

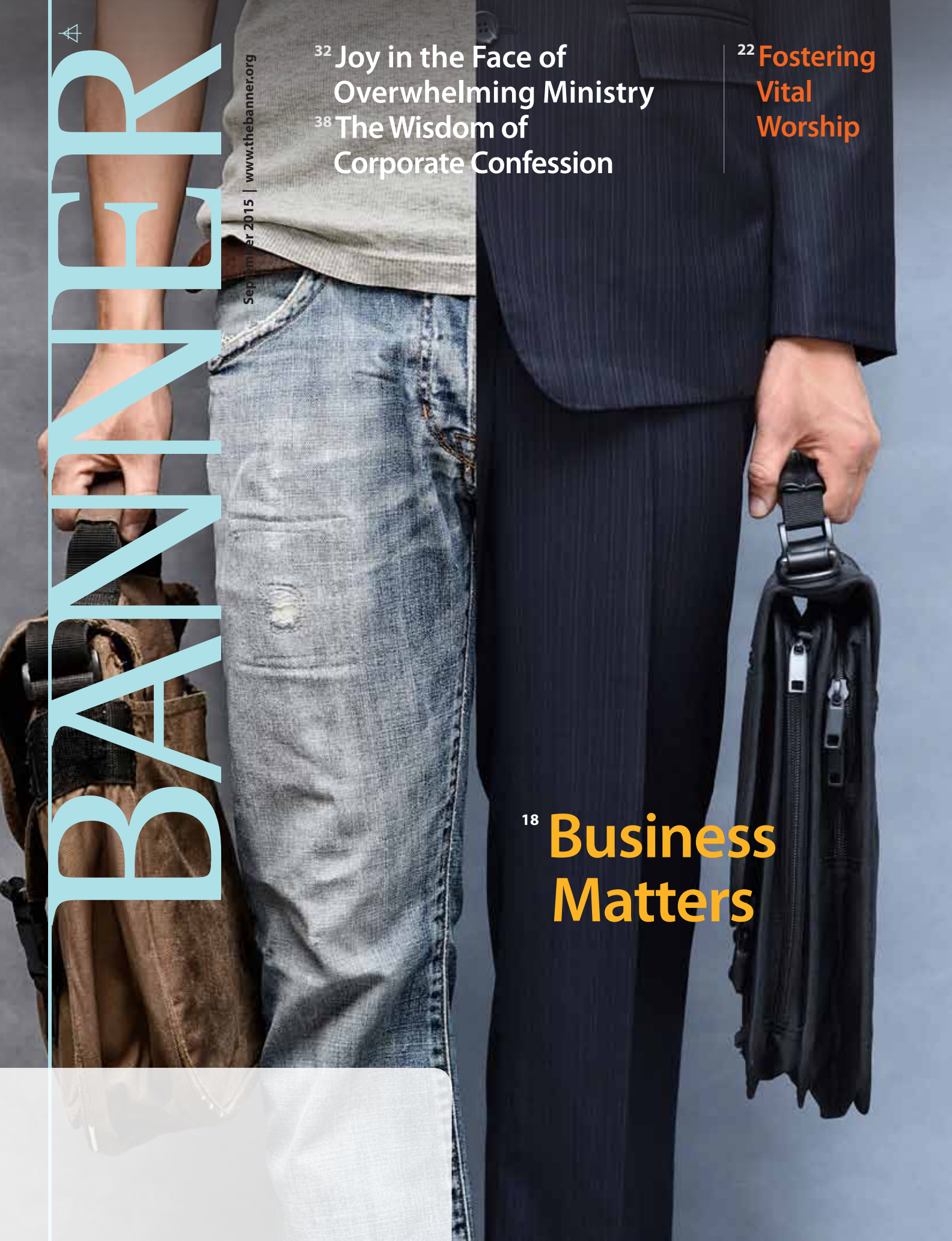
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As Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity, Sarah Coakley holds the established chair at Cambridge in philosophy of religion. She has previously held positions at the Universities of Lancaster, Oxford, and Harvard, and a visiting professorship at Princeton. Her subject area and specialty of study also includes Christian theology in addition to the philosophy of religion.

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# Call Me Len

**LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF** as *The Banner's* new interim editor. Some people call me “Leonard,” but most call me “Len.” A few very old friends get to call me “Lenny,” but don’t try it. I’m married to Jeanne Logan, an artist, and we live in Grand Rapids, Mich. We have four grown children and 12 grandchildren scattered around the country.

I’ve been an ordained minister for 45 years and was privileged to serve churches in Iowa, New York, Michigan, and Indiana. Then I served seven years as editor in chief for Faith Alive, the former denominational publishing agency, before my retirement in 2013.

I love the Christian Reformed Church as my spiritual mother. Growing up in Alpine Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids, I was deeply formed by its hearty but solemn worship, by the hymns in the blue and red *Psalter Hymnal*, and (in retrospect), by the Wednesday catechism classes.

Of course, the CRC is a very different denomination today—with widely divergent styles of worship, greater ethnic diversity, and with new social and theological issues that need to be addressed. But I still love the CRC and feel privileged to serve it now as interim *Banner* editor.

As I see it, an interim’s task is not to lead a church into new paths, but to help the church rediscover its identity. Only with a strong sense of identity can a person or congregation forge a new future.

Some have observed that the CRC is going through an identity crisis. Times have changed, and we can say “good riddance” to elements of denominational identity that revolved around ethnicity or cultural sameness. But there are others that we need to think about more carefully: our theological heritage, worship, mission, denominational structure, and, of course, the moral and ethical questions swirling around us.

As interim editor, I’d like to help us see how we can honor and reclaim important marks of identity that have defined us through the years. But I also want to help find ways we can wrestle honestly and charitably with what many see as threatening new undercurrents of change.

There are a few things you can expect:

- I believe our worship is the single most important way in which our faith is formed. I hope to highlight the theology and practices that make for vital, formative, exuberant Reformed worship.
- I’m concerned that we could be losing some of the rich theological heritage that characterized us over the years. It’s not enough, however, for us to simply point to our confessions like cross-stitched mottos on a wall. We need to discover creative and imaginative ways to respectfully engage the historic confessions of the church with today’s questions and concerns.
- I’m convinced that the vitality of the mission, worship, and fellowship of our local congregations will determine the future of the CRC more than any organizational restructuring. I hope to take a look at congregations in different places and situations that might help us see who we are and offer models for our future.
- Lots more people are accessing *The Banner* online. I want to move toward offering more exclusive online material, including my own thoughts, and promote the online *Banner* as a place for robust discussion.

I’m looking forward to a challenging and meaningful year for *The Banner*. I ask for your prayers, support, and, yes, your charitable criticism as I seek to build an editorial bridge into *The Banner's* future. ■

I’d like to help us  
honor and reclaim  
important marks  
of identity.



**Leonard J. Vander Zee** is interim editor of *The Banner*. He attends Church of the Servant CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.

**Leonard J. Vander Zee** *Editor*

**Judith Claire Hardy** *Associate Editor*

**Gayla R. Postma** *News Editor*

**Henry Hess** *Editor,*  
*Together Doing More*

**Kristy Quist** *Tuned In Editor*

**Dean R. Heetderks** *Art Director*

**Pete Euwema** *Graphic Design*

**Frank Gutbrod** *Graphic Design*

## Contact Us

1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids,  
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**News**  
613-330-3145 [news@thebanner.org](mailto:news@thebanner.org)

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## When I Have No Words

**A**FTER JUST A MONTH in Cairo, Egypt, where I'm serving as a Christian Reformed World Missions partner and Mennonite Central Committee SALT program participant, I found myself visiting a prison. I was part of an ecumenical ministry team that brings food and conversation to foreign prisoners whose families cannot afford to make the journey. There were inmates from Sudan and Germany and Belgium and Nigeria—but the group leader immediately introduced me to Carlos, a 60-something Peruvian serving a four-year sentence. "He'll be so pleased to speak Spanish with you," she said.

A friendly Egyptian toddler climbed on and off my lap while Carlos spoke about the prison fellowship. I struggled to understand him through a strong accent and the hubbub of the room. The long-lashed boy giggling at my knee asked for kisses in Arabic as Carlos told me about dishonest legal staff in Spanish and a Tunisian ministry team member counseled him in a thickly-accented English I found no easier to decipher.

By the time we circled to pray and say our goodbyes, I was finished. I waded through verb conjugations to tell Carlos I would pray for him, but I couldn't come up with any more Spanish—I just hugged him and walked, blinking, into the afternoon sunlight outside the compound.

I speak bits of four languages now, but I have no words with which to respond to suffering. I cannot produce a sentence in any tongue that has, in itself, any power to offer hope to those who are far from home and have no freedom to return there, those subject to law without justice, those who were once in the wrong place at the wrong time and are still there years later.

I've loved every language I've come across, but again and again I am encountering the limits of language. Again and again I find myself speechless. This wordlessness is accompanied by one of two things, always: the incomprehensible ugly, and the unexplainable sacred. Because there is an infuriating impotence to the plight of the prisoner, as well as an almost painful holiness in a group of people—Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Christian Reformed, Canadian, Danish, Egyptian, Tunisian, American, young, middle-aged,

retired, quiet, gregarious—who are following the commands of Christ, week after week, year after year, bringing fresh mangoes to a prison.

