summer celebration lasted into July, with festivities and a worship service featuring previous pastors and special music.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Jessica Oosterhouse

Denver Church Helps Alamoso Community

Volunteers from First Christian Reformed Church in Denver, Colo., traveled a couple of hundred miles recently to help residents of San Luis Valley near Alamosa.

Working with Christian Community Service Projects (CCSP), an organization based in Alamosa, they did various projects, including rebuilding a porch.

"They painted a house in a day," CCSP manager Suzanne Tolsma said. Another job was securing the skirting of a mobile home to the ground to keep out rodents and protect pipes from freezing.

CCSP is an interdenominational organization that helps residents in the San Luis Valley community.

"Most of the residents we help include those of low income or no income," Tolsma said.

First CRC had connections through Alamosa Christian Reformed Church and has previously worked with CCSP.

—Estefania de León



Volunteers help repair a deck.

Iowa Church Celebrates 100 Years

Ocheyedan (Iowa) Christian Reformed Church celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. The church began in 1913 with six families from Orange City, Iowa, who relocated in Ocheyedan.

Two world wars and some misunderstandings over the use of the Dutch language in worship services affected the church's growth. But in 1947 the congregation remodeled its building and started a Christian school.

Today the congregation has 275 members and is led by Bill Van Der Heide, the church's 15th pastor.

Ocheyedan CRC actively supports United Christians International, an organization dedicated to helping the Haitian people. The congregation sponsors a missionary couple from that organization.

The anniversary celebration's theme was taken from Psalm 100:5.

—Kyle Hoogendoorn



IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Timothy Monsma

1933 – 2013

Timothy Monsma, 79, was a devout missionary practitioner, scholar, and teacher. A specialist in bringing the gospel to the great cities of the world, he died of vascular dementia.

Responding to a deep sense of calling, Monsma attained a B.D. degree from Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa., followed by a Th.M. degree from Calvin Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. in Urban Missiology from Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif.

Monsma served a church in Minnesota before spending 12 years in Nigeria for Christian Reformed World Missions. He taught at Reformed Bible Institute (now Kuyper College), in Grand Rapids, Mich., and at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, then in Orange City, Iowa.

Prior to retirement he served as director of cities for Christ Worldwide, in Escondido, Calif. He retired in 1999.

Monsma enjoyed an international reputation for his profound knowledge of missions. Most well-known is the influential book he wrote in collaboration with Dr. Roger Greenway, *Cities: Missions' New Frontier* (1982).

Monsma is survived by his wife, Dorothy, five children and their spouses, 18 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

NEWS

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Norman Haan

1930 – 2013

Norman B. Haan, 83, a man of vision who was always ready to help and encourage, died following a heart attack while working in the garden.

After working in his father's print shop and serving in the U.S. Naval Reserve, Haan attended Calvin Theological Seminary, graduating in 1960.

Haan served Christian Reformed congregations in South Dakota, Michigan, Arizona, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and California. He retired in 1995.

Haan was a man of strong convictions and broad interests, a gifted preacher and teacher. Among colleagues he was known for his caring attitude, readily helping where needed. Following his retirement, his gifts as a teacher continued to be used internationally: he made several trips to Russia, the Philippines, and Ukraine, where he taught ministry students and pastors. He served Crossroad Bible Institute for 15 years.

Following retirement, he settled in the Waupun, Wis., area where a life of ongoing service awaited. From his involvement with Habitat for Humanity, he gained the skills to build his own retirement home.

Haan is survived by his wife, Joyce, six children, 22 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

MORE ONLINE

—*Louis M. Tamminga*

Participants at the prayer summit gathered for three days of worship and prayer.



Second Prayer Summit Held in Los Angeles

Nearly 400 people gathered in mid-April at Prayer Summit 2013, held at All Nations Christian Reformed Church in Lake View Terrace, Calif.

"It seems that as a pastor I spend so much time studying God's Word and less time than I would prefer in prayer," said Dave Buurma, pastor of Valley Christian Reformed Church in Napa, Calif. "Prayer is an important part of my life, but I wanted to do something to develop that side of my devotion even more."

"I was humbled and inspired by the testimonies," said Zeke Nelson, pastor/church planter at Church of the Cross in Delhi, Calif.

According to Sam Huizenga, small group discipleship goal specialist for Christian Reformed Home Missions and part of the planning team for the summit, the

goal was to catalyze a grassroots prayer movement within the classes (regional groupings of churches). That goal is being realized as classis prayer coordinators have nearly tripled in the last year, said Huizenga.

For Michelle Loyd-Paige of Muskegon, Mich., the prayer summit was an opportunity to share



one of her greatest joys: dance. Attending the summit on behalf of Angel Community CRC, a primarily urban African-American congregation, 54-year-old Loyd-Paige was asked by All Nations Church to perform a dance to the song "This Is My Desire."



"That song is like a prayer, and my dance was embodied prayer," said Loyd-Paige. "Being asked to dance was an honor. I am not a trained dancer; I am a worshiper. I was not dancing for people but dancing for an audience of one—God, my Father."

In addition to those who attended the prayer summit, there were 53 "Watch and Pray" sites around the country and over 350 hits on the website.

—*Heidi Wicker and Daina Kraai*

Thousands Mourn with Ontario Congregation

More than 280 congregations, Christian Reformed and many others, with combined membership of around 90,000 souls, sang “In Christ Alone” on a Sunday in May. They were mourning with a family and a congregation in Ontario.

It was the murder of Tim Bosma, a member of Ancaster (Ont.) CRC, that drew together so many Christians from far and wide.

Bosma, 32, was abducted while taking two men for a test drive of the pickup truck he was trying to sell. The story of the search for Bosma captured media attention across Canada. His remains were found nearly a week later by police.

That was when Heidi De Jonge, pastor of Westside Fellowship CRC in Kingston, Ontario, and Westside’s worship director, Jennifer Feenstra-Shaw, decided to invite fellow pastors to consider setting aside a “moment of solidarity” on the following Sunday. “They will be singing ‘In Christ Alone’ at Ancaster CRC,” wrote De Jonge. “And so will we. Please consider this opportunity to grieve and worship with them in solidarity.”

As the idea gained momentum through social media, the numbers of people indicating that their church would be singing “In Christ Alone” grew.

John Veenstra, transitional pastor at Ancaster CRC, said the congregation and the family were aware of the movement. “It’s a wonderful gesture of solidarity, and people are glad to hear it,” he said. “There is sustaining power of so many people remembering us.”

Bosma leaves behind his wife, Sharlene, and a 2-year-old daughter. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Gayla R. Postma

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Isaac (“Ike”) Apol

1924 – 2013

Rev. Isaac “Ike” Apol, 88, a humble servant of his Sender who was genuine in his relationships and deeply appreciative of the beauty of God’s Word and the natural world, died following a brief illness.

Following graduation from Calvin Theological Seminary, Apol went on to serve Christian Reformed congregations in Michigan, Illinois, California, Oregon, New Jersey, and Indiana. He retired in 1987, serving on an interim basis in 10 more congregations across the next quarter-century.

Apol had a wonderful and natural way of relating to people. He loved the Word and enjoyed his times of study in preparing sermons. He deeply appreciated reading and studying theology, becoming one of the first CRC pastors to attend the summer theological institute of Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. He was widely read in the works of Abraham Kuyper.

Apol was a fine gardener, an avid bird watcher, and an expert at upholstering furniture and at rushing and caning chairs.

Apol is survived by his wife, Alice, three children, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

Michigan Church Responds to Local Violence

More than 80 people from the area around Coit Community Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., recently pledged to do what was in their power to curb violence in their community.

It happened at an awareness-raising “Stop the Violence” pancake breakfast hosted by several men from the church.

A member of Coit Community’s youth group was shot in the stomach a few blocks from the church, and another who grew up at the church is incarcerated at Kent County Jail facing murder charges.

“[The violence] motivates men to get on the front line to do what we can in a prevention ministry,” said pastor Jerome Burton. “Only God’s gospel can change hearts, but we are agents of reconciliation.”

The breakfast was a partnership with several local churches and organizations, including Mothers on a Mission and Ridgewood CRC in Jenison, Mich. Mothers on a Mission is a group of parents and grandparents who have lost children to gun violence in Grand Rapids.

Participants were invited to sign their name to a large poster committing to join the movement. Everyone was encouraged to keep a porch light lit at all times as a testimony and measure of crime prevention.

Event organizers Chuck Skala and William Lugrand emphasized that this is not just a one-time event for



A participant signs her name to a poster committing to stand up against violence.

awareness-raising. They are now conscious of the ways their Cadets boys’ program can provide positive role models to youth.

Burton pointed to Skala and Lugrand as leaders and fathers in the congregation and models for youth. “They need to lead younger men, calling them to account. We need older men teaching younger men how to be men,” said Burton. Skala and Lugrand now lead a Bible study for 14 men on Thursday evenings.

—Noah J. K. Kruis

NEWS

CHURCH WORLDWIDE

Exodus International Shuts Down, President Apologizes

Exodus International, a group that bills itself as “the oldest and largest Christian ministry dealing with faith and homosexuality,” announced in June that it’s shutting its doors.

The announcement came just after Exodus president Alan Chambers released a statement apologizing to the gay community for many actions, including the organization’s promotion of efforts to change a person’s sexual orientation.

Exodus functioned as a support group for men and women who were struggling with their sexual orientation, and early on embraced the idea that gays and lesbians could become straight through prayer and counseling.

But the belief in “reparative therapy was one of the things that led to the downfall of this organization,” Chambers said in an interview, noting that Exodus in recent years had redirected its focus to helping men and women work through their sexual identity.

“I am sorry we promoted sexual orientation change efforts and reparative theories about sexual orientation that stigmatized parents,” Chambers said in the apology. “I am sorry that there were times I didn’t stand up to people publicly ‘on my side’ who called you names like sodomite—or worse.”

Chambers had already disavowed reparative therapy at the annual Gay Christian Network conference in January 2012, and his apology “is the acknowledgement many of us have been waiting to hear for a long, long time,” said GCN executive director Justin Lee.

—Religion News Service

Modern Hymn Writers Revive a Lost Musical Art

Most songwriters in Nashville want to get their songs on the radio. Keith and Kristyn Getty hope their songs end up in dusty old hymnbooks.

The Gettys hope to revive the art of hymn writing at a time when most popular new church songs are written for rock bands rather than choirs. They’ve had surprising success.

One of the first songs that Keith cowrote, called “In Christ Alone,” has been among the top 20 songs sung in newer churches in the United States for the past five years, according to Christian Copyright Licensing International.

Keith Getty wrote the tune for “In Christ Alone” on the back of an electric bill and sent it to his friend, Stuart Townend, another modern hymn writer. Townend wrote the lyrics and began playing it in churches in England, where people would line up to get the sheet music afterward.

Today it’s often sung in churches where young people congregate, including Axis Church in Nashville.

Rev. Jeremy Rose of Axis, who is in his 30s, said most new songs focus on how worshipers feel about God but don’t contain much theology. Older hymns often have good theology but lack a personal touch. “In Christ Alone” has both.

It’s a lost art, said Mark Hosny, artistic director of the National Praise and Worship Institute at Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville.

Newer Christian music often makes the band or lead singer sound good but doesn’t engage the congregation. That’s missing the point, Hosny said.

“A lot of today’s melodies are not singable. That’s why they don’t stick,” he said.

“We learn our faith through what we sing,” said Keith Getty.

—USA Today

For more on these stories, please visit thebanner.org.



RACHAEL MOUW

Natalie Mouw (8) plants an apple tree to commemorate her baptism with help from elder Lance Kraai.

Tree Planting Commemorates Baptism Promises

On a chilly Sunday morning, the congregation of Creston Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., moved outside at the conclusion of their worship service to plant two small apple trees. The saplings were to commemorate the baptisms that had occurred earlier that morning.

Gary and Rachael Mouw were among several new members welcomed at Creston that morning. Three of their children were baptized as part of the service.

Trees symbolize that things do grow and get better, elder Lance Kraai said. Planting trees for 10 to 100 or even 300 years out is a clear demonstration of hope in God’s promise.

“Right now these trees are not very impressive, but we believe that they will one day produce apples that can be made into cider and shared with our neighbors,” Kraai said at the tree planting. Likewise, he said, we claimed God’s promises to your children, and we believe that one day you will produce fruit that will be a blessing to your neighbors.

—Noah Kruis

Ontario Youths Do a 180

“I learned that you don’t have to fix all your problems before believing in God.”

That was the take-away for Nicole Yearley after attending this year’s All Ontario Youth Convention. Held in May in Waterloo, Ontario, this year’s theme was “180,” as youths learned that God’s promise of a new heart and a new spirit can cause a 180-degree turn in people’s lives.

More than 900 youths and leaders attended this year’s convention as hundreds more from as far away as Europe and South America followed via live-streaming.

“I really loved the genuine subjects that [speaker] Justin Lookadoo spoke to us about,” said Melissa Wolting of Chatham. “The way he talked really engaged every member of the audience.”

By the end of the weekend, organizers said more than 30 teens had made the decision for the first time to follow Christ, and many other teens and leaders received one-on-one prayer and encouragement. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Anita Brinkman



Justin Lookadoo was the convention speaker.



JAKE SNIEDER

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Kyu Sik Hong

1940 – 2012

Kyu Sik Hong, 72, was an extraordinary man who demanded the best from himself and from those around him in the service of the Lord.

Hong joined the Christian Reformed Church in 1990 and served as a church planting pastor of Eden’s Korean CRC in Wilmette, Ill. He retired in 2005.

After retiring from ministry, he drove buses for the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), which he had done prior to his calling to ministry. He also served as a pastor at Christian Indian Center, Denver, Colo., and was on the 2006 Urbana Plenary Planning Committee.

Hong had a local radio sermon series in Korean called “Voices of Eden.” He later compiled these sermons into a book. He also wrote an autobiographical and partly fictional book based on his experiences in life and as a driver for CTA.

Hong is survived by his wife, Jungsook, two children and their spouses, and one grandson.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Jonathan Kim

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Herman Hoekstra

1919 – 2013

Herman Hoekstra, 93, was a World War II veteran, passionate evangelist, winsome “people person,” and a man of ready humor. He passed away from congestive heart failure.