So we show up, I guess, and put our shoulders to the aches and the holiness. And we say some words in a few languages, but mostly we show up. And if I speak French or Spanish or English or Arabic to someone who understands one of those languages or none of the above, if I speak the language I'm attempting or pieces of the other tongues that have taken up residence in my mouth, or if I cannot speak any of them because it is too much for me, still I show up.

I kiss an Egyptian toddler and hug a Peruvian man and so acknowledge the sacredness of partial graces—prison visits and foreign languages—even as I beg my God for more. ■



**Kathryn Van Zanen** is a communications and fundraising assistant for the Anglican/Episcopal Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa. She is a member of Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.



MARK HILLARY/FLICKR

The only cure for loneliness,  
despair, and hopelessness  
is **love**.

— M O T H E R T E R E S A

# What about the Belhar?

Is it possible to be theologically and theoretically correct but relationally and practically wrong?

**IN RECENT YEARS** we have visited South Africa several times as volunteers. Mostly we work with and attend the Uniting Reformed Church (URC), which united separate branches of the Dutch Reformed Church that existed for whites and people of color. A few years ago, we were present as the URC celebrated the 25th anniversary of its adoption of the Belhar Confession.

In ensuing discussions, we had to admit that our church, the Christian Reformed Church in North America, has chosen to establish a separate category for the Belhar instead of adopting it as a full confession. That information was usually received with a puzzled look and the question “Why?”

Although we were unofficial representatives of the CRCNA, we felt we owed our South African brothers and sisters an explanation. We felt awkward, considering their very difficult lives as blacks under the apartheid regime, with all its attendant restrictions, discriminations, and injustices—many of which people still experience daily.

So what are the correct responses? How do we engage people who live with the issues of racism and social and economic disparity in a discussion about weak theology, hidden political agendas,

and slippery slopes? Claims regarding the Belhar’s length, its possible irrelevance to North American culture, or the distinguishing features of a “true confession” seem insufficient. Is it possible to be theologically and theoretically correct but relationally and practically wrong?

Historically, it appears that the institutional church has almost always been slow to speak out and act on social justice issues. Church leaders, including clergy, usually play it safe in order to avoid controversy and maintain support. The biblical prophets railed against the religious establishment as much as they did against the political establishment.

The church is in a tight spot. It must take into account its constituency’s assumptions, fears, lifestyles, and worldviews while confronting and challenging the same. The “Catch 22” is that, eventually, silence, avoidance, and inaction implicate the church, and even Christianity itself, as being unconcerned and unengaged, or worse, as being supporters and even perpetrators of injustice. Many have left the church, believing it to be self-absorbed and irrelevant.

In our humble opinion, it is incumbent upon individual members and church groups to courageously speak out against injustice and to advocate for change in established orders if they produce and support structural injustice. And so we call on the Christian Reformed Church to adopt the Belhar as a confession—standing alongside our brothers and sisters in South Africa. ■



**John and Yetty Jooose** are longstanding members of Ingersoll (Ontario) Christian Reformed Church.



## Wish You Were Here

Received the June *Banner* this afternoon and wanted to contact editor Bob De Moor as his time in this job is short (“Wish You Were Here”). I enjoyed your writings and can say the “newbie” editor will have big shoes—wooden or otherwise—to fill. Here’s wishing you the best in your future, and may God continue to bless your efforts.

—Tom Bosma  
Wyoming, Mich.

## Night Psalms

I spent the first 50 years of my life happily singing psalms and hymns from the red and then blue *Psalter Hymnal*. Now I am living in a care facility with seniors. I relate to Didy Prinzen’s article “Psalms in the Night” (June 2015).

Weekly I enlarge the print of a psalm for a Bible study at the facility: appreciative residents read, study, and sing it. Though sung without accompaniment and out of tune, we make a joyful noise. At our weekly worship services, pastors are often surprised by the enthusiastic singing. I treat occasional insomnia by singing to myself spiritual songs I learned years ago, one for each letter of the alphabet. They are precious memories.

—Eunice (Post) Hop  
Baldwin, Mich.



# LETTERS

## Grand Rapids Dreaming

One thing Clayton Libolt's article ("Grand Rapids Dreaming," May 2015) neglected to mention is the proverbial elephant in the room: our binational nature. It's just not working. Many binational Christian organizations have gone their own way to more effective ministry. How many Canadian Ministry Directors must we go through before our American cousins take us seriously?

Don't get me wrong. I love my American neighbors. I don't want to split our church. But our worldview and politics could not be more different. Let's admit that and do something about it.

At the very least, let's start with having our own synod north of the 49th parallel.

The CRC in its present form has already hit the iceberg, in Libolt's words. Will it continue to float in its present form? I think not.

—Henry Lunshof  
Smithville, Ont.

As an outgoing board member of two small organizations—our boards consist of about 10 members each—the prospect of having the denomination led by a board of 60 people makes me dizzy ("Grand Rapids Dreaming"). Mr. Libolt's point about board members rubber-stamping decisions already made by committee members or staff seems all too likely. Please let this dream sit for one year and give the decision-makers time to think this through. If it's good, it will survive the waiting, and if not, the denomination will have averted a disaster.

—Michele Gyselink  
Montreal, Quebec

Kudos to Clayton Libolt for his perceptive article on the matter of restructuring the CRCNA ("Grand Rapids Dreaming"). The impulse toward centralization in the pursuit of efficiency has also been seen in government and education in the past few decades. Now we have bloated gov-

ernment and a top-heavy education system, together with the substantial improvement of neither the welfare of our citizens nor the education of our children. Nor have many of our churches escaped increasing bureaucracy. Church staffs keep growing, resulting too often in the disengagement of congregational members. Our denomination's structure is somewhat messy, but a little messiness in our churches and denomination is better than an overly-centralized and efficient organization that moves people ever farther from a sense of personal identification and investment in our mutual service to the Lord.

—Duane Nieuwsma  
Byron Center, Mich.

## FAQ—Outreach

Just wanted to respond with a helpful resource for the individual whose question was posted in the FAQ "Outreach" (May 2015). I have been confronted with friends who question the exclusive claims of Christianity myself on more than one occasion. The answer given by Victor Ko was spot on, exactly what the individual needed to hear. I simply wanted to add a suggestion that he read Timothy Keller's book *The Reason for God*. It was extremely helpful in clarifying this question posed by the skeptical friend. Well worth the read for any Christian.

—Jack Toornstra  
Edmonton, Alta.

## Growing in Unity

Is it helpful to proclaim that the "lack of unity" is everywhere we look, and then list examples of it in the church ("Growing in Unity," May 2015)? Earlier pages of *The Banner* described unity in youth conventions, special Olympics, denominational agencies, community gardens, CRC and RCA classes, and in many other church activities. Let's deal with disunity when it exists, but also emphasize and appreciate

demonstrations of church unity when they do occur and praise God for them.

—Michael DuMez  
Oostburg, Wisc.

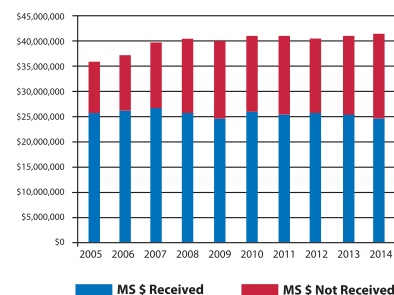
## Boko Haram

I read with interest the news article "Boko Haram Haunts Children" (May 2015). The story of the devastating Islamic attacks on Christian communities needs to be reported. The CRCNA has a sister denomination in Nigeria. There are also other CRC-related organizations involved in providing support to widows and orphans. It seems strange that *The Banner* would reprint an article from *USA Today* that does not mention the word "Christian." An article directly from the CRC in Nigeria and our direct involvement in supporting our fellow Christians is overdue.

—Bruce T. Muller  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

## Corrections

The colors on the Ministry Shares graph on p. 54 of the July/August issue were reversed in the print version. Here is the corrected version.



Also, the Synod 2015 photographs from that issue were taken by Karen Huttenga. We apologize for the oversight.

Finally, our apologies to Rev. Lisa Vander Wal, fraternal delegate to Synod 2015 from the Reformed Church in America, whose title was not listed correctly on p. 40.

MORE ONLINE

# NEWS

## NEWS CORRESPONDENTS

For correspondents' email addresses, see [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).