After serving in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II, Hoekstra worked briefly in a bank before enrolling in seminary.

He served Christian Reformed congregations in New Mexico, Illinois, New Jersey, and Michigan. Hoekstra retired in 1984.

Shortly before graduation from seminary, Hoekstra and his wife, Dorothy, were in a tragic accident that took the life of their 6-year-old son, Tommy, and Dorothy’s parents. This experience shaped Hoekstra’s ministry and made him keenly aware of God’s grace.

Hoekstra was a widely loved pastor. He had a naturally joyful disposition and was always happy to meet and mingle with people.

Hoekstra loved to talk theology and was well-informed about national and international affairs. He was loyal to the denomination and was a frequent delegate to CRC synods.

Hoekstra is survived by his wife, Dorothy Mae, four children and their spouses, 14 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

BY PETER SLOFSTRA



ORGANIZED SPORTS: COUNTING THE COST

SHOULD PARENTS encourage kids to participate in organized sports—even if it means missing church occasionally? “Absolutely,” say five families who are actively involved in their Christian Reformed churches 40 minutes east of Toronto. All have spent thousands of hours driving their kids to practices, games, and weekend tournaments.

A Healthy Outlet

Jeff Friend, an inspector with Durham Regional Police, and his wife, Beth, a child and youth worker, subscribe to the “keep ‘em busy” approach to parenting. In their careers, they regularly see the mess that young people can make of their lives. “Idle hands, idle minds,” Beth observes. “We

keep our children busy. That way they have an out, especially when there’s temptation from peers to get into trouble.”

Physical inactivity, excessive screen time, or trouble-breeding boredom are not their parental concerns for Jessica, 17, and Jacob, 15. Both have been busy with organized sports since age 4, beginning in house leagues and quickly advancing to more competitive traveling teams. Today Jessica is a top athlete in the Ontario Youth Soccer League while Jacob plays AAA hockey.

Energy and Time

High levels of energy and the willingness to invest lots of time are necessary requirements for any family considering organized sports, especially if there’s more than one person in the family who needs

to get to the rink, field, or pool. “We got bit by the soccer bug,” say Peter and Leemore Hoekstra, parents of five children. Two of their children, Rebecca, 21, and Rachel, 19, are now attending U.S. colleges on soccer scholarships. “We didn’t even know about soccer scholarships when we started,” Peter says cheerfully.

The unexpected blessing of scholarships aside, the Hoekstras appreciate organized sports for the healthy outlet that it’s always been for their entire family. “Peter’s hyper,” Leemore laughs as she listens to her husband exuberantly describe his daughters’ exploits on the field. “We’re all hyper!” Rebecca agrees. “Always late and always rushing,” Rachel remembers. “During the year it’s go, go, go,” says her dad. “I’m not one to say no. You see that your child has some talent,

and you do what you can to help her develop it.”

A childhood full of early practices, evening games, and weekend tournaments may seem daunting, but for Jessica and Jacob Friend it has yielded benefits. “I’ve learned time management, and I’ve become more independent,” Jessica explains. “I’ve gotten used to making time for everything. Routine is very important.” Her brother adds, “I’ve gotten used to saying, ‘I can’t. I’ve got hockey.’” Everything is so compressed. But because of this, I find it easier to meet deadlines at school.” These are mature words from two teens struggling to balance busy lives. But in the world of organized sports, there’s no such thing as arriving late or missing practices or games. A coach will excuse you for a wedding, a funeral, or a 50th anniversary, but skipping practice for a friend’s birthday party may get you benched.

Building Character

Time management is only one of the qualities kids develop through involvement in organized sports. Other qualities include skill development, self-confidence, discipline, team spirit, sportsmanship, leadership, and the ability to deal with disappointments. When Jacob was cut from the team one year, he felt that he had disappointed his parents. “I had to tell my dad, and that was hard on me. He could tell I was upset, but he was very empathetic.”

Although Rebecca and Rachel Hoekstra have never been cut, they have encountered some poor officiating along the way. Their father admits that parents get pretty heated about a missed call. “It’s your kids out there. That’s how people get hurt.” He has taught his girls that a bad call is an opportunity to be gracious and take the high road. “They’ve learned to listen, to follow instructions, and to take criticism,” he says, reflecting on his daughters’ character development.

Doing Your Best

At the Eastview Boys and Girls Club in Oshawa, Ontario, Brad and Michele George watch proudly as two of their five children, Alicia, 12, and Sophia, 10, perform their synchronized swimming

“Organized hockey is on Sunday. You’re not playing!”

routine in the pool with seven other girls. Hands shoot up, faces turn sharply, and legs are pushed into the air in perfect timing to the music.

Brad and Michele are national-level synchronized swimming judges. Michele’s own involvement in synchronized swimming got her girls interested. Today, Alicia and Sophia spend at least 12 hours in the pool each week. “We got the coach to move Sunday practice to an earlier time so that we can be done by 10:30 a.m. and still make it to the 11 a.m. service,” Michele explains. She jokes, “It probably helped that Brad is the president of the swimming club.”

Scholarships in synchronized swimming are not very likely. The Olympics? Who knows! Brad and Michele mainly visualize a future for their girls that includes lifeguarding, coaching, and teaching.

What really matters to them is that their children do their best in whatever they attempt. Brad shares the story of his oldest daughter, who was diagnosed with cancer. “She swam 18 hours a week during high school and learned how to manage both school and swimming. I’m convinced that her discipline and fitness helped her cope with the disease. While finishing college and undergoing the last stages of chemo, she got accepted as a paramedic out of 600 applicants!”

Is doing your best in synchronized swimming difficult? “Only when you’re trying really hard and a new routine isn’t working,” Alicia answers. But what about those morning practices and trying to get your homework done? “I’m an early person,” Sophia smiles. “And I don’t get that much homework yet.”

Counting the Cost

Rob Engelage is a mechanic who owns his own garage. He played hockey in a church league and remembers his father saying, “Organized hockey is on Sunday. You’re not playing!”

Rob and his wife, Teresa, a nurse, were young and money was tight when their two sons, Andrew and Aaron, now 24 and 22, asked to play hockey. The house league provided Andrew’s goalie equipment; the rest they bought used. Andrew got a shutout in his first game. Soon someone said, “Get him to play AAA.”

Initially Andrew also played baseball and Aaron played soccer. “It was ridiculous,” Teresa recalls. “We said, ‘Pick a sport.’” After that it was hockey all the way.

Rob and Teresa acknowledge that organized hockey is expensive. Crockpots and “survival kits” full of sandwiches, fruit, and sports drinks make tournaments more affordable. But there’s always the cost of upgrading equipment, registration fees, ice time, gas, and hotels. If it leads to an athletic scholarship or a professional career, the expenses are an excellent investment. But when a hockey stick breaks during a game, there’s probably a mom in the stands thinking, “There go our groceries!”

In Andrew’s case, this pricey venture led to the Windsor Spitfires, where he set an Ontario Hockey League season record of 46 wins by a goalie and helped his team win the Memorial Cup, the most coveted prize in Junior A hockey. Today he tends goal professionally for the Utah Grizzlies, and his NHL-sized dream is very much alive.

Health Issues

Rob Snoek did not let an amputated leg hold him back from pursuing his Olympic dreams. A three-time Paralympian, he has translated his athletic experience into a career as a radio and television sports broadcaster. When his youngest son, Wesley, 13, was diagnosed with Legg-Perthes disease at age 5, he remained hopeful that his son would still be able to play. “His hip was necrotic,” explains Pam Snoek, a nurse. Thankfully, Wesley’s hip regenerated itself and hockey actually helped him to become stronger. Today »

he plays AAA hockey like his older brother, Nathan, 16, who has been relatively injury-free despite his “high risk, big reward” approach to the game.

Injuries are normal in sports. In his career, Andrew Engelage has suffered a concussion and groin injuries. His brother’s NHL dream was dashed by surgery and rehab for a torn knee cartilage. After a nasty header, Rebecca Hoekstra needed 18 stitches; her sister, Rachel, has rolled her ankles. Jessica Friend has broken both collarbones, and her brother, Jacob, was sidelined for five games when he stretched his ACL.

Other health issues are also a concern in organized sports. In the quest for an edge, young athletes may experiment with energy drinks or be tempted to try performance-enhancing drugs. In synchronized swimming, eating disorders is a worry. “Body image is always an issue,” Michele George points out. “Coaches and judges are encouraged to keep an eye on intake and weight so that the girls don’t become skin and bones.”

Digging Deeper

- *The Most Expensive Game in Town: The Rising Cost of Youth Sports and the Toll on Today’s Families* by Mark Hyman (Beacon Press, 2012). 176 pp.
- *Whose Game Is It Anyway? A Guide to Helping Your Child Get the Most from Sports, Organized by Age and Stage* by Richard D. Ginsburg and Stephen Durant with Amy Baltzell (Houghton Mifflin, 2006). 314 pp.
- *statsdad.com* Fran Dicari is a self-admitted overscheduled dad of overscheduled athletic kids. His blog covers the costs, comedy, and competition of youth sports in America.
- *athletesinaction.org* This Christian organization “works with athletes and coaches to use the unique platform of sports to help people around the world with questions of faith.”

Faith Formation

But what about spiritual health? What about sports and Sunday observance? What about faith formation?

All five families agree that sports can become a form of idolatry. “It can become your everything,” Michelle George says. “I see it all the time in parents who want their kids to be the next best thing.” Jeff and Beth Friend acknowledge that sports are a huge part of their kids’ identity—and theirs as well. Nathan Snoek says, “I couldn’t imagine my life without sports.”

None of the families, however, can imagine their lives without God and the church. The Friends make it a priority to attend church as a family whenever they’re home. Peter and Leemore Hoekstra insist, “Our identity is in Christ.” The Engelage family transferred to a congregation that offers two morning services so they could attend church after practice. For the George family, the Sunday morning routine includes packing church clothes along with bathing suits before they rush out the door at 6:30 a.m. The Snoeks cherish their church friends. All stress the importance of prayer when faced with stressful tryouts, coaches who give their own kids preferential treatment, or difficult decisions like choosing between an academic or an athletic track. “We pray often,” Michele George says, watching her girls in the pool. “We do personal devotions. We listen to praise songs on our headphones. We have a spirit of worship in our home and in our lives.”

A Missional Life

Organized sports are arguably a great way to live a more missional life. “People have come to us to talk about their marriages,” Pam Snoek says. “God has even used us to help them.” All speak about the joy of having church friends and sports friends. Jessica and Jacob Friend recognize that they are role models for the younger players. Rebecca and Rachel Hoekstra love their involvement in a sports ministry for disadvantaged kids.

Still, faith formation is a huge concern for these families. “I regret that I did not insist on a Christian family for my son when he was billeted in Windsor,” Teresa

Engelage says. She also acknowledges that she had to distance herself from certain hockey friends who were pulling her away from God. “They liked to party. When you feel that their influence is stronger than our faith influence, it’s time to cut ties.”

Rob Engelage recalls the fears his mother once voiced about her grandsons’ faith. At the time he asked her, “But how do you think Christians get into the NHL? Don’t we want Christians in the NHL?” For Rob Snoek, Paralympian, sports journalist, and hockey parent, the answer is simple. “Organized sports are no more of a challenge to your faith than anything else. We feel that our kids’ athletic ability is a gift from God and it would be a disservice not to use it in his service. We would never pray that our sons win a game—only that they use their gifts to honor the Lord.”

Every Square Inch

Do we want Christians in organized and professional sports? Since Jesus is the Lord of every square inch, the answer is yes. And let’s be honest. The Christian athletes whose witness we celebrate when they publicly thank God got there by developing their talents in organized sports while wrestling with the question that confronts every Christ-follower: How do we live *in* the world without becoming *of* the world?

“I’m very competitive,” Jessica Friend says. “I don’t like to lose. But if I do I’ll shake my opponents’ hands and give them a high five.” Standing up, Jessica and Jacob thank me for the conversation. Both shake my hand. As I watch them leave, I admire their youthful poise and thank God for the physical and spiritual vitality of all these parents and young athletes. ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE



Peter Slofstra is the pastor of Hope Fellowship CRC in Courtice, Ontario. He has finished the Boston Marathon four times and cycled Sea to Sea across Canada with his wife, Marja, on their tandem bicycle, Big Blue. He’s the author of *In Tandem: A Sea to Sea Cycling Odyssey*.

Raising Global Children

WHEN I WAS 7 YEARS OLD, the world became much bigger. Three Vietnamese young people moved into our home when their displaced family came to Cutlerville, Mich. I was their guide to America, teaching them how to pronounce “tweezers” and explaining our strange ways as I scrutinized their every move with wonder. Suddenly I realized that there were continents full of people who lived and looked different from me. And that we still had a lot in common.

It’s very easy to move about day-to-day life in a bubble without giving much thought or care to the larger world. That myopic tendency is easily transferred to our kids. But since God “so loved the world,” and we are called to be witnesses “to the ends of the earth,” it’s important for us to intentionally break through that bubble.

How can we help our children—and ourselves—care about people and places they’ve never been? Instead of taking them on trips to far-off places, you can bring the world to them.

Share Your Home

A few years back, my husband and I hosted two foster sons from Sudan. These young men were a kind and loving introduction to another world, one our young children could not yet comprehend. Our preschool son created a painting of his family in which he shared the dark skin of his “brothers”; he hoped he would grow up to look like them.

Now our kids are teenagers. This past year we hosted an exchange student from Japan. It’s true that we learned a lot about Japan, but I think we learned even more about ourselves. This young man often gave us a completely different perspective on the way we do things and why we do them.

Share Your Table

Not everyone has the time or money or space to host live-in visitors. But opportunities abound for dinner-table hospitality: visiting missionaries, international students at local colleges or high schools, and refugee families who need friendships and the connections that come with them. Your children can learn a lot in one evening as you demonstrate curiosity about different ways of life by asking appropriate questions and comparing experiences.

Book ‘Em

Having trouble finding someone to invite? Then get thee to a library, where pages full of people and places unfamiliar can open young eyes to the fact that we often have more in common with others than we think. Challenge your kids to read something outside of their ordinary reading choices or read aloud



to them if they prefer. Movies are another good option for introducing other cultures.

Pray

Make a list of things to pray about as a family—current events, ongoing conflicts, news from a missionary—and then talk about the things on the list before you pray. Rejoice with your international family over good news, and point out ways that you, your family, and your country depend on others. Thank God for the gifts he gives each of his people. This will help kids understand that those people and places, those joyful events and the terrible conflicts, are important to you and to God—a perspective the nightly news doesn’t offer. Use prayer guides from various denominational and other Christian ministry agencies for a wider range of prayer options.

These are just a few ways parents can bring the world to their kids. There are so many others: giving, for example, is a concrete way to show that there is something else out there. Art, music, and theater all lend themselves to discussing things outside your bubble. Cultivate opportunities to point out things that will widen your kids’ horizons. We live in a beautiful, broken, breathtaking world full of sadness and joy. Don’t let them miss it. ■



Kristy Quist is the Tuned In Editor for *The Banner*. She spends much of her free time dreaming up ways to see more of the world.



JILL DEVRIES

Finding Purpose and Faith

by Kristen deRoo VanderBerg

What is it like to be young today?

In a culture where many people are connected to technology for the better part of the day, where the minutiae of everyday life are publicly shared on the Internet, and where unemployment rates are skyrocketing, making it even more challenging for young adults to find jobs, how do people come of age and learn to recognize and achieve their God-given potential?

For a growing group of young adults, the answer seems to be found in acts of

service. By reaching out beyond themselves, young men and women are making a difference in their communities and learning about themselves and God along the way.

Take Erika Boudreau, for example. The 18-year-old from London, Ontario, never really thought of herself as someone who would take part in a mission trip. But after a casual comment to her mother, she found herself signed up for the Talbot Street CRC (London, Ont.) Serve trip.

Boudreau and her Serve team served at a soup kitchen based in North Reformed Church in Newark, N. J. They also cleaned out supply closets, an office,

Erika Boudreau (second from right in front row) and a team of young adults from Talbot Street CRC in London, Ontario, were part of a group that spent a life-changing week serving in Newark, N.J. Other members of the group came from St. Catharines, Ontario, and Grand Rapids, Mich.

and a classroom at a school that had been flooded.

“Newark is a city that is run down by poverty and violence,” Boudreau said. “On our first night there, the pastor made it very clear that we were not there to fix the problems of people. We were there to sit with the people who came, to talk to them, and to listen.”

You add.
God multiplies.

That's just what they did. While they worked hard to clean out water-damaged rooms or to serve in the soup kitchen, their biggest contribution was building relationships with people in the community.

"Before I went to Newark, I heard the saying that a smile could brighten someone's day. That saying became very true during my Serve trip," Boudreau said. "The simple power of sitting with people and talking about anything—music, the headlines in the newspaper, even candy—could bring happiness to someone's day."

And that wasn't the only lesson she learned. She said the experience taught her to get to know people before rushing to judge them.

"Ninety percent of the people in Newark are people who, on a regular day, I would never sit down and talk to," she said. "While I was there, I did talk to them. I heard some of the best stories of hope, love, and the power of God in someone's life. Getting to genuinely know someone is so much more enjoyable than basing your opinion on something you have only heard."

She also learned about herself and about God's ability to use her skills, interests, and talents to make a difference in the world.

"I never thought God would use me, but he has used me in ways I never thought he would," she said. "Since Serve, God has sent me on a crazy journey of self-discovery."

Boudreau was one of 1,943 Christian Reformed young adults who gave a week of their time to share the gospel through Youth Unlimited Serve projects in 2012.

"That translates into 49,250 hours of students hearing powerful testimonies from individuals who received their work," said Jeff Kruithof, Youth Unlimited Director.

"Those students had the opportunity to catch a glimpse of how they fit into God's overarching plan of redemption



Ndeye Maty Diagne's participation in a Learning Circle when she was 15 helped her to take charge of her future. She now volunteers her time to help other young people in her community.



At 25, David Reynoso Velazquez Aguirre is a leader in his community. He is the president of a men's group at his church and leads workshops on HIV prevention.

and restoration. They also learned that the spread of the gospel is most effective when the work of their hands matches the love expressed in their words."

This phenomenon is not restricted to North America. Young adults around the world face similar challenges in terms of tough decisions, high unemployment, and uncertainty about the future. They are also finding similar life-changing success by serving others.

Volunteering in Senegal

Ndeye Maty Diagne is a 22-year-old woman from Keur Massar community on the outskirts of Dakar, Senegal.

Life for girls isn't easy in Senegal. They receive less schooling than boys their age and have few opportunities for employment. Girls also have very little say in their lives and aren't allowed to speak up to their elders.

This leaves them vulnerable. Their parents can pressure them into early marriages—sometimes when they are as young as 13. Girls are also often the victims of unwanted sexual attention and may be coerced into exchanging sexual favors for good grades in school, or for gifts and money from older men. The results are high rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, early unwanted pregnancies, sexual abuse, and violence.

World Renew, the development and relief agency of the Christian Reformed Church, has been working with the Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELS) in Senegal since 1998 to help young adults like Diagne to overcome these challenges and achieve their God-given potential.

When she was 15, Diagne joined the World Renew and EELS Adolescent Health program. A recent survey showed that, as a result of this program, young adults have changed their behaviors significantly. The average age for marriage has gone up and the incidence of forced marriage has decreased. »

Moreover, there has been a substantial decrease in the number of unwanted pregnancies. Participants in the program say that they feel capable of dealing with unwanted sexual advances. There are also community action groups that spread the messages of the program through community events and discussions.

The key to this success is the young adults themselves. Teens join groups called Learning Circles where they learn about health issues, their rights, and how to start important conversations with their parents and elders. The groups are led by other young people, known as peer educators, who know the issues group

members face because they face them as well.

“My peer educator’s name was Khady Diaw,” said Diagne. “I learned so much from her and the program. I learned about the causes and consequences of several illnesses like sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. I learned about the evils of early or forced marriages and rape.”

She also learned that she had skills and talents that she could contribute to society. After completing all 48 lessons of the Learning Circle program, Diagne decided to join a local Youth Action Group to advocate on behalf of young adults in her community. As a volunteer, she now organizes advocacy events and leads discussions in her community. She has also spoken on radio and television to communicate her message to a larger audience.

“I am one of the leaders of my Youth Action Group. The peer educators have picked me, and I am very proud of that,” Diagne said. “The work is very interesting and motivating. It has allowed me to get to know many youths and neighborhoods. It has taught me so much, and I am always learning more.”

Nicaragua Youth Reach Out

Similarly, in Nicaragua young men and women are using their time and talents to reach out to other youths in their schools and communities.

High rates of unemployment and low levels of education leave many Nicaraguan young adults uncertain about their future. Some turn to drugs or gangs to fill the gap. A culture of *machismo* puts additional pressure on young men to have sex at an early age and with many partners.

The risks of all these behaviors are high. They can expose young people to HIV and sexually transmitted infections. They can also limit opportunities for future employment and success.

Through its partner, *Accion Medica Cristiana* (AMC), World Renew has been

Opportunities to Serve

The Christian Reformed Church and its agencies offer a variety of service opportunities for young people. Here are some of them:

ServiceLink crcna.org/servicelink

- Opportunities for individuals or groups
- Rehoboth Christian School, Rehoboth, New Mexico
- Ministry to Seafarers, Montreal, Quebec
- Romania Child Development Volunteer
- Various opportunities with Omwabini Rescue Steps, Kimilili, Kenya
- Ministry internships with a variety of churches and organizations

Calvin College calvin.edu/slc/programs/

- A variety of service-learning opportunities
- An all-campus Bible study each fall (100-plus groups of students, faculty, staff) calvin.edu/faith/bible-study/sermon-on-the-mount/
- Worship Apprentice Program calvin.edu/faith/discipleship/students/worship-apprentices.html
- Jubilee Fellows Program (includes a 10-week ministry internship) calvin.edu/academic/congregational-studies/jubilee-fellows/
- Spring Break Service-Learning trips calvin.edu/slc/programs/spring-break/

Calvin Seminary calvinseminary.edu

- Facing Your Future: calvinseminary.edu/admissions/fyf/

Christian Reformed World Missions crwm.org/volunteer

- International work teams
- International service & learning teams
- Individual opportunities
- Hope Equals
- Cohort Opportunities

Safe Church Ministries calvin.edu/broene/groups-workshops/sapt/

- Sexual Assault Prevention Teams

World Renew worldrenew.net/what-you-can-do

- Serve With a Purpose (SWAP) program
- International internships and opportunities
- International work teams: Haiti, Honduras, Japan
- North American Disaster Response Groups
- College semester internships and interim opportunities

Youth Unlimited youthunlimited.org/serve

- Serve

You add.
God multiplies.

MINISTRY SHARES TOGETHER DOING MORE



Ndeye Diagne is a member of a Youth Action Committee that receives training (below), advocates on youth issues, and performs plays (left) to reach out to young adults in her community.



helping young people in Nicaragua put their lives back on the right path. David Reynoso Velazquez Aguirre, now 25, is a great example. He attended a workshop on HIV with other men from his church. What he learned changed his life.

"This was the first time in my church there was an invitation to talk on this topic," he recalled. "Other organizations hold HIV campaigns once in a while, but they don't have the same focus as World Renew and AMC had with this project. The difference with AMC is they took it much further. They didn't just hold a one-day campaign. They gave follow-up, and it was a more extensive project."

Aguirre was so impressed by what he learned that when AMC asked him to lead workshops in other area churches that he eagerly accepted the opportunity. While he had been tested and found to be HIV negative, he knew that he could just as easily have been HIV positive. That motivated him to share lessons with others.

"People accepted my invitation to the workshops because they had trust in me as a leader with a good testimony," he said. "I then had the opportunity to get to know many brothers in Christ and to see many of them gain new knowledge that they hadn't had before."

Blessings Through Volunteering

While young adults like Aguirre, Diagne, and Boudreau are finding ways to use their time and skills to make a meaningful difference to others, the experience is also having an impact on them and their faith.

"I had been to school, but I owe everything I know to the program," said Diagne. She went on to explain that it has empowered her to take charge of her future. Though she lacks much formal schooling, Diagne has become a day care teacher. She cites her experiences with the Youth Action Group as giving her confidence and communication skills to achieve this dream.

Aguirre said his experience has deepened his faith. Today he serves as a coun-

selor to other young adults and is the president of a men's group in his church.

They aren't alone. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada recently released the results of a survey called "Hemorrhaging Faith," looking at why and when young adults are leaving, staying, or returning to the church.

One of the things that they discovered after interviewing more than 2,000 young adults is that volunteering and service at a young age is directly correlated with active involvement in the church later.

"We have examined responses to several questions that we believed would help us understand spiritual turning points in the lives of young adults," the report says, before going on to explain that mission trips are one of the most significant activities "positively correlated with active participation in the church as young adults."

Boudreau agrees.

"Very few things have had a greater impact on my life than the Serve trip to Newark did," she said. "Serve taught me the power of God to turn someone's life around, which if I ever doubted, I no longer do.

"It also taught me that God is truly everywhere. I saw hope when it appeared to be total darkness; I saw love when all I thought I would see was hate; I saw beauty when everything was broken. And I saw the evidence of new life amidst everything we experienced. Everyone we talked to was so full of life and hope believing in a better tomorrow, not at all the way I thought it would be.

"If you are willing to step out of your comfort zone and open your mind and your heart to God, there is no telling what he will use you to do, but I promise you it will be worth it." ■



Kristen deRoo VanderBerg is communications manager with World Renew

Trying Times

“**T**hese are the times that try men’s souls,” Thomas Paine wrote well over 200 years ago. Today the times still try our patience, our faith, our resolve.

But I have met some people who have tried to make a difference. While their efforts may seem comparatively small, they are making an undeniable difference.

Young people from our church make peanut butter sandwiches—hundreds and hundreds of them—for kids who’d otherwise have no lunch. A young woman I know gives free horseback riding lessons to a special needs child. Some travel many, many miles to pray together. Some go transcontinental to advocate for peace. Some build fences. Some cultivate relationships.

A young couple I know is traveling the world, photographing mission work to cultivate a greater mission heart in all of us. Some volunteer for political candidates. And some fill sandbags to stem a flood. They text, they tweet, they twitter, they Facebook about it. They are networked, and they are working!

It makes me wonder why my own generation is not more willing and eager to do more daring things in the name of Jesus. These are not only times that try our souls, but times in which we ought to try harder to impact souls!

Someone once falsely accused Plato of dishonorable conduct. When asked how he planned to defend himself, Plato is said to have answered, “We must live in such a way that all men will see that the charge is false.” Perhaps an even healthier attitude would be to attempt to live in such a way as to demonstrate that our claim is true.

This month “Together Doing More” has youth as its theme. Everywhere I go I hear people decrying the fact that the Christian Reformed Church in North America is losing young people in droves.

I personally think that some of them are leaving because the church does not acknowledge that it needs them. They are often the ones wishing not so much to be different as to make a difference. The message they sometimes receive in return is that it is not so important: creation stewardship is not what is important; it’s

only preparation for heaven that is. Justice is not what matters; it’s only justification that does. Our carbon footprint is not such a concern; it’s only our witness that is.

I have heard well-meaning people declare that the task of the church is simply to bring people to Jesus; not to be concerned about pollution, as if we could do the former without the latter. We forget that among Jesus’ parting words to his followers were “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20).

What about our Reformed heritage? Where is our conviction that there is not a square inch of the universe over which Jesus does not declare, “I am Lord”? We have a veritable army of foot soldiers ready and eager to find new ways to demonstrate that by how we live. It is time for us to invite our young people to participate in the mission, to urge them, to encourage them, and to learn from them how best we can do that in the 21st century.