**Gayla R. Postma** News Editor  
Email: [gpostma@crcna.org](mailto:gpostma@crcna.org)

**Anita Beem**  
Classes Lake Erie, Kalamazoo  
248-559-2806 • 248-645-1990

**Anita Brinkman**  
Classes Chatham, Huron  
519-354-9126

**Gregory Chandler**  
Classes Georgetown, Grandville,  
Grand Rapids North  
616-392-8434

**Shashi DeHaan**  
Classes Arizona, Red Mesa, Greater L.A.  
623-418-6705

**Callie Feyen**  
Classes Atlantic NE, Hackensack, Hudson,  
Illiana, Southeast U.S.  
240-422-1171

**Janet A. Greidanus**  
Classes Alberta North, Alberta South/  
Saskatchewan  
In Memoriam articles  
780-484-3370

**Kyle Hoogendoorn**  
Classes Heartland, Lakota, Northcentral Iowa  
712-476-5955

**Jonathan J. Kim**  
Classes Hanmi, Ko-Am  
626-616-0411

**Ron Rupke**  
Classis Quinte  
905-349-2336

**Kristin Schmitt**  
Classes Grand Rapids East, Grand Rapids  
South, Thornapple Valley  
616-818-6673

**Amy Toornstra**  
Classes Columbia, Lake Superior, Pacific  
Northwest, Wisconsin  
503-399-9165

**Krista Dam-VandeKuyt**  
Classes Eastern Canada, Hamilton, Toronto  
905-977-9855

**Alissa Vernon**  
Classes Niagara, Northern Michigan  
289-214-2025

**Tracey Yan**  
Classes B.C. North-West, B.C. South-East,  
California South, Central California  
604-420-3030

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please contact the news editor.



Setting up standing stones: Aydan, Kirsten, Julianna, Dominique, Simon, Erin, and Ben.

MARLENE BERGSSMA

## “One Generation Will Call to the Next”: Seniors Share Faith Stories

**Y**outh group leaders at Jubilee Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines, Ont., took their faith formation sessions into the living rooms of older members to hear the faith stories of earlier generations.

“We have a vision for intergenerational ministry at Jubilee,” said the church’s youth ministry coordinator, Anna Bailey. “While I was thinking about [that] and planning an authentic faith formation component for our youth program, the idea of our teens receiving hospitality, wisdom, and life experience from older, faithful Christ-followers came about.”

Jubilee CRC’s members responded enthusiastically to Bailey’s request to share their stories; 17 volunteered to share with a group of teens known as the “Jubes.”

Sylvia DeVries, who hosted the Jubes with her husband, Bill, said they were drawn to participate because they were thankful to be known to the youth of their church. She expects that after these meetings “the kids [have] more of a sense of the faith of some of the older couples in the church and who they [are].”

“When I heard [the older members’] stories, it really touched me, because most of their stories were probably hard to tell,” said Kadie, 15.

For Alan Vandermaas, the presence of the teens actually helped him to remember. “Several of my stories came from their questions,” he said. “They woke up my memory.”

Ben, 15, said, “The talks were inspiring because [these] were ordinary people who did extraordinary things. They showed that anything is possible and can be done with the helping hand of God.”

The teens closed their year of youth group with a Sunday worship service in which grade 12 students celebrated their own stories by laying stone markers. They thanked the older members for passing on their faith with a video showing the origin of the story-sharing project.

“Most of [the seniors] weren’t [always] that strong in their faith. But then they started to learn more about God, and they got deeper with God. After I heard that, it helped me to go into a deeper relationship with God,” said Kadie. “They opened my eyes.”

—Alissa Vernon

## Stories for the Future

During a mission trip to Beautiful Gate Orphanage Care Center in Lesotho, Africa, Carol Bosma saw a group of children huddled together looking at books. The image she took home soon turned into an idea.

Bosma, a member of Orland Park (Ill.) Christian Reformed Church, is passionate about living the words of Jesus in James 1:27b: "Look after the orphans and widows in their distress." Remembering what she had seen on her visit to the orphanage, Bosma decided she wanted not only to look after the children's immediate needs but their future needs as well.

"When [the children] are adopted, they quite often go to English-speaking families," Bosma explained. "Why not help build their library [with] books so they can better learn English and prepare themselves for their future?"

Once Bosma returned home, she contacted Beautiful Gate and asked how she could help with



**Orland Park CRC collected books for Beautiful Gate, an orphanage in Lesotho, Africa.**

their future. Together, they planned a book drive. Beautiful Gate recently opened a small library on campus; a family volunteered to paint the room and buy a rug and a new cozy chair for reading. All that was needed were books. "Lesotho is a country where books and other resources are hard to find and can be quite expensive," said Bosma.

"I knew that this would touch Orland Park Church members' hearts to contribute to the book drive for the children of Africa."

The church ran the drive for four weeks and collected over 100 books, including Bible story books, Dr. Seuss, and many other favorites. "I hope sometime to return and volunteer again in Lesotho," Bosma said. "I want to love and hug these children who need to feel and know that their heavenly Father sees their needs for now and the future, and helps fill these needs through so many people around the world who haven't forgotten them."

—Callie Feyen

## IN MEMORIAM



**Rev. Theodore (Ted) Wevers**  
1924-2015

Rev. Theodore Wevers was a man of humor and wisdom who considered it a theological imperative to "walk the talk" every day. He died peacefully on May 23 at the age of 91.

Wevers worked at a very young age as a dairy farmer in Wisconsin but eventually left the family farm to study for the ministry.

He went on to serve Christian Reformed congregations in Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, California, and Wisconsin. Wevers loved preaching the Word of God and also enjoyed teaching catechism, leading Bible studies, and working with the youth of the church. He retired in 1987 but continued serving churches as an interim pastor.

Wevers will be missed for his wisdom, his unconditional love and support of his children and grandchildren, and his daily prayers for all of them.

Wevers was preceded in death by his first wife, Frances; his second wife, Julia; and one daughter. He is survived by three children and their spouses, 11 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

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

## Board of Trustees 2015/16 Executive

The Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church elected its executive officers for the 2015/16 year. The 30-member board is binational, with 15 members from the U.S. and 15 from Canada. Both the Michigan Corporation and the Canada Corporation elect their own officers, and from those six, the binational executive is elected. The binational executive includes Kathy Vandergrift (president), Chris Van Spronsen (vice president), and Cal Hoogendoorn (vice all).

The Board of Trustees conducts the governance and administrative business of the CRC in between the meetings of the annual synod held in June. The Board meets in February, May, and September each year.

—Gayla R. Postma



**Back row (l-r): Cal Hoogendoorn, Chris Van Spronsen, Peter Noteboom, Mike Wevers. Front row (l-r): Kathy Vandergrift and Socorro Woodbury.**

GAYLA R. POSTMA

# NEWS



Oakdale Park CRC celebrates 125 years.

## Michigan Church Celebrates 125th Anniversary

In 125 years, Oakdale Park Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., has transitioned from a church that served Dutch immigrants by incorporating the Dutch language into its services to a church that continues to serve its ethnically diverse neighborhood.

In May, Oakdale Park held three commemorative services celebrating the past, present, and future of the congregation. Committed to diversity, the church has overcome difficulties while growing into its own culturally diverse place of worship.

“The first Sunday was a reflection on the past that included the celebration and recognition of growth through embracing immigrants—most of whom were Dutch,” said Rev. John Rozeboom, the church’s administrator.

“The second service focused on current ministry diversity,” Rozeboom said. After Oakdale Park welcomed Dutch immigrants, the congregation experienced another cultural shift. “White flight”—the movement of Caucasian residents to the suburbs—changed the membership landscape. In the 1960s and 1970s, many African Americans migrated from the southern U.S. and moved into available homes. Oakdale Park welcomed these new members to their existing immigrant-based congregation. Diversity continues to play an important role in the church.

The commemorative services concluded with senior pastor Rev. Emmett Harrison focusing on the spiritual growth of Oakdale’s members. Rozeboom said that since its beginning in 1890, the church has reached out, now hosting over 500 members, with 300 of them participating in regular worship groups.

The future looks bright. “Kids are an important part of Oakdale’s ministry,” said Rozeboom. “One hundred kids attend the church, and there is about one baptism each month.”

—K. Schmitt

## CRC Executive Director Issues Statement on Court Ruling re Same Sex Marriage

Steven Timmermans, executive director of the Christian Reformed Church, issued a statement in response to the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling that made same sex marriage legal across the nation. Same sex marriage has been legal in Canada for more than a decade.

While many denominations and religious organizations are taking public stands against the ruling, Timmermans noted that the Christian Reformed Church already has a position on homosexuality and one on marriage. The CRC’s position on marriage states, “Marriage is an institution

created by God. It is a covenant relationship established by mutual vows between a man and a woman united by God.” He also pointed out that both of those documents refer to the CRC’s synod-appointed study committee to provide pastoral advice concerning same sex marriage. The committee is scheduled to report in 2016.

Timmermans said that some of the questions coming to his office are from people wondering if the state can, by means of the recent Supreme Court ruling, force churches to open their doors to

## Ontario Group Sews ‘Fidget Quilts’ for Veterans

Fidget (or touchy) quilts, used to reduce agitation for patients suffering from dementia, are also now being used by veterans, thanks to the Busy Hands group at Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Brockville, Ont. The group made and delivered 23 fidget quilts to Perley and Rideau Veteran’s Health Centre in



Fidget quilts have embellishments for stimulating mind and hands.

Ottawa, Ont. The quilts are made of many different textured fabrics and have embellishments such as pockets, zippers, and lace, all of which enable patients to focus their hands and minds through sensory stimulation.