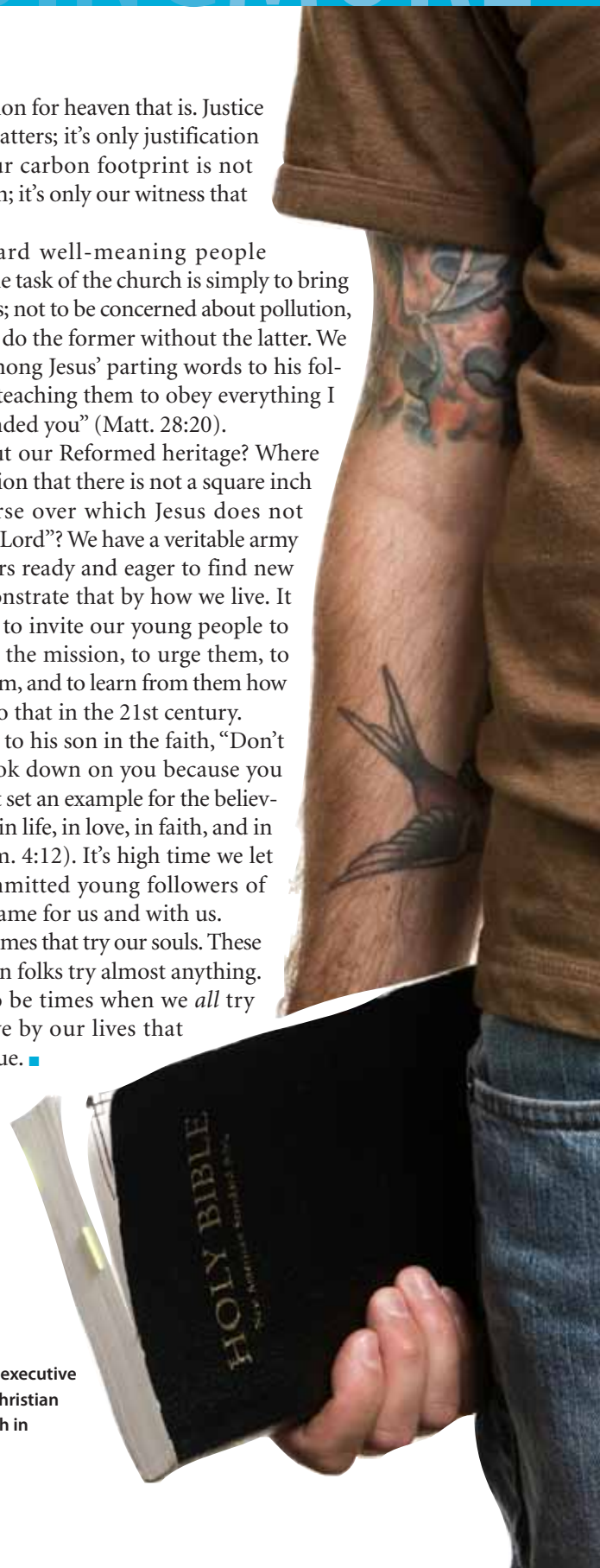
Paul wrote to his son in the faith, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). It’s high time we let our own committed young followers of Jesus do the same for us and with us.

These are times that try our souls. These are times when folks try almost anything. Let these also be times when we *all* try more to prove by our lives that our faith is true. ■



Rev. Joel Boot is executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

“What about our Reformed heritage?”





Peggy Goetz

Returning Stroke Survivors to Church

After a stroke, people often have difficulty reintegrating into the life of their church.

At first, the church family and others are very involved. But once the person begins adjusting to life beyond the hospital and rehab, attention wanes, said Peggy Goetz, a Calvin College communication arts professor who has researched stroke survivors.

Because they can't speak easily, some stroke survivors lose their friends. Typically they aren't chosen to serve as ushers, speakers, or servers of communion in church.

"If you think of church . . . it's about communication in so many ways," Goetz said.

Goetz recently landed a \$25,000 grant to study how stroke survivors with communication disorders experience Christian communities.

Along with student researchers, she will interview and attend church

with the survivors. They will also interview friends and caregivers.

At the conclusion, they will host a special worship retreat. "I hope to have that service led and planned by stroke survivors," Goetz said.

Rather than fitting the accepted idea of normal, she said, many people with disabilities—people with communication disorders included—would like to have society changed in various ways to give them access.

"Peggy's project gives people who have significant communication issues post-stroke a voice to express important church-inclusion issues near and dear to their hearts," said Judith Vander Woude, the director of Calvin's speech pathology and audiology program. "The work Peggy is doing is cutting-edge in disability studies." ■

—Myrna Anderson,
Calvin College

Sharing God's Love with a Scientist

Jerry (not his real name) was a highly accomplished scientist who thought very logically and did not believe in God.

"You can imagine, then, how difficult it was when he developed MS—multiple sclerosis," said Rev. Stan De Vries, a hospice chaplain in Minnesota for the Christian Reformed Church's Chaplaincy and Care Ministry.

When De Vries began to visit Jerry as his hospice chaplain, he was totally bedridden and fearful.

"Jerry grew up in a Jewish family, but his scientific mind had long ago concluded that you cannot prove or disprove God's existence," said De Vries.



Stan De Vries

Still, Jerry loved to talk about anything and everything, including his fears. He began to reconsider his scientific assumptions about the existence of a God.

At one point, Jerry said: "Time is short and I have one last chance." He tried to formulate a prayer to God but couldn't find the words.

De Vries said to him, "Are you requesting to know that there is a God who cares about you and will not let you suffer for a long time." His reply? "I think you hit the nail on the head."

De Vries asked if he needed the assurance that God accepted him with all his brilliance and faults. He agreed.

As he spoke of God's forgiveness and acceptance, the chaplain said, "When God forgives us, there is nothing left to condemn us."

Jerry replied, "I hope so."

Jerry didn't want De Vries to leave that day. The chaplain stayed awhile longer. Then he touched his forehead and gave him a final blessing. ■

—Chris Meehan,
with information from Rev. Stan De Vries

Two Churches, One Focus

Zeke Nelson is pastoring two churches at the same time. One is a 2006 church plant in Delhi, Calif., called Church of the Cross. The second, in nearby Livingston, is the multiethnic Church of the King launched in 2011 with help from Christian Reformed Home Missions.

“I split my vocation into two places so both churches support me part time,” said Nelson.

Nelson at first thought he’d plant churches in Latin America after doing mission work there.

But he was ultimately attracted to forming a multiethnic congregation in



Children from Pastor Zeke Nelson’s church play outside in the sunshine.

the United States. That’s what he has in Livingston with its Hispanic, Anglo, and Indian populations.

“There’s a real sense of community and love for one another here,” he said.

Nelson, with his wife, Rebecca, and four children, teams with Kenny Perum-

alla, a missionary to the Indian population in Livingston, to minister to a small core group and many in the community.

While the ministry is an outreach to

the Indian population, it also has an intimate focus, including all who attend worship services.

“It’s pretty well in my DNA to start new things,” said Nelson. ■

—Anne Byl,

Christian Reformed Home Missions

Seminary President Encourages Grads in ‘An Age of Uncertainty’

Rev. Jul Medenblik, president of Calvin Theological Seminary, gave the class of 2013 words of encouragement and of warning during graduation services held this past spring.

Graduates, he said, were leaving the seminary to serve God’s church in “an age of uncertainty and anxiety.” In the last year alone, examples abound, he said.

“We watched Hurricane Sandy shut down the city that never sleeps—New York City. But it was another hurricane—a school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in the community of Newtown, Conn., that caused many people to pause and reflect on the brokenness of persons and society.

“I could tell you that this was just a unique year, but I do believe we live in an age of uncertainty and anxiety, and you will teach and preach in this age of uncertainty and anxiety. How will you do so?”

Speaking to the 75 graduates in the Calvin College Covenant Fine Arts Center, he answered that question by turning to the apostle Paul.

At the end of his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul writes to encourage and challenge the church he obviously

loves: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

The graduating class represented 10 countries: Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Liberia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, South Korea, and the United States. ■

—Chris Meehan,

CRC Communications



Graduates of Calvin Theological Seminary’s class of 2013

*You add.
 God multiplies.*



Angelo Joseph has turned from voodoo to Christ.

Looking to God for Hope

Before the 2010 earthquake that devastated much of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, many Haitians who practiced voodoo blamed evil spirits for tragedies.

But after the disaster, many of them turned to churches instead of voodoo temples, proclaiming God's sovereignty in their lives.

Today Back to God Ministries International sees more people like Angelo Joseph, a 20-year-old student, opening up to the gospel.

Angelo once dedicated his life to worldly pleasures. He looked forward to drinking and partying at Carnival, Haiti's version of Mardi Gras. But this year was different.

When Angelo's sister invited him to skip Carnival and come with her to a spiritual retreat, he decided to go.

Along with 250 other students, he listened to Pastor Jacky Chéry, a BTGMI staff member, share a message and broadcast recordings from Rev. Paul Mpindi, French ministry leader for BTGMI.

After the reflections, many youths, including Angelo, stepped forward to request prayer and express their faith in Christ.

"I have heard the call, and it was as if I want Jesus to change my life," he said.

After the retreat, Angelo received a New Testament. He now attends Pastor Jacky's "newborn Christian" class and listens to devotional CDs recorded by Rev. Mpindi focusing on challenges young people face. He also intends to join the local church where his mother and sister already worship. ■

—Brian Clark,

Back to God Ministries International

Envisioning a Transformed Romania



Young people routinely gather in a small tea house in Târgu Mure, Romania, to talk and study.

The tea house is operated by Philothea Klub, a Christian nonprofit that is one of Christian Reformed World Missions' ministry partners in Romania.

Begun in 1994, Philothea Klub focuses on teaching biblical values and training Romanian youths to serve their communities. It also offers substance abuse talks, mentoring, counseling, workshops, clubs, and summer camps.

Recently Gabriella Belenyesi, Philothea Klub's director, joined CRWM's collaborative movement of leaders ministering to Romanian youth.

Much of Romanian society, and youths in particular, still live under the influence of Romania's communist past. Some of them are orphans or are from broken families, having grown up in a society lacking religious faith and pulled apart by betrayal, distrust, and fear.

In response, CRWM is linking with partners like Philothea Klub

Young Romanians meeting at a tea house to talk and study.

to reach Romanian youths. CRWM missionary Steve Michmerhuizen regularly organizes "Compass and Map" meetings for these ministry partners.

Participants share their stories and challenges, offering each other encouragement and ideas. They also discuss ministry strategies.

These "Compass and Map" events are just a few links in a growing transformational network movement in Romania.

"This is a strategy that crosses denominational, ethnic, and class boundaries to identify, encourage, equip, and link grassroots Christian leaders for the transformation of lives, communities, and culture," says Michmerhuizen. ■

—Sarah Lin,

Christian Reformed World Missions

Summer Fun from A to Z

You wait all year for summer vacation, but by the middle of summer it hits you: you're B-O-R-E-D. Guess what? Some people get their best ideas when they don't have anything

to do. So next time you're bored, get creative. Make something. Draw something. Read something. Write something. We've got ideas from A to Z.

Marshmallow Shooter

It only takes five minutes to make this marshmallow shooter, but it's good for hours of fun!

Here's what you need:

- paper cup
- round (not long) balloon
- scissors
- duct tape
- mini marshmallows

Here's what you do:

- Cut off the bottom of the paper cup.
- Tie a knot in the bottom of the balloon.
- Cut off the top inch (3 cm) of the balloon.
- Stretch the balloon over the cut end of the paper cup until the knotted end lies flat over the cup.
- Tape the balloon in place.

Here's the fun part! Put a marshmallow in the bottom of the cup where the knot is. Stretch the balloon back and make sure the marshmallow is sitting right on top of the knot. Then let it go and watch the marshmallow fly!

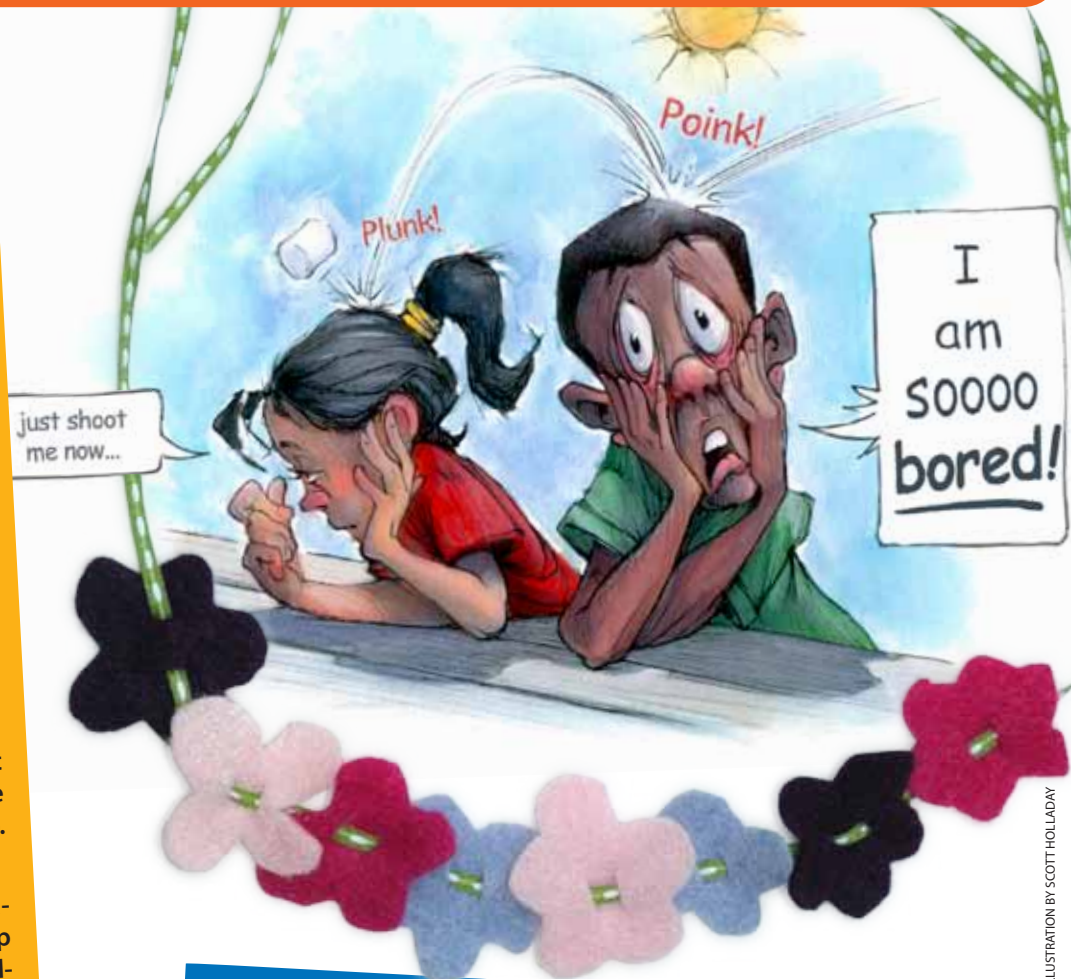


ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY

Felt Flower Necklace

Here's a great activity for birthday parties, sleepovers, or long car trips. Make this necklace with flower shapes or hearts, leaves, circles, or whatever you like.

Here's what you need:

- Felt in your favorite colors
- 36 inches (1 m) of narrow green ribbon
- Scissors

Here's what you do:

- Cut about ten 1-inch (2.5 cm) flower shapes out of felt.

- Fold each shape in half, then carefully cut two very small slits about 1/4 inch (5 mm) apart in the middle.
- Slide shapes onto ribbon by pushing one end of the ribbon UP through one slit, then DOWN through the other slit. Leave about 12 inches (30 cm) of ribbon at both ends to tie in a bow behind your neck.

You can make bracelets, crowns, and headbands by adjusting the length of the ribbon.



Make Your Own Word Games

Make your own word searches, crossword puzzles, mazes, math puzzles, cryptograms, and more at Puzzlemaker: discoveryeducation.com/puzzlemaker. It's free! For even more fun, you and a friend can solve each other's games.

A to Z Summer Fun

Here's an A-Z list of things to do when there's "nothing to do." How many can you do this summer?

- Make paper AIRPLANES.
- Read a BOOK.
- Bake and decorate CUPCAKES.
- DRAW a tree.
- Cook and EAT a meal with your family.
- Build a FORT.
- Make GREETING cards.
- Play HOPSCOTCH with a friend.
- Make ICE CREAM in a bag (instructions online).
- Learn some JOKES.
- Fly a KITE.
- Go to the LIBRARY.
- Make a MOVIE.
- Plan a NEIGHBORHOOD party.
- Set up an OBSTACLE course and have races.
- Make sock PUPPETS and put on a show.
- Play Twenty QUESTIONS.
- Organize your ROOM.
- Write a STORY.
- Plant a TERRARIUM.
- Walk in the rain under an UMBRELLA.
- Fill a VASE with paper flowers.
- WASH your family's car.
- Make a XYLOPHONE with glasses of water.
- Look for things that are YELLOW.
- Visit the ZOO.

Read Up a Storm

Reading is one of the best ways to banish boredom. Try reading outdoors if it's nice, or under a blanket tent indoors if it's raining. Here's a list of great new books. You'll find tons more at your library.

Picture Books

- *Princesses on the Run* by Smiljana Coh—the best non-girlly princess book we've seen in a long while.
- *Open This Little Book* by Jesse Klausmeier, illustrated by Suzy Lee.
- *Look Up! Birdwatching in Your Own Backyard* by Annette LaBlanc Cate.

Early Readers

- *Penny and Her Marble* by Kevin Henkes (grades 1-2).
- *Looniverse: Stranger Things* by David Lubar (grades 1-2).
- *Kelsey Green, Reading Queen* by Claudia Mills (grades 2-4).

Novels and Activity Books

- *Doodle Your Day* by Anita Wood, illustrated by Jennifer Kalis (grades 3-7).
- *Counting by 7s* by Holly Goldberg Sloan (grades 5-7).
- *Zebra Forest* by Adina Rische Gewirtz (grades 6-8).
- *Made by Dad: 67 Blueprints for Making Cool Stuff* by Scott Bedford (all ages with help, older kids alone).

—Book suggestions from Camille DeBoer, co-owner of Pooh's Corner, a bookstore in Grand Rapids, Mich.



Sandy Swartzentruber is a freelance writer and a member of Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich. She

loves to make things when she's bored.

Being Christian and Gay



I MAGINE LIVING in a world where you are not able to love, not be in a romantic relationship, not have a family. Then imagine the sadness of not being able to change your feelings and realizing that you have no choice in who you are attracted to.

Welcome to my world.

I was 13 years old when I first realized that I am a lesbian. My first thought was, *I'm a freak. No one can ever know.* For the next decade or so, I dated boys and told myself that one day I'd be normal: I'd find the right man, fall in love, and have the family I dreamed of. That never happened.

In my 20s I came out and lived a gay lifestyle. Being open and honest about

being gay meant I was free, I thought. Never would I want to hide this part of me again.

Sixteen years ago, everything changed. For most of my life, I had been an atheist, refusing to trust anyone or anything but myself. But no matter what I did or who I had relationships with, something was missing.

With the help of some wonderful people, I finally realized that what was missing in my life was God. At first I was hesitant to follow God. I was very afraid that by becoming a Christian I would have to give up on my dream of having a family. Reading what the Bible says about homosexuality, it became clear that this was not the lifestyle God intended for me.

Some of my friends who attend "gay-friendly churches" believe that living a

homosexual lifestyle is OK as long as the relationship is monogamous. These friends believe that the Scriptures dealing with homosexuality reflect the context in which they were written and do not apply to us today.

These churches were very appealing to me. I could go, worship God, be part of a community, and continue to hope for a family. But with much trepidation, I decided to trust God's Word.

On its website, the Christian Reformed Church states, "Homosexuality (that is, *homosexual practice*) is incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Scripture." The church is not saying that homosexual orientation itself is sinful, but the practice of a homosexual lifestyle is.

All these years later, I still agree with the position of the CRC. But I cannot

silence the loneliness. Much of the time I feel like I am walking this road alone, which makes keeping the commitment more difficult.

A Divisive Issue

Homosexuality is one of the most divisive issues in Christianity today. Much pain has been caused—either by the things people say or by the deafening silence that sometimes accompanies this subject.

When Christians tell offensive gay jokes in my presence, I feel like I need to hide who I am. Other times, their silence can be even more hurtful than insensitive words. At times I have wanted to talk about my struggles with my brothers and sisters in Christ. But I'm often met with silence. Just hearing the word *homosexual* or *gay* brings up images, stereotypes, and assump-

In the end I
knew I could
not ignore
what the
Scriptures
had to say.

tions that make it difficult for many in the church to participate in a conversation about homosexuality. A few very precious individuals have been willing to sit with me, listen, ask questions, and remind me of how much God loves me.

I've had some tough conversations with gay friends. I tell them that even on the days I feel most alone, knowing that God loves me makes those days so much better than any of the days that I lived without God. Many of my friends say they will never set foot in a church. They believe church people despise them. And they are right—some do despise them.

Unfortunately, theirs are the voices we hear most often. They preach hate and picket funerals with signs that say “Fags go to hell.” But I have met many others who are willing to love people who are homosexual, but just don't understand the issues. If you're one of those people, here are some things to consider.

- Understand that for a gay person to follow Christ means never enjoying the intimacy of marital love, never having a traditional family. I have been told numerous times over the years that being gay and celibate is just like being a single person without a spouse. This is difficult to hear. Straight people have the option to begin a relationship with someone they are interested in. But I believe that obeying God comes first, even when it means we can't have our heart's desires. And I have discovered that God honors this.
- Walking alongside Christian gay people means you'll encounter both those who are seeking to follow God through celibacy and those who aren't. Talk to people who are struggling with this. Some of the most helpful, healing conversations I have had were with people who truly want to understand, who care enough to ask questions. Show compassion. Cry with people and laugh with them. Share a meal and break bread together. Love them and let them love you back. Be empathetic. Imagine what it would be like to walk in their shoes. Include them in events that are for families.
- Listen. We don't have to solve every problem. We can't pretend to really know how we would react to the same struggle. All we really have to do is to love others the way that God loves us.
- Pastors and leaders, address the issue of homosexuality. Teach what the Bible says about the practice of homosexuality, but also teach how

we are to love one another and welcome people into the church. Remind your congregation that the church is a place for those who are broken, and Jesus is the one who can make all things right. Create times when people can ask you questions about this subject and be in discussion with each other.

If we in the church can only love people who are not broken, who would be left? Loving people does not mean condoning a lifestyle. I knew a gay woman who decided to attend church with her partner. She liked what she heard and eventually spoke with the pastor. He explained the church's position: that the Bible teaches that an active homosexual lifestyle is not acceptable to God. Over the years, the woman continued to speak with the pastor. He welcomed the conversation, as did others in the church. She and her partner continued attending. I asked her what kept them coming. “I don't agree with the church's position on homosexuality,” she said, “but there's a lot of love here.” The pastor was also able to convey that this woman and her partner will always be loved by God.

Jesus said, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). That means loving “sinners” as well as “saints.” Let's come alongside homosexuals and let them know they are not alone. And may they know we are Christians by our love. ■



Merrill Nosler joined the Peace Corps and is located in Azerbaijan, where she is serving as a youth development volunteer for

two years. She is a member of River Rock Church in Folsom, Calif.

Taking on Timberlake

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE'S LATEST ALBUM, *The 20/20 Experience* (RCA), sold nearly 1 million copies in its first week. He'll return next month with the second part. Back in 2000, this wouldn't have been considered a great feat. But given the demise of music sales caused by piracy and Internet streaming, it's a surprise. Even more surprising: In a culture of instant rises and falls from fame, how has Timberlake been able to sustain his popularity?

Teaming up with producer and co-writer Timbaland, Timberlake became more experimental, opting out of 3-minute, radio-length songs for longer, more developed songs. His genre-bending combination of club and dance beats includes sounds from pop, reggae, R&B, big band, and classical music. His wide-ranging vocals and high falsetto complete a very tight sound.

Timberlake's staying power, beyond base sex appeal, can be attributed to at least three things. First, he has stayed in the public consciousness through his acting career, avoiding the personal scandals that often ensnare celebrities in American culture. Second, while his music stays within the bounds of pop,

Timberlake is in that ideal space between tradition and innovation.



his vocal talent and use of varied instrumentation subtly challenges the traditional rules of popular music. Finally, Timberlake has found a way to channel older forms of pop, most notably the influence of Michael Jackson. Justin hasn't replaced the king of pop, but he is an up-and-coming prince.

But we can't ignore the sex appeal. Some say that Christians have gravitated toward folk music in popular culture because lyrically it avoids talk of sexuality. While this might be the music we are comfortable talking about, we cannot avoid conversations about being sexual and embodied creatures.

If we do not engage this conversation inside the church, we allow popular culture to be the deciding voice about how to think and enact our God-given sexual nature. And while Timberlake doesn't complete a Christian perspective on this topic, his song "Mirrors" does get at how men and women together image and reflect a true humanity. Music like his might make us uncomfortable, but for the sake of the next generation we shouldn't just ignore it.

Timberlake's ability to combine vintage influences and sounds in a new and contemporary way has kept him in that ideal space between tradition and innovation. Ultimately, his audience is attracted to something with which Christians are familiar: the old made new. ■



Greg Veltman is research and program coordinator at the Student Activities Office at Calvin College. He's a member of Creston Christian Reformed Church.

Mozart Piano Concertos Nos. 20 & 21

by **Jan Lisiecki**

reviewed by **Otto Selles**



Imagine Justin Bieber as a classical pianist with an artsy scarf around his neck. Well, maybe not. Jan Lisiecki is a

Polish-Canadian prodigy (with carefully tousled hair) who recorded two of Mozart's best-known piano concertos for the prestigious label Deutsche Grammophon (DG)—when he was only 16. Playing with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, he displays a perfect command of his instrument and a lovely touch. Now 18, Lisiecki is on a worldwide tour; his second album with DG is a recording of Chopin's Etudes. Not exactly "Baby, Baby," but definitely Romantic. (DG)



rednow.com

reviewed by **Sandy Swartzentruber**

The folks at *rednow.com* are all about wonder—and wondering. Their mission is to pose big questions that help people explore life in the context of film, music, television, and other media. For example, a piece on the TV series “The Walking Dead” asks, “What makes us human?” And if you’ve seen the show, you know how fraught with meaning that question is. Rednow is an excellent resource for those who want to wrestle with, rather than react against, the media around them.



The Burgess Boys

by **Elizabeth Strout**
reviewed by **Otto Selles**

Zach is a lost teenager—so lost that he takes out his frustrations on the Somali refugees who have moved into his hometown, Shirley Falls, Maine. His mother calls for help from her brothers, two lawyers who fled Maine to work in New York City. Zach’s legal problems soon take a backseat to a larger family drama. While not equal to Strout’s *Olive Kitteridge*, the novel’s multiple perspectives draw the reader into the brothers’ troubled lives. Strout stresses the need to seek reconciliation when we can. (Random House)



My Name Is Parvana

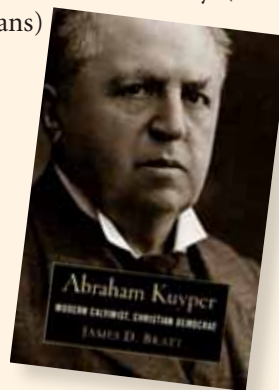
by **Deborah Ellis**
reviewed by **Jenny deGroot**

In 2001’s *The Breadwinner* and two subsequent novels, Deborah Ellis introduced us to Parvana and the stories of an Afghan community caught between the Taliban and the Western coalition forces. In this final novel, 15-year-old Parvana is imprisoned by American soldiers who suspect that she is a terrorist. Prior to her arrest, she had been reunited with her family and was teaching in a school for girls. Alternating between Parvana’s imprisonment and her life immediately before it, Ellis gives her readers a painful yet hope-filled conclusion to this series. Ages 11 and up. (Groundwood)

Abraham Kuyper: Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat

by **James D. Bratt**
reviewed by **Robert N. Hosack**

This first English-language full biography of Kuyper, the Dutch polymath who moved from the pastorate to the Dutch parliament, is a comprehensive “warts and all” overview of Kuyper’s extraordinary career and legacy. Calvin College historian James Bratt expertly traces the origin and development of Kuyper’s signature concepts—common grace, Christian worldview, sphere sovereignty, Christian engagement with contemporary culture—in the dynamic context of a life story. (Eerdmans)



42

reviewed by **Kristy Quist**

In 1947, Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball. His breakthrough was engineered by the Dodgers’ general manager, Branch Rickey, who signed Robinson. *42* recounts both the desegregation of baseball and the relationship between Robinson and Rickey. Both were Methodists. Rickey’s advice is often directed by biblical wisdom; he warns that Robinson’s “enemy will be out in force, and you cannot meet him on his own low ground.” While the movie is a bit heavy-handed, the grace and power of Robinson’s life story rises above it. (Warner Bros.)