Perley and Rideau Veteran’s Health Centre, which serves over 250 veteran residents and 200 community residents, is one of the largest senior care centers in Ontario.

“[The quilts] are pretty easy to make. If you can sew a straight line, you can make one of these quilts,” said Maggie Sportel, a member of Busy Hands. The group held a fundraiser to purchase four more sewing machines and received donations of materials from congregation members and textile shops.

—Krista Dam-VandeKuyt

same sex marriages. "The answer, while not at a level of legal advice, continues to be the same," he said. "If a church restricts the use of its building for its stated religious purposes, it can refuse to 'rent' to others for different purposes."

He concluded his statement saying that Christians must give clear witness to Jesus' command to love one another.

"While great discernment is necessary due to society's rapidly changing mores, we must be clear about our witness," he said. "Society may change, but our goal does not. May we continue to be used powerfully by the Spirit in making disciples next door and around the world."

—Gayla R. Postma

## Noteworthy

The girls soccer team at **Calvin Christian High School** in Grandville, Mich., won its fourth consecutive state Division IV championship.

Following his win in Michigan, **Anthony Langeland** won first place in the Skills USA National Competition, making him the national champion in Diesel Technology.



**Girls soccer champions from Unity Christian High School.**

Unity Christian High School is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA).

**Montreal Ministry to Seafarers** is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. It started as an outreach of the young people of First Christian Reformed Church in Montreal in the 1960s.

Calvin Theological Seminary professor **Rev. Mariano Avila** received a Community Service Award from Gatherings of Hope for his work in establishing the Certificate of Hispanic Ministry.



**Young people from First CRC in Montreal in the 1960s.**

**Ryan Konynenbelt**, 18, of Nobeledford, Alta., placed third in the International Livestock Auctioneer Championships held in Calgary. He finished as the top Canadian in the competition and also won Rookie of the Year.

**Unity Christian High School** in Hudsonville, Mich., won its ninth state title in 11 years in Division III girls soccer.

**Rev. Leanne Van Dyk** was appointed 10th president of Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga.

Columbia is



**Rev. Leanne Van Dyk**

**Rev. John Witvliet**, director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, received the 2015 Jubilate Deo award from the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. The award is given to honor "a person who has made a significant contribution to the worship life of Catholics in the U.S."

### IN MEMORIAM



**Rev. Duane J. Timmermans**  
1957-2015

Rev. Duane J. Timmermans, 57, described by many as having a magnetic personality, was a down-to-earth person who connected easily with anyone and everyone. He died unexpectedly on April 10 following a stroke suffered while driving a friend to the airport.

Timmermans graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1986. He served Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church in Berwyn, Ill., and Vogel Center CRC in McBain, Mich., where he was pastor at the time of his death. Throughout the years, Timmermans also worked on various synodical committees.

Timmermans was an ordinary man in many ways. He enjoyed the simple things in life, including fishing and gardening. Those who had conversations with Timmermans always knew he was a man of God. He loved being a pastor; ministry for him was a blessed and positive experience.

Timmermans is survived by his wife, Sharon, and their three children, and by his father and parents-in-law.

—Janet A. Greidanus

### IN MEMORIAM



**Rev. John L. Meppelink**  
1929 - 2015

Rev. John Meppelink lived with a blend of seriousness and good humor and planned his work carefully. He loved preaching the Word of God. He died at age 86 in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Meppelink served six Christian Reformed congregations in Colorado, Illinois, and Michigan. He became a chaplain at Holland Home in Grand Rapids in 1986. After his retirement in 1994, Meppelink continued to work for 12 more years at Holland Home in various capacities. He continued to preach until the year before he died.

Meppelink and his wife, Carolyn, were involved in numerous volunteer projects at Holland Home and in the community. Holland Home residents remember the many slide shows, skits, and other programs Meppelink presented, sometimes in full costume.

Raised on an Iowa farm, Meppelink had a lifelong enjoyment of farm machinery, trains, and gardening. He also enjoyed camping in national parks and other travel adventures.

Meppelink was predeceased by his first wife, Evelyn, and his daughter Sharon. He is survived by Carolyn and by three children and their spouses, Carolyn's three children and their spouses, 14 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

# NEWS

From the very young to the young-at-heart—and every age in between—Christian Reformed folks gathered over the summer months for fun and fellowship, work and worship. Here are just a few of those stories. (See [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org) for more on each of these stories.)



## California Youth Group Reunites after 35 Years

The 1970s youth group of Palo Alto (Calif.) Christian Reformed Church reunited this summer when 16 of them and their spouses gathered for a camping weekend at New Brighton Beach in Santa Cruz, Calif. They enjoyed grilling hamburgers, sitting around a campfire, and reliving high school memories. Michelle Bosch remembers ice cream socials, retreats in the Bay area, and riding to youth group in her friend's VW Bug. "We all went to different high schools, some even rivals. But we didn't care. We were like a big family," said Bosch. Campers at the reunion included Tracy Kornelis VanderHelm, Cindi Rooks Lynch, Kathy Kornelis Jonkman, David Rooks, Michelle (Shelley) Bosch, Jan VanderSluis Seerveld, Cheryl Smith Mensing, and Ron Eskes.

—Amy Toornstra



GREG CHANDLER

## Classic Tractor and Car Show a Hit at Rural Michigan Church

Set in an agricultural community near Hudsonville, Mich., Zutphen Christian Reformed Church proved to be the perfect backdrop for a classic tractor and car show. About 1,000 people turned out on a sunny and warm Saturday

afternoon for the show, the sixth year in a row the church has held the event. The show attracted about 100 classic tractors and cars, with some tractors dating as far back as the 1920s. Besides the classic tractors and cars, the day included a pig roast and children's activities, including pony rides offered by the Critter Barn, a nearby educational farm.

—Greg Chandler

## Cadet Counselors Gather in Ontario

Counselors for Cadets (the boys' group in many Christian Reformed churches) met in London, Ont., to reflect on this year's theme, "Hooked on Christ," emphasizing the importance of getting and staying hooked on Christ. Workshops included blacksmithing, model airplane building, glass etching, and car care basics, as well as counselor leadership skills. The convention happens two out of every three years, with a triennial camporee for Cadets scheduled in the intervening year.

—Anita Brinkman



## Alberta Disaster Response Volunteers Gather in Edmonton

Fifty volunteers from northern Alberta who have responded to natural disasters as part of World Renew Disaster Response Services teams gathered in Edmonton to share meals, photographs, stories, and celebrate how God has used them to bring hope to victims of natural disasters. World Renew-Canada director Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo noted the youthful energy of the DRS volunteers, the "significant number of people that were still serving as volunteers in their 70s and looked like they are still in their 50s."

—Janet A. Greidanus

## Michigan Country Church Crams Parking Lot with Hockey Plus



Kids were rocking the parking lot of Niekerk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich., on Monday nights during Hockey Rock—a drop-in children’s program designed to attract youth from grade 3 to high school. As many as 130 kids came out weekly in June and July. What began in 1999 with roller hockey and Christian music now includes just about

every activity under the sun: volleyball, basketball, Frisbee golf, and even crafts or unorthodox sports like nine-square and Ga-Ga Pit. Niekerk CRC partners with nearby Ebenezer Reformed Church to support Hockey Rock, including transportation for about 45 kids from two community pick-up points.

—Alissa Vernon

## GEMS Counselors Hold 46th Annual Leadership Conference

Counselors for GEMS (Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior) gathered in July at Messiah College near Harrisburg, Pa., to participate in a series of activities centered around the theme for the coming year, “Choose Truth,” based on Psalm 119:105. The local conference committee included (l-r): Amy Brooks, Sherrie Kuiken, Judy Vander Ploeg, Cheri Jefferson, Laura Saloiye, and Anita van der Merwe.

—Callie Feyen



## VBS Raises Funds for Nepal Earthquake Relief

About 85 kids who attended vacation Bible school (VBS) at Oakwood Christian Reformed Church in Belding, Mich., raised nearly \$500 for World Renew’s relief efforts in Nepal during the one-week program. One 4-year-old brought in \$58 by going to her neighbors. “We were so amazed at the response of the VBS families,” said Trudy DeWindt, whose daughter and son-in-law live in Nepal and survived the earthquake. The children brought in their donations in elephant-shaped banks that they had made during craft time.

—Gregory Chandler



## Church Internships Help Young Adults Build Leadership Skills

Twelve high school students, three college students, and one international student took part in a 10-week summer internship program at Calvary Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich. They learned leadership skills and served their community—all while taking home a

paycheck. The goal, said Daniel Harris, the church’s ministry director, is “to build into the lives of young people and to give them experience in the ministry of a local church.” This is the seventh year the church has hired interns.

—Susan Vanden Berg

# NEWS

## CHURCH WORLDWIDE



### CHURCH WORLDWIDE: 25 Years Later, Houses of Worship Living up to Spirit of Disabilities Act

As the United States celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act in July, the focus was on progress made in accessibility and inclusion in the workplace and public spaces.

Although the ADA didn't require accommodation and accessibility in places of worship, many went ahead and did it anyway.

Projects achieve the best results by involving, in a meaningful way, all affected parties at the outset of the process. That's especially true when faith communities build, renovate, or retrofit their sanctuaries, social halls, and restrooms to make them fully accessible.

Encouraging people with disabilities to participate in facilities planning at the beginning and in a formal way is evolving. However, some tentative steps have been taken by some extraordinary people.

In the rural community of Borculo, Mich., not far from Grand Rapids, the Christian Reformed Church occupies a 125-year-old building built in a style familiar to the area. The sanctuary is a few steps above ground level, accessible by a concrete ramp and a motorized lift. But until a few years ago, the basement—where the bathrooms, social hall, library, and classrooms are—could only be reached by steps and an awkward chair lift. With numerous seniors in the 300-member congregation, the church began to study how best to make the basement accessible.

One of the key members of the committee was Pat Huisingsh, who had grown up in the church. Huisingsh, who has muscular dystrophy, uses a power wheelchair. Until a few years ago, she was an insurance agent and active in her church, singing in the choir, teaching Sunday school, and working with young people. Now she serves as a regional representative on disability issues for her denomination.

She made the case to the building committee and then to the congregation that they needed a full-sized elevator, no small expense for a church of that size. In part, she believes, "because I've grown up in the church, and they've seen the extent of my disability," they voted to approve the elevator, which also accommodates other power chair users, including a college student and an elementary schoolgirl.

Huisingsh said this sends an important message to people from the area who visit Borculo Christian Reformed Church for weddings, funerals, and vacation Bible school: "We don't exclude." As a result, such visitors may consider becoming members.

*Excerpted from Religion News Service*

### Highlights of 2015 Spring Classis Meetings

Two or three times each year, Christian Reformed churches send representatives to their classis, a regional grouping of churches. Delegates at those meetings review and make decisions about shared ministries and practice mutual accountability for their congregations' individual ministries. Here are the highlights of spring classis meetings.

Seminary graduates **welcomed into ministry** in the Christian Reformed Church included John Medendorp, Tim Leferink, and Jon Vugteveen.

Henry Hogeterp and Jim Pot were **released from ministry in the CRC**.

An emerging church does not have its own council and is under the care of a council of a neighboring Christian Reformed Church. An organized church has its own council. **Sanostee (New Mexico) CRC** was designated as organized.

**Little Saigon/Duong Le, Westminster, Calif.**, and an **English/Hispanic ministry in Bellflower, Calif.**, were approved as church plants.

—Banner Staff

## IN MEMORIAM



### Rev. Benjamin J. Becksvoort 1947-2015

Rev. Benjamin Becksvoort was a man of singular humility who, although a very able and knowledgeable leader, kept himself in the background. As one colleague described him, "He was a servant leader before being a servant leader was fashionable." He died at home on June 6 of cancer at age 67.

Becksvoort served Christian Reformed congregations in Ohio and Michigan; he also served as chaplain at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. He became a regional leader for Christian Reformed Home Missions (Great Lakes area) in 1997.

Becksvoort was a lifelong student and promoter of the spiritual disciplines of the faith. He ministered to people who were lost and those who were found, to young and old, to church plants and established churches.

Becksvoort will be remembered for his chili; his subtle sense of humor and infectious laugh; his enjoyment of golfing, fishing, and gardening; and his deft and gentle way in denominational leadership. Despite his large physical presence, he will always be remembered as "Gentle Ben."

Becksvoort is survived by his wife, Beverly, and by two children and a son-in-law.

—Janet A. Greidanus



# FAQs

## Outreach

**Q** Since Judaism, Islam, and Christianity all call upon the God of Abraham, we don't need to evangelize Jews and Muslims—or do we?

**A** Followers of all three religions believe that there is only one God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. However, both Judaism and Islam starkly contradict Christianity in their view of the nature and character of God, sin and salvation, and the person and work of Jesus Christ.

First, the nature and character of God: Jews and Muslims believe that God is the Transcendent One. No one can enter into God's presence because of God's holiness. One implication of this doctrine is that God is distant from us and our affairs. Christians, who profess God as a Trinity, believe this Creator God has broken into our world and became personal and approachable to us. In Jesus Christ, God has dwelt among us in the flesh; he knows our pain and suffering.

Second, sin and salvation: Jews believe we are born good but become sinners by choosing evil; we can atone for our sins through prayer and repentance. Muslims believe we are sinners because Allah has willed it; salvation is based on purification by good deeds such as prayer and fasting (Quran 7:6-9). Christians believe we are born sinners and salvation is by grace alone, exclusively based on the works of Christ.

Third, the person of Christ: Jesus claims that there is only one way to God, through him (John 14:6-7). He is the ultimate revelation of God. If we want to know what God is like, we need to look at Jesus (14:9-11).

Do we need to reach Jews and Muslims? Let one expert in Judaism answer that for you. "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? . . . 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'" (Rom. 10:14-15).

—Victor Ko is a church planter with mosaicHouse in Edmonton, Alta.

The moral of the story is simple: looks are deceiving.

## Justice

**Q** What can we do about injustice from the past?

**A** This is a global question that arises in post-conflict countries and North America today. A recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission report in Canada, for example, drew public attention to the injustice done to generations of indigenous children—more than 150,000 in total—who were forcibly removed from their homes to attend residential schools that were designed to "take the Indian out of the child." A common response is: "What can we do about it now?" The same question arises in the United States. In post-conflict countries, historic injustices often remain unresolved. In each case, we want to change the future even though we can't change the past. But how?

Sincere apologies are helpful but not adequate without corrective action. Legal prosecution of perpetrators, such as the Nuremberg trials after World War II, can play a part, but are not broad enough to heal wounds in whole populations. Financial compensation can help victims deal with impacts but may not change factors that led to the injustice.

Reconciliation and restorative justice offer a different path than "payback" or "forget it and move on." It could be called "remember forward." Learning from the truth, the focus is putting just systems in place now and restoring broken relationships. Truth, justice, and healing come together. This approach draws on deep roots in the Christian story of redemption. In post-conflict countries, this mix is called "transitional justice," an emerging field of practice.

Right in principle, this approach is difficult to put into practice. It requires intentional and persistent action over time, extensive dialogue, and inclusion of all parties. Without that, it leaves unfinished business. But transitional justice also offers rich rewards for those who engage in it.

—Kathy Vandergrift is a public policy analyst living in Ottawa, Ont.

## Faith Formation

**Q** Why do excited and eager 8-year-old boys turn into sullen, withdrawn 13-year-olds within five short years? I've taught second grade Sunday school for years, and it grieves me to see this happen over and over again. Is it simply inevitable?

**A** Let me tell you a story. Years ago an elder said to me, "I once decided that I was going to have a conversation with 13-year-old boys after every worship service. The first two Sundays they shifted uncomfortably away from me and gave me confused looks. By the third and fourth Sunday, they were responding to my questions with self-conscious grunts and nods. By the fifth Sunday, I was getting complete sentence answers, which were later even extended to short paragraphs." After three months, they were coming up to talk to me before I had gotten my coffee."

He then went on to describe the ways he stayed in touch with them throughout their high school years and beyond.

The moral of the story is simple: looks are deceiving. All of us walk around with barriers, and at some stages of life these barriers are more obviously visible. However, the Lord's simple but powerful declaration in Genesis 2 that "it is not good for man to be alone," applies to all people at all stages of life. We all long to have others walk alongside us in gently accepting and encouraging ways.

We need communities in which we overcome our fears and with persistent calmness invite others of all ages to walk with us.

—Syd Hielema is a team leader for CRC Faith Formation Ministries. He is a member of Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Ancaster, Ont. ■



# BUSINESS MATTERS

**LET'S FACE IT:** business has an image problem.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, businesses in the United States gained 732,000 jobs in 2014. Business growth is clearly leading the U.S.'s economic recovery. And yet a recent Gallup study asking Americans to rate the honesty and ethical standards of various professions found that the only ones ranked lower than businesspeople were politicians—specifically members of Congress.

This generally unfavorable attitude toward business often extends to churches, where an implicit hierarchy places “sacred work”—such as ministry and missions—above the “helping professions”—teachers, nurses, doctors, and social workers. Both of these categories are regarded more highly than the “secular” pursuits of people employed in business. Unfortunately, we’re also likely to hear business characterized from the pulpit as an expression of sinful greed. Meanwhile, people who leave the business world to do something “more important to the kingdom” are praised.

Why is this image problem something we should care about? As Christians, we’ve been called to love our neighbors as ourselves and serve one another out of gratitude for God’s amazing love. Business is the social institution through which people serve more human needs than any other. This includes providing places where the vast majority of your congregation works.

Business also provides the funding for all other institutions—including government, nonprofits, and the church. Clearly we need to take a closer look at how God can and does use businesses and businesspeople for good in his kingdom.

So how do we make sense of this? How does business fit into God’s plan to redeem the world? The idea of common grace, popularized by the Dutch theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper, is a good place to begin. Common grace, according to Kuyper, refers to the God-given capacity in each person—not just those who believe in God—to serve the common good. As James Bratt pointed out in the article “Conscious Christianity,” “Common grace not only makes society possible but makes it possible for Christians usually to live in society alongside people who don’t know or outright reject Christian teaching” (*The Banner*, Aug. 2014).