THE LOWDOWN



Rebooting: Enigmatic singer-songwriter Sam Phillips returns with

her latest album, *Push Any Button*. (Littlebox Recordings)



He Did It: *The Butler*, a star-studded film inspired by the butler who served eight U.S. presidents over

30 years, is set to hit theaters mid-month. (Weinstein)



Good Book: Sophie Piper retells Old and New Testament stories with bright illustrations

by Estelle Corke in *My Story Time Bible*, a small but sturdy book for children. (Lion)



Big Books: New novels from familiar authors line the shelves; look for *Claire of the Sea Light* by Haitian

writer Edwidge Danticat (Knopf), *The Daughters of Mars* by *Schindler’s List* novelist Thomas Kenally (Atria), and *Rose Harbor in Bloom* from romance writer Debbie Macomber (Ballantine).

**MORE REVIEWS
ONLINE**

Practicing Covenantal Love in Medicine

WHY DOES BEING REFORMED MATTER for the practice of medicine, in my case, in oncology? Because it provides the most meaningful understanding and expression of “beneficence of care” by which we reflect God’s never-failing covenantal love for us.

I was blessed with a Christian university education that opened my eyes to the meaning of Abraham Kuyper’s confession of “the sovereignty of the triune God over the whole cosmos, in all its spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible.” Subsequent medical school education gave me a solid base for understanding the multidimensional nature of health and disease, but it focused primarily on the mechanics of diagnosing and managing patients with disease. Certainly technical competence is necessary for everyone in medical practice. However, the core of medicine is relational, and its core principle of care is beneficence.

Given this reality, the biblical theme of covenant provides a meaningful model for envisioning the relationships that constitute medical practice, particularly the complex web of relationships in oncology practice. In the Reformed understanding of covenant, our relationship with God is a model for our relationship with other human beings. Just as God graciously offered and faithfully keeps covenant with us, in medical practice care we offer care to those who are rendered vulnerable by disease and in need of care. And patients with cancer or other disease are best served in covenantal trust by being honest and forthright in relating the results and consequences of treatment. Caregivers should offer expertise that empowers and encourages patients to decide on the available therapeutic options based on their own beliefs and preferences.

Understood in this way, those who practice medicine must address and meet the needs of their patients beyond the physical, biotic, and physiological imbalance and distress associated with their disease and sometimes its treatment. I once cared for a woman with advanced breast cancer who lived with a psychotically possessive husband who kept her captive to his needs at the expense of hers. As her disease broke free from the cancer-suppressing effect of repeated therapies, she needed emotional and spiritual as well as physical care. Admitting her to hospice care earlier than the official rules prescribed provided a respite among giving, caring, and covenantally committed staff during her final months of life.

Our relationship with God is a model for our relationship with other human beings.

Covenantal relating also applies to other relationships in medical practice. Respect for the expertise of the growing number of new types of caregivers (physician assistants and specialized nurse practitioners, for example) is crucial to giving the most expert care to patients when most needed. While communicating the value of expert care available through nurses, social workers, and other health care professionals, it’s also important to acknowledge the limits of expertise to well-focused, total care. One can envision an interlinking web of care representing patients, different types of professional caregivers, and supportive family or church members.

The theme of covenant is deeply embedded in Islamic and Jewish faith traditions, but the inherent appeal of covenantal relating as an expression of common grace is also recognized by caregivers and medical professionals outside of those faith traditions. Developing an ethos of covenant can also help people of diverse beliefs who are engaged in medicine remain attentive to their other relationships outside of medical practice—relationships with family members, church, and community—that also must be covenantally met. ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE



James J. Rusthoven practices medical oncology in Brantford, Ontario, and enjoys teaching and speaking about biomedical ethics. He is a member of First Christian Reformed Church in Hamilton, Ontario.

FAQs

Faith Formation

Q We are about to hire our first-ever full time youth ministry “person.” Our council is having quite a debate whether to use the title “youth pastor” or “youth director.” What do you think?

A It’s an important debate that can quite easily degenerate when driven by various anxieties. The Heidelberg Catechism beautifully describes how we are all prophets, priests, and kings through the work of Christ (Lord’s Day 12), and that three-fold office encompasses pastoring. “Pastors” pastor people; “directors” direct programs. “Pastor” is a deeper, more true-to-life title.

I wish your council was debating whether or not to use the word “youth” in the title instead. Doesn’t the “senior” pastor also seek to minister to youth through preaching and other means? Won’t this “youth-focused” person be challenging the entire congregation to be more hospitably intergenerational in many different ways? Won’t he or she be equipping parents to be more faith-contagious in their homes? By specifically giving one person a title that narrows that role’s focus to youth, one might unwittingly give the impression that the rest of the leadership and membership are “off the hook” in that area.

I recommend simply using the title “associate pastor.”

—Syd Heilema is a professor of religion and theology at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario.

Justice

Q I can’t find a decent, affordable place to live where I can find work. Is shelter for all a meaningless, utopian dream or a realistic social goal?

Allow your own practices to continue to feed you.

A Homelessness, like poverty, is always a concern. Many churches help people find housing as a diaconal ministry, and some sponsor housing projects for special groups like seniors. A growing number also pursue access to safe and affordable housing as a justice issue.

A safe, healthy place to live is essential for human well-being. Research now shows that the cost of ensuring access to housing is less than the health and social costs linked to homelessness. Readers of the Old Testament will not be surprised. When God established a covenant with Israel, it included a guarantee of access to land and a place to call home for everyone. Cities of refuge provided shelter for anyone who was left out.

While no society achieves the goal of housing for all, some do much better than others. Two factors seem to make a big difference. First is public recognition that housing is more than a marketplace commodity. The real estate industry is a vital sector in most economies, but reliance on the marketplace alone will leave some without housing. Second is a housing strategy that brings stakeholders together to work toward the goal of housing for all. Effective plans include a range of options with attention to special needs and various stages of need, such as emergency shelters, transition housing, and affordable places for those with limited resources. They also integrate different types of housing into supportive communities. Christians and churches can help to ensure that such housing strategies are being implemented in their communities.

—Kathy Vandergrift teaches public ethics to university students and advocates for the rights of children.

Outreach

Q As I’m learning about Eastern and monastic spiritual practices, one thing that strikes me is the consistent place of

silence in these approaches. In my own church’s worship gatherings and prayer meetings, I notice how little silence we seem to tolerate. How might we begin to add more contemplative practices in our churches?

A I’m glad to hear of your journey into new faith practices. There are many traditions that offer rich resources for prayer, worship, and entering into God’s presence, both for individual and corporate practice. I recommend that you initially continue to develop your own contemplative prayer practice and expand the resources you draw upon—there is a rich Christian history of silence and contemplation, from the desert fathers to medieval monastics to Thomas Merton and other contemporary figures.

As far as including such practices into the worshipping life of your community, I suggest connecting with your pastor, worship leader, and/or worship committee. Share your own testimony of how space and silence has cultivated a deepening sense of God’s presence, and commend them on what they are presently doing weekly to gather the broader community into God’s presence. You might suggest a time of silent prayer, *lectio divina*, or meditative chant. Or perhaps a good first step might be a small group or adult Sunday school class that focuses on centering prayer or another contemplative approach. Through it all, allow your own practices to continue to feed you, while recognizing the ways your church is already meaningfully drawing people to God.

—Bryan Berghoef is a church planter starting a new faith community in Washington, D.C., and the author of *Pub Theology: Beer, Conversation, and God*. ■

Called to Care

“LOVE ONE ANOTHER . . .” *“Whoever is least among you . . .”*
“The good Samaritan . . .” *“Whoever loves the least of these . . .”*

The smell is awful even as I step up on the porch. I am greeted by a mangy black lab with open sores and a large—really morbidly obese—boy-man wearing a dirty shirt, belly hanging out. He bellows, “Dad, she’s here!”

I start across the room. My shoes, cushioned by a thin layer of dirt, don’t make the expected clicking sound. A tiny woman is lying on a hospital bed spotted with urine and blood, curled in a fetal position. She’s sucking on the end of a disposable diaper that is strangely askew on her tiny bottom. The smell in the house is a bit more bearable than it has been in previous years.

The woman’s father sits in a wheelchair at her side. A bag of urine hangs over the back of his wheel chair. “I’m so glad you came; we’ve been trying really hard but just can’t seem to get that diaper on,” he says. The voice is tender and concerned. “Neither of the two people who were supposed to help us showed up; we didn’t know what else to do.” As I struggle to straighten the woman’s diaper and get her pajamas on, I try to avoid the saliva running from her mouth. Suddenly I realize that I’m leaning against a blackened pad hanging over the side of the bed.

The father says something to me, but I’m not really listening. My response does not match his statement, and he clarifies. I say, “I’m sorry, I must be deaf.” “No” he says, “You are just concentrating on the job you have to do.” Not really true—I’m concentrating on the filth. He tells me again how much I’m appreciated.

Back home, I head straight for the basement where I strip and put my clothes—shoes included—directly into the washing machine.

I am bothered by my thoughts and actions. It’s obvious that God wants me to be a part of these people’s lives. He calls us to share his love with others by our words and actions. But I don’t want to be there. I don’t want to help out, and yet I know that I should. It would be easier to call protective services, but they’re already involved—things are better than they had been. I’m ashamed that I carry out my task with anger at being placed in this position. I’m ashamed that I do not trust God enough to watch over me and keep me healthy. I am ashamed that my attitude makes me curt and rather hard-hearted. I’m angry that no one else seems to be called to do this kind of thing.

We often speak of God’s calling in terms of profession. What does God call us to do, and how does God call us? In my profession as a nurse’s aide, God calls me to care for people. I’m good at that. But if I succeed in following God’s will in my profession, am I limiting myself? My profession fits into a nice



**Must God’s will
invade every aspect
of my life?**

little box in my life. Every day I leave my job and go home to a cozy clean house. Does God expect me to enter a place that makes me physically ill as well? Isn’t what I do at work enough? Must God’s will invade every aspect of my life? Why does he put such difficult things in my path?

I have a lot of growing to do before I become the woman God has created me to be. I need the kind of help that only comes from God. ■



Karen Hengeveld is a wife, mother, and grandmother. She works at the Christian Rest Home and attends West Leonard Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.

ADS

Deadlines: September issue is 8/5/13; October issue is 9/2/13. Details online.

Prices: Most ads are \$0.33^{US} per character (min. 150 characters including punctuation and spaces). A discounted rate of \$0.26^{US} per character applies to Anniversaries, Birthdays, Obituaries, Denominational and Classical Announcements, and Congregational Announcements. Photos are \$22^{US} extra.

To Advertise: Place your classified ad online at www.thebanner.org/classifieds or email it to classifieds@thebanner.org or fax it to 616-224-0834. Questions? Call 616-224-0725.

Denominational and Classical

Calls Accepted

LAGRAVE CRC rejoices in the acceptance of their call to Rev. Peter Jonker to serve as the minister of preaching.

Available for Call

FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF DENVER announces that Rev. Nathan DeJong McCarron is available for call. We joyfully recommend him for further ministry in the CRC. We wish him and his family the Lord's blessing as they seek to serve a new community of faith. He can be contacted at natedejongmccarron@gmail.com

ALGER PARK CRC of Grand Rapids joyfully welcomes Rev. Robert Harris and family back from the Philippines, having completed their service with CR World Missions. We announce that Rev. Harris is available for a call and wish him and his family the Lord's blessing as they seek to serve him in a new community of faith. He can be contacted at bobharris@me.com or (616) 971-2052

Eligible for Call

Synod 2013 has approved the following for extension of candidacy—each is eligible for call for the ministry of the Word (see crcna.org/candidacy for complete list of candidates): **Amanda Bakale, Samuel Boldenow, Kevin J. Boss, Timothy A. De Vries, Gina L. Dick, Kyle Dielema, John Mark Douglas, Katherine Hirsberg, Joshua R. Holwerda, Joseph Hwang, Lee Khang, Allan R. Kirkpatrick, Hitomi Urushizaki Kornilov, Benjamin J. Schaefer, Juli Stuelpnagel, Adam Van Gelder, Caitlin R. Visser, Richard W. Visser, Caleb J. Walcott, Kristopher R. Walhof, Jan Anthony Weststrate, Douglas M. Wood.**

Rev. Joel R. Boot, Executive Director

We are pleased to announce that **Josiah Chung** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word. Rev. Joel R. Boot, Executive Director

Congregational

Church's 146th Anniversary

FIRST CRC seeking to give thanks and praise to God's faithfulness for 146 years of ministry in Muskegon, First CRC would like to invite all former members and friends to join us in a final celebration service on September 15 at 9:30am. Dinner and program will follow. Please RSVP for the dinner to 231-773-1752 or firstcasmuskegon@frontier.com.

Church's 75th Anniversary

SECOND CRC of Randolph, WI plans to celebrate 75 years on October 5 and 6, 2013. We invite former pastors, members and friends to join us for a program on Saturday evening and a special worship service on Sunday. For more information, contact Harold DeVries at 920-326-5140.