## Businesses as Agents of Shalom

This idea of common grace suggests three ways that businesses can be agents of shalom to the world.

**First** is the principle that the good gifts of a loving God are for all people. This is illustrated in Matthew 5:45b: “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” All people, including believers and nonbelievers in business, benefit from these loving gifts.

# BUSINESS IS THE SOCIAL INSTITUTION THROUGH WHICH PEOPLE SERVE MORE HUMAN NEEDS THAN ANY OTHER.

**Second**, common grace suggests that God influences non-believers as well as believers to do good things in the world. We all know of many businesses that work for the good of society by serving their customers well through creating good jobs, using resources sustainably, and supporting their communities. Here are just a few examples:

- Chipotle, a fast-growing “fast casual” restaurant chain, is committed to “Food with Integrity” by using the best ingredients they can find while caring for animals, farmers, and the environment. They also strive to care for employees well through promotion from within, training, and good compensation.
- TOMS, a shoe company, serves people in need by providing shoes, vision care, clean water, safe birth, and bullying prevention services. Under the heading “Improving Lives,” the company website notes, “With every product you purchase, TOMS will help a person in need. One for One.”
- Patagonia, a supplier of outdoor clothing and gear, takes responsibility for the impact of its activities on customers, employees, communities, and the environment. They are committed to fair labor practices and safe working conditions as well as producing high-quality products.

**Third**, this understanding of common grace suggests that Christians in business can be instruments of God’s grace in society. Common grace motivates us as a call to action. Common grace is not simply a passive exchange between God and human-kind—it can be our ministry. It is, says theologian Richard Mouw in his book *He Shines in All That’s Fair*, a way in which “God can use us to restrain the power of sin in the larger human community and to perform our own works of civic good.”

The examples we’ve already mentioned illustrate that businesses can contribute to the good of society. But why do they act that way? We need to recognize that Christians and non-

Christians may pursue similar ends without having the same motivation. For instance, secular businesspeople might focus on their customers’ long term well-being for a variety of reasons: because they truly care about them, or they feel it is the right thing to do, or it makes them feel better about themselves. Alternatively, they may foster good relationships because they believe doing so will provide them with higher long-term profits. Regardless of the motivations driving the business, in each of these situations customers and employees may be treated with respect and honesty.

Let’s look at Patagonia again as an example. Under the heading “Becoming a Responsible Company,” its website states:

We are in the earliest stages of learning how what we do for a living both threatens nature and fails to meet our deepest human needs. The impoverishment of our world and the devaluing of the priceless undermine our physical and economic well-being. Yet the depth and breadth of technological innovation of the past few decades shows that we have not lost our most useful gifts; humans are ingenious, adaptive, and clever. We also have moral capacity, compassion for life, and an appetite for justice. We now need to more fully engage these gifts to make economic life more socially just and environmentally responsible, and less destructive to nature and the commons that sustain us. . . .

It is easy to see the principles of stewardship, justice, and care for others in Patagonia’s statements—even though they are not attributed to a belief in God. These similar views and activities between believers and nonbelievers allow us all to work together toward common goals for the betterment of society.

In his book *Why Business Matters to God* (see “Digging Deeper” sidebar, p. 20), Jeff Van Duzer proposes that from God’s perspective, the dominant business paradigm needs to be turned on its head: instead of customers and employees being the means of serving shareholders, shareholders and their capital should serve customers and employees. The purpose of business, he says, is to serve the community by making useful goods and services available at reasonable prices that will enable the community to flourish and provide meaningful and creative jobs for its employees. Of course this doesn’t mean that profit is unimportant. Generating profits is critical, because without profit the business dies. A biblical perspective allows us to see profit as the means to service rather than the purpose of the enterprise itself.

## Common Grace Ministry

Of course, we don’t all work for a business that is run by Christian principles. And not all of us are in leadership roles where we work. But no matter what our role, we can still practice “common grace” ministry. Consider these practical and biblical ideas: »

### B Corp: Redefining Success in Business

This growing community of more than a thousand businesses is committed to encouraging a new type of corporation that is “purpose-driven, and creates benefit for all stakeholders, not just shareholders.” Their unifying goal is to redefine success in business. Member businesses volunteer to meet higher standards of transparency, accountability, and performance, as certified by the nonprofit “B Lab” through meeting standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. The B Corp movement seeks to be a resource that drives the creation of higher quality jobs and improved quality of life in communities. It does so by working to pass laws, change the way money is invested, and alter where consumers spend their money. [bcorporation.net](http://bcorporation.net)

## Digging Deeper

- *Why Business Matters to God (And What Still Needs to Be Fixed)* by Jeff Van Duzer (IVP Academic, 2010). Van Duzer presents a vision of business that contributes to the purposes of God. This book explores the nature and meaning of doing business and finds that it calls for much more than most think. Van Duzer integrates biblical studies with the disciplines of business and economics.
- *Business for the Common Good: A Christian Vision for the Marketplace* by Kenman L. Wong & Scott B. Rae (IVP Academic, 2011). Is business just a way to make money? Or can the marketplace be a venue for service to others? Rae and Wong seek to explore this and other critical business issues from a uniquely Christian perspective. Business can be even more than an environment through which individual Christians grow in Christlikeness.
- *How the Church Fails Businesspeople (And What Can Be Done About It)* by John C. Knapp (Eerdmans, 2011). Why do so many Christians struggle to relate their faith to their daily work? Knapp argues that the church's ambiguous teachings about vocation, money, and business have long contributed to Christians' uncertainty about discipleship in the workplace. Drawing on his own expertise in business ethics and numerous interviews with Christians in diverse occupations, Knapp offers a new theological framework for Christian life in the world of business.
- *Journal of Markets & Morality Vol. 18, Number 1* (Spring 2015). A special issue on "Common Grace and Business." Presentations given at the Symposium on Common Grace in Business cosponsored by Calvin College and the Acton Institute on October 31, 2014. Articles by business professors and other Reformed thinkers on the intersection of common grace and various business disciplines.

- Pray about your work and ask God through the Holy Spirit to give you strength, wisdom, and discernment. "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5).
- Do your job the best you can. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Col. 3:23-24).
- In your attitude and interactions with others at work, be God's agent for redemption. "Live such good lives among the pagans that . . . they may see your good deeds and glorify God" (1 Pet. 2:12).
- Treat coworkers and employees as people of value. Offer them respect, a fair working wage, and benefits—for we are all created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27).
- Find the good things happening at work and encourage those who are doing them. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Gal. 6:9).

- Respect the leaders God has placed in authority above you. Build them up, encourage them, and pray for them. "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority" (1 Pet. 2:13a).
- Build authentic relationships with customers and community that are built on dignity, trust, mutual respect, and true concern for them. Be honest and transparent in all communications.
- Pray about tough decisions. Establish the practice of re-examining decisions through prayerful reflection and be open to changing the decision if you feel like it is the right thing to do.
- When there's dissonance between doing the right thing and benefit to the bottom line, become an expert in looking for a creative third way that emerges as you persist in faithful discipleship as a businessperson.

## A Divine Calling

In conversation about how God uses business and businesspeople as part of his plan for redeeming the world, a long-time Christian Reformed pastor admitted that he had been remiss by failing to recognize business as a divine calling and failing to affirm businesspeople in their ministry.

So what can churches do? They can start by learning more about what their business congregants do—perhaps pastors and church leaders could start by visiting people at work. For the pastor, such visits might lead to a deeper understanding of the challenges and temptations their members face and inspire sermons and biblical teaching better targeted to their needs. In addition, this knowledge would help churches hold businesspeople responsible for their stewardship of what God has given them.

Above all, the church can celebrate these ministry workers as much as they would any missionary. Affirm, encourage, and pray for the businesspeople in your congregation, reminding them that their work has been ordained by God. When businesspeople feel the full support of the church, they will be empowered to grow their common grace ministries and encouraged to participate fully in the redemption of God's world. ■

[STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE](#)



**Tom Betts** is an assistant professor of business at Calvin College. Previously he spent 25 years in marketing and management in the publishing industry. He is a member of Alger Park CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.



**Bob Eames** is a professor of business at Calvin College and director of the Calvin Center for Innovation in Business. He has over 20 years of experience in marketing and management roles in the insurance, advertising, and office furniture industries. Bob is a member of Monroe Community Church in Grand Rapids.



**Jill Risner** is an assistant professor of business at Calvin College. Jill has also started a marketing consultation and graphic design business with her husband. She attends Beckwith Hills CRC in Grand Rapids.

# I Became a Grandfather Today

**I** **BECAME** a grandfather today. It was supposed to be entirely different. We were supposed to hold a beautiful, warm baby girl. Instead, she died before she ever took a breath.

Everything was fine on Wednesday when Rachael went to the doctor. Rachael felt the baby kicking that night and went into labor the next morning. But when she arrived at the hospital, the nurses could not find a heartbeat. Charity Marie was born later that day at 6:34 p.m. My first grandchild.

We arrived at the hospital and went to the delivery room. Dave and Rachael were crying; Charity was on the bed. Charity was beautiful. She had a full head of dark hair and such pretty features. Her toes and fingers were perfectly shaped.

I held Charity. Her skin was soft but pale, and starting to turn blue. I looked at her and could only think of everything that she could become, but wouldn't.

Dave and Rachael left the hospital without their child. They loaded their belongings into a car with an empty baby seat. They came home to an apartment filled with a cradle, blankets, diapers, and toys that were no longer needed.

That night they were home alone, adjusting to a new reality. Instead of a baptism, they needed to plan a funeral.

When my father died over a decade ago, we celebrated a life well lived. But for Charity we could only mourn the full life we had hoped for her, the hopes and dreams that would never be fulfilled.

There was a simple graveside service. Just immediate family. The seminary dean gave a thoughtful message. Dave carried the small coffin with Charity's body and placed it in the grave. It was a small coffin in a small hole. It was so very hard to watch my son placing his daughter in her final resting place. Each family member put a flower and some dirt on the coffin,



and we watched the gravedigger finish the job, shoveling dirt to fill the grave, and replacing the sod.

We cried a lot that week. "When will we be able to stop crying?" my wife asked. I don't know.

We will probably never know why—at least medically—it happened. We always want to know why things happen. We feel better when we know why. Maybe we feel like we have more control. Maybe we feel more like God.

Intellectually, I know God is in control. I have always trusted that God will take care of me, no matter what. But emotionally I'm not so sure. If God is in control, how could this have happened?

The Heidelberg Catechism says that faith is not only a knowledge and conviction, but also a deep-rooted assurance. It doesn't say anything about emotions or

feelings. It's at times like these, when emotions are dry and there are no good answers, that the knowledge and conviction, the assurance of God's grace, carries us along.

We rarely know the answers to the "whys" of life. Sometimes we can look back and understand. But mostly the answers to our questions will have to wait for heaven.

We don't understand why Charity's door was closed before it was opened. We just need to trust; to know that God provides, even when bad things happen.

But it still hurts. And we still cry. ■



Paul Zigterman is the father of six children. His second grandchild, Evelyn Bonnie, was born to Dave and Rachael on May 30, 2014. He is a member of Lombard (Ill.) Christian Reformed Church.

## Fostering Vital Worship

by Phil de Haan



**F**or years, two small groups of believers gathered to worship at 3000 South Race Street in Denver, Colo. A group of English-speaking believers met upstairs; a group of Chinese believers met in the basement.

Then one day someone asked what might seem like an obvious question, but which until then had gone unspoken: “Why don’t we worship together?”

And so began an experiment. In October 2012 the two congregations joined, and Hillcrest Christian Reformed Church emerged.

“It was,” Rev. Joy Engelsman recalled, “the beginning of a brand new story, but one with its own joys and challenges.”

Engelsman, a Christian Reformed minister and member of Hillcrest CRC, calls it a whirlwind courtship, where you run to the altar and then figure out later how you’re going to work together.

The new church wasted little time in seeking good counsel. This included applying for a Vital Worship Grant through the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. The grants aim to foster well-grounded worship renewal in congregations and worshipping communities throughout North America.

The following spring, Hillcrest learned that it had received a grant.

“As a merged church, we were overwhelmed with issues of theology, fellowship, mission, and programs,” said Engels-

man. “We hardly knew where to start. The grant program helped us to focus our energy and attention in a very specific area, and the ongoing accountability and support from the [Worship Institute] grants team kept us on track toward our goals.”

Engelsman, who took the lead for Hillcrest in the project, said the goal was to bring unity in Christ in the midst of so much diversity.

She said the grant also helped the church explore styles of worship that would best assist in faith formation in order to help the Hillcrest congregation grow as disciples of Christ.

Engelsman said it hasn’t been easy, and there have been many obstacles along the

You add.  
God multiplies.

## ““ The grant program helped us to focus our energy and attention in a very specific area. ””

way. But through the resources provided by the grant, much prayer, and the leading of the Holy Spirit, more conversations are happening and more activities are bringing groups within the congregation together. People are gaining a greater



Hillcrest Christian Reformed Church received a Vital Worship Grant in 2014. The grant team included Claire He and Joy Engelsman.



Pastor Kelly Brill describes her church's experience with the grant project to colloquium participant Eric Mathis.

understanding of how different cultures enter into worship.

“The project has done much to bring the two congregations together,” said Engelsman. “We learned the same things at the same time. We sat in Sunday school classes together; we learned each other’s

songs. We are continually trying to plan worship together.”

Claire He, a graduate student, musician, and one of the leaders of a Chinese student ministry at Hillcrest, came to faith in Jesus Christ a few years ago. She said her faith has grown this past year as she’s discovered the dialogic nature of worship.

“The concept of dialogic worship makes more sense to me now. It has helped me to grow in my relationship with Jesus, because worship is a conversation with God, not a single-direction lecture,” said He.

“In worship there are times when God talks to us, like the sermon and Scripture reading, and there are times when we talk to God, like confession and assurance, congregational prayer, and offering.

“The selection of songs is closely related to the content and structure of the sermon and service. Now I realize that everything in the worship service is there for a purpose.”

Engelsman and He came to Grand Rapids in late June for the 2015 Vital Worship Grants Program colloquium—a chance for grant recipients from 2014 to share what they learned through their projects with the 2015 cohort who are just beginning their projects.

“Colloquium is meant to create a space for conversation and collaboration and learning for our grant recipients,” said Rev. Kathy Smith, associate director of the Worship Institute and program manager for the Vital Worship Grants Program.

“With these grants, together we’re working to foster vital worship in congregations, parishes, and other worshiping communities in North America. Our grants last for just a year, but we hope

that the impact lasts well beyond the grant year itself.”

Engelsman said that getting together with other grant recipients at colloquium to commiserate, educate, and illuminate was a huge blessing. Grant recipients come from many different backgrounds and geographic locations, she noted, but they share a deep desire for worship renewal, and three days of conversation can be rejuvenating.

Those sentiments brought a smile to the face of Worship Institute director Rev. John Witvliet, who has been at the helm of the institute since its founding on the campuses of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary in 1997.

Shared insights, Witvliet said, are in fact a critical part of the Vital Worship Grants Program. “We learn a tremendous amount [from grantees]. We first learn from the wisdom demonstrated in designing [the grants], and we also learn from the insights gleaned from implementing and adapting them as they unfold.”

That learning has been a hallmark of the Vital Worship Grants Program since it began in 2000. Since then, the program (formerly known as the Worship Renewal Grants Program) has awarded more »

### Explore and Apply

The Vital Worship Grants Program seeks to foster vital worship in congregations, parishes, and other worshiping communities in North America. This grants program is especially focused on projects that connect public worship to intergenerational faith formation and Christian discipleship. These projects take many forms. The program encourages proposals to be developed through a collaborative process from emerging and established churches, seminaries, colleges, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and other organizations. To apply, visit [worship.calvin.edu/grants/explore-apply](http://worship.calvin.edu/grants/explore-apply). The next application due date is January 10, 2016.



Left: Vital Worship Grant recipients join in round-table discussion.

Grant recipients discuss together what they are learning about worship through the grant process.



» than 700 grants to churches, schools, and seminaries across North America for projects that can generate thoughtfulness and energy for public worship and faith formation at the grassroots level.

Some 100 of those 700-plus grants have been awarded to Christian Reformed churches and/or parachurch organizations in Canada and the U.S., from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, from California to New Jersey.

Each year, the grants represent a broad spectrum of locales, projects, and denominations. And each year numerous stories,

Q&As, and videos are posted at *worship.calvin.edu*. Although grants do not fund the creation of books, in some cases grant projects have provided the groundwork for eventual publications.

Smith says the institute functions as a trusted conduit for the Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc., which generously supports the Vital Worship Grants Program. Lilly, which has as its major areas of concern religion, education, and community development, gives the Worship Institute money for the grants program and then trusts it to make good decisions about how to allocate the funds.

An advisory board of pastors and teachers from a variety of backgrounds assists the Calvin grants team in the annual selections.

In the spring of 2015, another 29 projects were awarded Vital Worship Grants. The projects represent congregations and schools from 15 denominations, 18 U.S. states and one Canadian province, 25 congregations and church plants, two regional church bodies, and two college and seminary communities.

At the June colloquium, project directors and team members for all 29 grants gathered on Calvin's campus to dialogue not only with each other, but also with Worship Institute staff and with the recipients of 2014 grants, who came back to campus to share the results of their year-long projects.

Those interactions between grant recipients just beginning and grant recipients at the end of their project year is something new grantees appreciate.

“The Vital Worship Grants program models a communal learning style that can be practiced in other church renewal efforts long after the grant project is completed,” Engelsman said. “We are grateful for the generous grant funds but just as thankful for the lessons about dreaming, communication, listening, eating, and cooperating together toward an agreed-upon goal.”

As the congregation at 3000 South Race Street in Denver celebrates the completion of their grant, they recognize there is much work yet to be done. But Engelsman credits the important work done through the grant as putting Hillcrest “a few more steps down the road.”