Church's 60th Anniversary

MARANATHA CRC in Belleville, ON will celebrate its 60th anniversary on Oct. 5-6, 2013. A neighbourhood BBQ and open house will be held on Saturday, Oct. 5 as well as a banquet that night and a celebration service Sunday morning. For details contact the church at 613-962-2062 ext. 200 or email info@maranatha-church.com.

Church's 50th Anniversary

CRESTVIEW CHURCH, BOULDER, CO is celebrating 50 years of ministry! Celebrations and dedication of the remodeled sanctuary are set for Sep 7-8. If you are a former member or attendee we invite you to join us. Please RSVP to office 303-444-5780 so we can plan accordingly

HAVEN CRC in Zeeland, MI will celebrate 50 years on September 28 and 29. We invite all former pastors, members and friends to join us for a Saturday evening dinner and program and Sunday worship service. For more details, contact the church at 616-772-2400 or havenchurch.org.

LIVING STONES CRC Sacramento, CA is celebrating 50 years of ministry with an afternoon social time and dinner on the church front lawn September 14, 2013 from 2 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Former members and attendees are invited to join us. Please RSVP by e-mail to lscrc50th@gmail.com or call Council Clerk Donna DeVries at 530-756-8372.

PRINCETON CRC in Kentwood, MI will celebrate 50 years of God's goodness, September 15-22. All former members are invited. For details call 616-455-0110 or www.princetonrc.org.

Announcements

PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS in Greece, April 3-15, 2014, led by Dr. Jeffrey A. D. Weima, professor of New Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary and leading Pauline scholar. Walk in the footsteps of Paul during the day and learn more about the apostle at night during featured study sessions on "Paul: His Life & His Letters". Visit sites by land and sea connected with Paul's Second and Third Missionary Journeys. Also see other major biblical, archeological, and cultural interest sites. For more information on this truly inspirational tour, contact Dr. Weima at (616) 957-6019, weimje@calvinseminary.edu, or www.jeffweima.com. Arrangements by Witte Tours, a leader in spiritual journeys since 1975.

SUMMER WORSHIP IN LUDINGTON Visiting the Ludington area this summer? Come worship with us at the Ludington State Park amphitheater Sunday mornings at 10am. from July 21 through August 25. Service is sponsored by Lakeside Church. For more information check us out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lakesidechurchludington.

Birthdays

95th Birthday

EDITH BLANKESPOOR Fellowship Village, 300 East Jefferson, Inwood, IA 51240, celebrated her 95th birthday on Aug. 19. Her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren thank God for her good example and instruction in the faith.



DOROTHY (VERWYS) SPOELMA wife of the late John Spoelma, will celebrate her 95th birthday on October 3, 2013. Dorothy resides at 2105 Raybrook #3058 in Grand Rapids, MI 49506. Dorothy will celebrate her birthday at an open house at Raybrook Estates on Oct. 5 from 3-4:30 pm

surrounded by her friends and family. Her family includes; Gwendolyn (Ken) Hoving- Granddaughter Jennifer (David) Eldersveld, Grandson Chip Hoving (Andrea). Her daughter Muriel (Bill) Hop- Grandson Patrick Bosgraaf (Chelsea), Grandson Michael (Tonya) Bosgraaf, Grand-

daughter Kristen (Mike) Nitz, Grandson Jonathon (Krissi) Hop. Plus 11 great grandchildren! We give thanks to God for her life of faithfulness, devotion and love that she continues to share with us.

90th Birthday

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Sy Disselkoe on July 31 and 90th birthday to Margaret Disselkoe on August 13 from your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. God has truly blessed us.

RUTH (STEVENS) FONDSE July 25 (1612 N. 2nd Street-Sheboygan, WI 53081) With love and thanks from your family. You have been such a blessing to us and to so many!

JOHN MESMAN OPEN HOUSE Aug 3, 2013, 2-5 P.M. Raybrook Manor 1st floor John is from Edgerton, MN and Highland, IN

80th Birthday

HARVEY KIEKOVER with thanksgiving to God for his 80 years and 48 years of ministry the family of Harvey invites family and friends to an open house celebration on Sat., Aug. 10, 4-7:00 pm at the Drenthe Grove 1/2 mi. w. of Drenthe, MI



Aid to Churches and Christians in Eastern Europe and Russia

Pastors

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

1 CORINTHIANS 9: 16

His smile is friendly, and it's easy to see why residents of the children's hospital, veterans' hospital, and state-run elderly home look forward to his visits. Pastor Ivan Sirenko lives in the city of Sumy, Ukraine. 66 years old, but unwilling to slow down, Ivan is a church planter. Six days a week, he preaches and visits in the village of Viry, 60 km from home. With a heart for the unwanted and homeless, Ivan reaches out with the gospel as well as food bought from his own pension. It's a ministry that is not about results or recognition, and Ivan needs support to cover travel expenses and food parcels. Can you help?

Phone: 888-844-2624

Website: coah.org

Email: info@coah.org

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Anniversaries

65th Anniversary

FERINGA Harold & Louise of 2663 Cedar Grove Court, Jenison, MI 49428 will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on August 4, 2013. Praise to the Lord.

WARD Dean and Betty (Slings), 222 North Sixth Avenue East, Newton, IA 50208, celebrated 65 years of marriage on July 22. Your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, give thanks to God for the blessing you have been in our lives!

60th Anniversary

DEROOY Henry & Sylvia celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 3, 2013. Address: 59 Pine Ave., Snohomish, WA 98290. Their children Dwight & Bonnie DeRooy, Sylvia Boomsma, Dirk & Bev DeRooy, their 10 grandchildren & 11 great grandchildren join Hank & Sylvia in thanksgiving for 60 years of faithfulness & God's many blessings.



FEDES Marv and Nell (Izenbaard) will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on August 14, 2013. Their children, Mike (Rene'), Dan (Robyn), Tim (Tami), Marvonne (Dwight) Logterman, Dave (Wendy) & Paul (Deb), 29 grandchildren (1 in glory) and 2 great grandchildren, thank God for

their parents' love and faithfulness to God and to each other.

HEUKER Jim and Elois (Kruithof) August, 21: 7116 Eastern Ave, Grand Rapids, MI 49508. Ken/Marla, Tom/Diane, Dave/Karla, Ron/Theresa,

(the late Dan) and Kathy Ellen Rozema, Ed/Jennifer and 20 grand kids plus 6 spouses, 7 great grands. With thanks to God for His goodness.

STRUYK Thanking God for 60 years of faithfulness, love and blessings is the family of John Robert and Annie (Bosma) Struyk. Anne, Robert and friend Kathleen, (Mike and Jill, Brinley, Molly, Sadie), (Kevin and Jenny, Kate, Jack), (Brian and Erica, baby Sam), Jane and Ben Gibson, (Jeff), (Dan and Rachel), (Jill and Henry, baby Hank), Dave and Sandi, (Ryan), (Kristen). Our family will be celebrating on the weekend of Aug. 15.

WIGBOLDY Rev. Homer and Betty (DeVries) 1812 Pine Circle, Lynden WA 98264 are celebrating 60 years of marriage on August 21. Their children Carol (Todd) Goyt, Brenda (Lee) Fennema, Ken (Paula) Wigboldy, Shirley (John) Steigenga, Linda (Bryan) Kamps, Nancy (Victor) Wolffis, Susan (Harmen) DeJong along with their 21 grandchildren and one great granddaughter praise God for his love and faithfulness through many years. Your love and commitment to God and to each other is an example to us all.

50th Anniversary

HOEKS Henry J. & Caroline (Prins) of Ada, MI, will celebrate 50 years of marriage on August 24. With their children Sandy and Lon Swartzentruber (David and Abby) and Jeff and Becky Hoeks (Gerrit), they are thankful for God's faithful presence through the years.

JONGSMA Art and Judy (Landis) will celebrate 50 years of marriage on August 23, 2013 along with their children: Kendra and Erwin van Elst (Tyler and Kaleigh); Michelle and Dave De Graaf (Justin and Carter). We give thanks to God for his faithfulness and presence in our lives. 7708 Stations Dr., Byron Center, MI, 49315.

Church Position Announcements

PASTOR Bethel CRC in Listowel, ON is seeking a second full time pastor to serve a vibrant, all-ages congregation of approx. 650 members. For a job description, please email John Greydanus jhgreydaus@gmail.ca

PASTOR First Pella, IA, CRC is seeking an energetic, gifted pastor to grow a diverse congregation into a vibrant, discipling body of believers who seek to radiate God's love and expand His Kingdom. Direct inquiries to Mona Roozeboom roozeboom@central.edu

MUSIC/WORSHIP DIRECTOR The Bridge Community Church (CRC) in Langley, BC., has an immediate opening for a part-time Music/Worship Director. The applicant should have strong musical ability, spiritual passion, and strengths in leadership. For more details about the position and the church, visit our website at: www.bridgelangley.org. Please email your resume to searchcommittee@bridgelangley.org

PASTOR: Bethel Christian Reformed Church (Fulton, IL) has begun its search for a new pastor. The congregation is praying that the Lord will provide a pastor who not only loves to preach, but desires to lead the congregation into effective engagement with the community. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, email info@chapter-next.com.

PASTOR Moline, MI CRC is seeking a pastor with a passion for God, preaching His Word, relating to a multigenerational family, shepherding spiritual growth and membership, equipping for missions and community outreach, and a strong Reformed world-view of God's world. For more details contact tomspanan2@yahoo.com or 616-877-4190. Check the church web: www.molinecrrc.org.

PASTOR Hillside CRC in Abbotsford, BC is seeking a pastor for a 60-70% position in our small church of about 75 people. Responsibilities involve leading both a pastoral/enabling ministry and some preaching. We are looking for a pastor who would use his or her gifts to further enable our member-participant ministry and work alongside our worship planning teams. We are looking for a candidate who would live in the Abbotsford area. To express interest or request information please email kristie.spyksma@gmail.com

TRINITY CRC in Edmonton, Alberta is seeking a full-time Youth Ministry Director who is passionate about working with youth,

coordinating various youth programs, helping youth experience God's love and equipping them for Christian service. Ordained and unordained candidates are welcome to apply. Relevant experience desired. For more information or to submit your resume, email Christine at bcmontpellier@hotmail.com

MINISTER - CONGREGATIONAL LIFE Faith CRC, a church of 900 in the western suburbs of Chicago, seeks a Minister of Congregational Life to administer and lead the adult ministries and pastoral care of the church, preach and lead worship regularly and support evangelism and community outreach. Please direct all inquiries to fcrcsearchteam@gmail.com or contact Ray Middel at 630-862-1861.

PASTOR With the retirement of our founding pastor, Loop Church is seeking a minister dedicated to the Reformed faith with an urban vision who will lead us, through preaching and pastoring, so that spiritual formation among our members will flourish and our witness will attract others to our worshipping community in Chicago's South Loop neighborhood. If interested, please forward your letter of interest, CV, and profile to jim@loopchurch.org.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR Visalia Christian Reformed Church in Visalia, CA, is seeking a part-time director for our children's ministries. We are looking for a Christ-follower who has a passion for sharing God's love with the children of our church and the surrounding community, The Children's Ministry Director responsibilities require approximately 30 hrs/wk. Please visit our website at <http://visaliacrc.com> to view the full job description and to apply. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. 559-625-0444

PASTOR Mill Creek Community Church (~30 minutes north of Seattle, Washington) is searching for a full time solo Pastor to lead our congregation into its next chapter. We are a congregation of all ages and stages in our Christian walk and enjoy a contemporary style of worship. We are looking for a Pastor who is a compelling preacher with strong leadership skills, enthusiasm for community outreach, and could help our church grow in both discipleship and membership. Previous pastoral experience is preferred. Please submit resumes to mcccsearchteam@hotmail.com.

KLOOSTERMAN Bernard & Nellie, 151 Carmen Rd. Brighton, ON: August 10, 1963, children: Arlene (Dick), Yvonne, Evelyn, Howard (Christine) 9 grandchildren, 1 great granddaughter. Thankful to our Lord for His faithfulness.

STRUYK John & Andrea (Benschop) will celebrate 50 years of marriage on August 9. Their children, Calvin, Angela & Christina with their spouses and 10 grandchildren thank God for His blessings these many years. Address: 50 Gearin St, Trenton, ON K8V 3Y1

VAN BRUGGEN Dean & Carol (Siekman) will celebrate 50 years of marriage with their children (Doug & Kathy Tanis, Dave & Miki DeWindt) and grandchildren. We praise God for His faithfulness and invite you to celebrate with us in The Vault of LaGrave CRC, Grand Rapids, MI on Saturday August 31, 2-4 p.m.

VAN VOORST Robert and Carol (Vander Veen) of Sioux Center, IA, will celebrate 50 years of marriage on August 29. Children Gail & EJ Bonnema, Dale & Julie, Karla & Paul Hofman, Keith & Laura, Kelvin & Stacie, along with their 15 grandchildren, praise God for their faithfulness to the Lord and each other, and for their godly example in our lives.

ZUIDEMA John and Gladys (Shoemaker) of Jenison, MI will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 16. Their children William (Jana), Calvin, Mary, and Tim along with grandchildren Rachel, Johnny, and Isaiah praise God for his love and faithfulness.

Obituaries

BOLT Carolyn Alma (Balfourt); June 25, 2013; 2226 Radcliff Circle Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546; She is survived by her husband Robert; children James and Elizabeth Bolt, Robert and Carol Bolt, Lynn and Larry Rosendale, Timothy Bolt, and Kristin and Scott VanderHoning; grandchildren Andrew, Nicholas, Jason, Kaylin, Tina, Kayla, Brittany, Clarissa, Courtney and Colton; brother Robert (Judy) Balfourt; and sisters-in-law and brother-in-law Theresa Brouwer, Arlene Bolt, Nancy Bolt and Norma (Lloyd) Tinholt.

DATEMA Harold, age 85, May 31, 2013. Formerly of Grand Rapids and Big Star Lake, MI. Preceded by his wife, Judy (Huizingh) Datema in 2000. Children: Pat and Bart Den Boer, Jack and Grace Datema, Mary and Mike Van Laar. Grandchildren: Becky and Andrew Sinclair, Rachel and Nate Jager, Tim Den Boer, Jodi Datema, Laura Datema and fiancé Alex Oddo, Susan Datema, Kate Datema, David Datema, Ben Datema, Jeff Van Laar and fiancée Allie Duernberger, Jana Van Laar, Dan Van Laar. Sister, Esther and Dean Manni. Brothers-in-law, Rod Brayman, Marvin Huizingh; sister-in-law, Shirley Ten Have. Nieces and nephews.

DE YOUNG Gordon, June 11, 2013; Ada, MI; Gord is survived by his wife of 54 years, Grace (De Boer); sister: Helen and Preston Den Besten; sister-in-law: Marge De Young; sons: Glen and Faith (Ebberts), Gary and Mary (Vos), and Galen and Heather (Francis); 8 grandchildren and 1 great grandson.

FRIDSMA Audrey Anne (Cok) age 88; June 6, 2013; Grand Rapids, MI; She is survived by her husband, Bill, of 63 years; her children: Brenda (Phil) Veen; Tom (Karen) Fridsma; Sue Fridsma; Jim (Anna) Fridsma; 8 grandchildren; 2 great grandchildren; siblings Marilyn (Bert) Gjeltema, Paul (Marilyn) Cok, and Earl (Jan) Cok; and in-laws: Coby Cok, Tom De Vries, Janet Cok, Elena Cok, Diane Cok, John Vanderbilt, Til/Terry Fridsma, and Joey Fridsma. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ben and Catherine (Cramer) Cok, daughter Kathy De Young, son-in-law, Gary De Young, grandchildren Andy and Sarah De Young; and by siblings Ralph, Dorothy Vander Sluis-De Vries, Stanley, Allan, and Marvin, and in-laws: Glenn Vander Sluis, Effie Vanderbilt, Hilda and Engel Cok, and Jake and Ruth Fridsma.

FRIDSMA Matilda (Terry) of Grand Rapids, MI age 87 entered eternity June 27, 2013. She was preceded in death by her sisters Effie Vanderbilt and Hilda (Engel) Cok and brother Jacob (Ruth) Fridsma. She is survived by one brother William (Audrey deceased) Fridsma and sisters Coby (Ralph deceased) Cok and Anna Mae (Joey) Fridsma and one brother-in-law John Vanderbilt. She was a much-loved aunt to 17 nieces and nephews.

HOLLAAR William A. "Bud", age 86, June 15, 2013; 13618 S. Laramie, Crestwood, IL 60445. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Lois (Haak); children: Bill Hollaar, Vivian (Dave) Sytsma, Larry (Deb) Hollaar, Ken (Heather) Hollaar; 10 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

IZENBAARD John, age 91, of Portage, Mich. Went home to be with his Lord & Savior on May 15, 2013. Survived by his wife of 66 years. Irene (Vander Kloek) children; Cheryl (Robt.), Heerlyn, Tom (Kathy), John (Sue) 9 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren. Sister, Nellie (Marvin) Feddes.

KAMPSTRA Renard G. (Renny), 90, 107 Canterbury Green, Montgomery, TX 77356 (formerly of Chicago, IL, Waynesboro, PA, Bradenton, FL) passed away May 19, 2013. He is survived by his loving wife of 67 years, Lucy (nee Fischer), children Marjorie (Bob) Smith, Jim (Sue) Kampstra, George (Hilary) Kampstra, Cindy (Casey) Riney, 6 grandchildren, sister Babe Smit, brother George (Betty) Kampstra. Our comfort is in knowing he is now in the VERY PRESENCE of our Lord and Savior. Interment at Arlington National Cemetery. Memorials to Autism Speaks or Salvation Army.

KINGMA Bernice (Bastianse), Grand Rapids, MI. went to be with her Lord & Savior on Apr. 10, 2013. She is preceded in death by her children; Marcia Monsma, and Bill Kingma. She leaves behind her dear husband of 70 yrs., Harvey Kingma, & children: Richard Monsma, Lynn & Gloria Moll, Beverly Kingma, Larry & Carole Poll, Harv J. Kingma, and Daniel & Debra Smith. 17 grandchildren & 34 gt. grandchildren.

LANDMAN Judy, 71 on June 7, 2013; Grand Rapids, MI; She left behind loving daughters: Bekki Landman and Shanda Landman Ditlev; son-in-law: Jon Ditlev; grandchildren: Ana, Jacob, and Micah; mother: Florence De Young; brothers: Richard (Sue) Landman, Jack Landman; sisters: Marge (Jim) Brink, Barb (Bill) Vis; step sisters: Joyce (Doug) Bruursema, Marlene (Glen) Cutcher, Jackie (Keith) Lefebvre; and step brothers: Jim De Young, Gord (Eileen) De Young, Ron (Linda) De Young, and Mel (Christi) De Young.



SEGAAR Herman, age 101 and Johanna (DeJager), age 97, Glenwood, MN, went to be with their Lord and Savior on April 27, 2013 and June 24, 2013 respectively. Survived by their children, Larry and Faith, Judy and Don, Alyce and Ray, Carl and Marlys, Stanley and Pauline, Ruth, and Nancy. 15 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. Preceded in death by daughter, Connie Mae, and 1 great-grand child.

SIEGERS Charlotte (Sluis) 87, died May 31, 2013 at Hospice House of Holland, MI. Preceded in death by her husband Donald Siegers of Chicago and Imlay City, MI, and grandson Kyle Siegers. The beloved mother of Calvin (Judi), Rick (Jill), Donna Tuls (Tom), and David (Cindy). Survived by sister Jessie Alderden and brother Arthur Sluis. 9 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren. Assured of eternal life.

TELMAN Mrs. Theresa, aged 90; Grand Rapids, MI; Tress was predeceased by her husband Henry C. Telman. She is survived by her children: Joan and Ron Van Zee, James and Blanca Telman, Jan and Jerry Jonker, Jeff and Beulah Telman; 18 grandchildren and 41 great grandchildren.

Employment

CAREGIVERS NEEDED Are you interested in working for the best living assistance services company in West Michigan? Visiting Angels is looking for people who can be excellent, not average; make a connection with our clients; be perfectly dependable; practice compassion and work with integrity. Contact Heather at 616-243-7080 or heather@vangels.com. www.vangels.com

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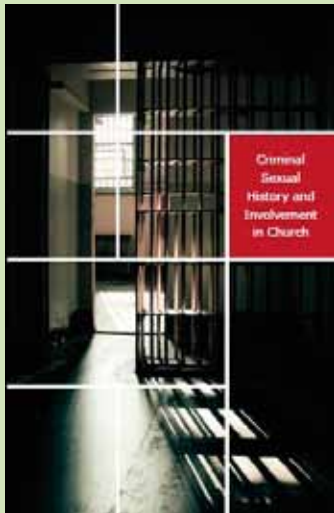
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Abuse Awareness Sunday

September 22, 2013

Abuse Awareness topic for 2013:
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Can a congregation maintain a safe church environment and also welcome those who have offended sexually?

- What are the critical points to consider?
- What have other churches done in this area?
- Where can I find useful resources?

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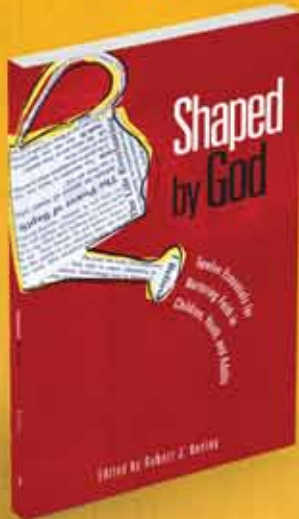
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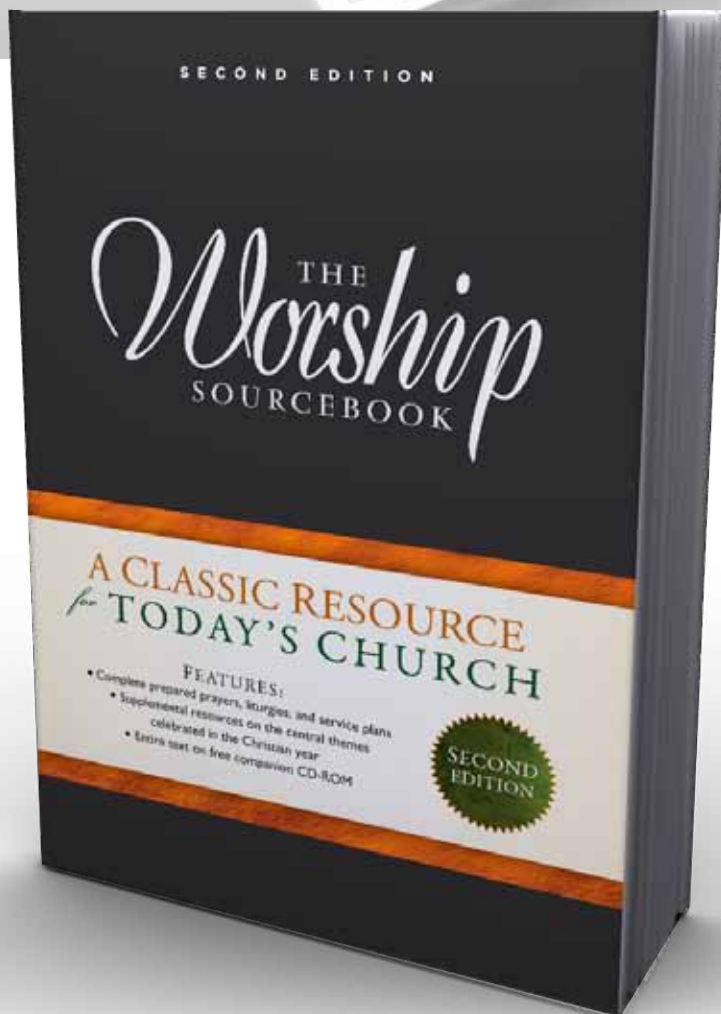
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Punch Lines

What has made *you* smile lately? Got a joke or funny incident you'd care to share with your wider church family? Please send it to *The Banner* at 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508; or email it to editorial@thebanner.org. Thanks!

How to write good:

1. Avoid alliteration. Always.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. Avoid clichés like the plague. They're old hat.
4. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
5. One should never generalize.
6. Comparisons are as bad as clichés.
7. Be more or less specific.
8. Sentence fragments? Eliminate.
9. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.
10. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are unnecessary.
11. Who needs rhetorical questions?
12. Do not use double negatives, never.

—Mark Stephenson

A group of high school students let three goats loose inside the school. Before they did, they painted numbers on the goats' sides: 1, 2, and 4. School administrators spent most of the day looking for number 3.

—George Vander Weit

Most people think that tuna fish are the bravest sea creatures. But that isn't true. Tuna are the chicken of the sea!

—Dale Claerbaut

A woman asked her husband, "Could you please go out and buy a gallon of milk? And if they have avocados, get six."

A short time later, the husband returned with six gallons of milk.

"Why did you buy so many?" his wife asked.

"They had avocados," he replied.

—C. VanderZee

Our granddaughter, 7, told us some time ago that what she really wanted for her birthday is a passport. We had explained to her that that you need a passport to travel outside the country, as we sometimes do to visit family or to go on vacation. The desire for a passport had become a frequent part of her conversation, and she was getting tired of waiting for it to happen.

One morning she was in the next room watching a VeggieTales movie that had something to do with the Israelites being in exile. When it ended, I heard her say, somewhat sadly, "You really can't do much for them. They're going to need passports. They're in another country."

—Henry Hess

My 2-year-old granddaughter, Sydney, sneezed one day. Afterward, she went to her mother with her hands extended

and asked, "Mommy, can you wipe the 'bless you' off my hands?"

—Betty Nyenhuis

As my friends and family know, I am quite "hair challenged." One evening my 4-year-old grandson sat down beside me and began to examine the hairless area on my head. "Grandpa," he asked me, "do you like it that you have so little hair?"

"No, Jacob," I answered. "I wish I had a fine head of hair like you do."

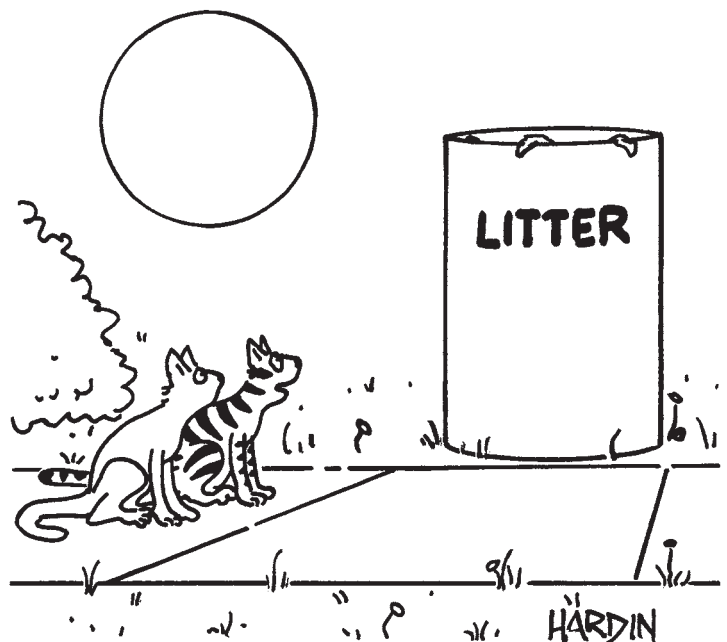
"Don't feel bad, Grandpa," he said. "Jesus notices every hair that falls from our heads."

I don't think I've ever hugged him as tightly.

—Bernie Van Der Molen

We were installing dormitory furniture in an Abbey. One of the brothers was assigned to help and be our companion. During lunch one day, we were discussing the sin of pride and the need for Christians to live humble lives. The brother had been quietly listening. Finally he spoke. "I have to make a confession. I have learned to live a humble life, but I have become too proud of it!"

—Adrian Vander Starre



"It must be intended for exceedingly tall cats."



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