“I believe that we will look back at this worship grant experience, and say, ‘That was one of the moments that the Lord used to bring us together and strengthen us for missional service in the kingdom,’” she said. ■



Phil de Haan is senior public relations specialist for Calvin College.

### Supporting Calvin College in Prayer

- Pray for wisdom for the leadership of Calvin College as the college continues to look ahead at some of the opportunities and challenges facing higher education.
- Pray that each of the 850-plus students in the most recent graduating class will find meaningful work and serve God as agents of renewal wherever they are.
- Pray for the incoming class as they are beginning their journey at Calvin. Pray that they will grow closer to God during their time at Calvin.
- Pray for Calvin College's mission to remain clear, compelling, and relevant.
- Pray that all faculty and staff will remain committed to integrating faith into every learning opportunity.



You add.  
God multiplies.

## Institutes and Centers at Calvin College

Calvin College's many centers and institutes enrich the programs of the college and create worldwide impact by addressing significant needs and strategic opportunities in pursuit of the college's mission.

**Center for Social Research (CSR)** conducts social scientific research on behalf of Calvin faculty, the Christian Reformed Church, and a wide array of local, national, and international organizations. The CSR's skill set includes research design, data modeling and database design, surveys (online, by mail, and in person), qualitative research, geographic information systems, data visualization, and publication design.

Year founded: 1970

**Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship** exists to coordinate and provide leadership for the project of advancing and improving intentional Christian scholarship at Calvin College. Since its inception, the center has sponsored numerous scholarly projects, many of them collaborative, resulting in scores of published books, articles, conferences, art installations, concerts, lectures, and reading groups.

Year founded: 1976

**H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies** is a research center and special collection focusing on John Calvin, Calvinism, and the Reformation. The center offers hands-on classes for students, spotlighting its rare books, lectures, presentations, conferences, summer seminars, and a program of fellowships for faculty and graduate students from other institutions and for pastors in the Reformed tradition.

Year founded: 1981

**Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (CICW)** promotes the study of the theology, history, and practice of Christian worship and the renewal of worship in congregations. CICW provides courses on worship, offers online resources, hosts an annual conference, sponsors books on worship, and furnishes grants and consulting services to congregations that seek to promote worship renewal.

Year founded: 1997

**Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics** continues Paul Henry's quest to promote serious reflection on the interplay between Christianity and public life and foster civic engagement. It provides resources for researchers, supports publications and conferences in order to disseminate scholarly work, and seeks to highlight the best thinking on faith and politics for the larger public.

Year founded: 1997

**Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning** is devoted to the study and promotion of pedagogy and learning from an integrally Christian perspective. It focuses on teaching and learning from pre-kindergarten through college and fosters research, curriculum innovation, and professional development. The Institute frequently brings professionals together for workshops, conferences, collaborative research opportunities, and coordinated publication projects.

Year founded: 2004

**Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity** pursues three aims: to promote a deeper understanding of Christian movements from the global South and East, to partner with scholars in these regions to support their Christian thinking and cultural engagement, and to provoke a reorientation in the global North toward the concerns of world Christianity. The institute carries out its mission through supporting faculty-led projects, scholarly lectures, and research and faculty development projects worldwide.

Year founded: 2006

**Van Lunen Center: Executive Management in Christian Schools** provides world-class executive management education essential to the future of schools based on the historic Christian faith. Its Van Lunen Fellows Program helps Christian school heads develop into dynamic executives who lead from faith-based values, knowledge, and habits.

Year founded: 2007

**Calvin Center for Innovation in Business** engages students, faculty, and the broader business community to support and develop the Calvin College business department, raising the level of business education and scholarship at the college to ensure that students are well equipped for lives of service and leadership in business.

Year founded: 2010

**Clean Water Institute of Calvin College** is devoted to improving drinking water conditions in developing global regions. The institute focuses on improving community health by advancing the understanding and practices for providing appropriate drinking water solutions, with primary emphasis on the protection, development, treatment, and delivery of drinking water supplies in developing global regions.

Year founded: 2015 ■



## Looking Forward

**T**his is the time of year when many congregations start new seasons of ministry: children and youth programs resume; church education and small groups start again; Coffee Break and community ministries restart; and church councils, consistories, and diaconates ramp up their work after a summer pause.

It is a time of hope, energy, and renewal as we seek the Spirit's blessing going forward into a new ministry year.

Those of us who serve in the denomination are seeking to walk more closely alongside you. A few years ago, a team of Christian Reformed agency and ministry leaders spread out across North America, listening to congregational leaders talk about the challenges they face.

As a result of those meetings, this team—the Strategic Planning and Adaptive Change Team—identified 13 challenges facing the CRC. From those challenges, five priorities were identified. These five priorities are being shaped into a ministry plan that will provide the framework by which we work together and assist each other in ministry.

While all five priorities are significant, I am going to focus on two of them: Church and Community and Faith Formation, since they often require us to look beyond ourselves for resources.

Resources are an important part of planning to engage in ministry—whether to the unchurched around us or the children and youth of our congregations. We ask questions like these: What did we use last year for youth group? Did it work? How do we start a men's ministry in the neighborhood? What materials have others found to be helpful?

In the search for great ministry resources, don't forget your own denomination. Together we have produced a wealth of resources that have a Reformed perspective—something that is often not found in popular commercial materials. Under Resources on the [crcna.org](http://crcna.org) website, you'll find the Faith Alive page. Even though Faith Alive no longer exists as an agency, [FaithAliveResources.org](http://FaithAliveResources.org) remains a gateway to hundreds of helpful resources.



But resources are only part of the answer. Our goal should be to fall into step with the Spirit—to see where God is already at work and to join him there. Too often we rely on human designs and plans.

If the CRC has a blessing that can sometimes be a curse, it is our tendency to be too cerebral. Consider parenthood. Parents who are awaiting a birth or adoption often buy books and look online for answers to questions about child raising: How can we be more like the French, who don't have fussy babies? How can we promote a love of reading in the first year or two of life? How can we ensure effective bonding? It's all cerebral.

There's nothing wrong with being cerebral. We have to understand, dig deep, discern, and then apply. But once that child arrives, parenting involves much more than thinking. Ask any parent. Can you simply pick a parenting approach, apply it, and expect it to work? No—you have to take into account your child's temperament and needs and adapt accordingly.

That is also true of ministry. Synodical study committees, debates, and votes will only get us so far. During synod this year there were also moments of prayer invoking God's will on human deliberations, recognizing that our efforts are not our own but must be a way of joining in God's work.

This means that we also must recognize the limits of our efforts. Whether it's in a *Banner* editorial, a synodical study committee, or a church council, our posture must be one of humility.

Consider King David's plans for building a temple for the Ark of the Covenant in 2 Samuel 7. God said no—I'm not choosing your plan; I have a greater plan. So David went before the Lord, abandoned his own plans and ideas, and submitted himself to God, saying, "Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant."

As we look forward, may we also look to the Lord, submitting our plans to him. ■

“Our goal should be to fall into step with the Spirit.”



Dr. Steven Timmermans is the executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

## OUT AND ABOUT

### Sophie's Top Ten Most Wanted

**T**wo weeks before Easter 2014, Sophie Golhof Ensing took to heart a challenge given by visiting pastor Rev. Moses Chung, director of Christian Reformed Home Missions.

He had given the members of Sophie's congregation, Fleetwood CRC in Surrey, B.C., a "Top Ten Most Wanted" bookmark inviting people to make a list of those they know who need Jesus.

"Then do everything you can to attract them to Jesus and pray until they come to know Jesus," Chung said.

Sophie was excited about the challenge. "We live in a globally diverse community. I began to pray that I might have an opportunity to converse with some and give them a copy of the *Today* devotional."

Sophie made a list of names. Over the past year, she has been praying for several people by name and looking for opportunities to share the love of Jesus in practical ways.

First on her list was Tarik, who owns a local print/copy shop Sophie has frequented for a "grandma photo book project" she's been working on. Since she's been praying, God has opened doors for Sophie to share her faith with Tarik, who identified himself as a Muslim.

"I was able to tell him the reason Jesus came for every tribe and nation," she said.

The next time Sophie went into Tarik's shop to print photos, she gave him a copy of the gospel of John and the Easter issue of the *Today* devotional produced by ReFrame Media, the English outreach of Back to God Ministries International. She invited Tarik to read the devotional and the gospel account to learn the story of Jesus.

Tarik cheerfully received the gift and continued a friendly dialog with Sophie whenever she came into his shop. Sophie keeps praying for Tarik and shares her faith at every opportunity.

A second person on Sophie's prayer list was Evan [not his real name], their



**Above: Sophie and her granddaughter, Nicole Ensing, page through Sophie's photo album that gave her an opportunity to share her faith with Tarik.**

**Right: CRC ministries inspired Sophie to pray for her neighbors.**



financial advisor. She prayed for Evan, who has no church family, and looked for occasions to share her faith with him.

"As we talked together about our financial business, Evan was interested in our commitment to leave 10 percent of our estate to Back to God Ministries and other Christian ministries when we die. This launched a conversation about our local church's outreach."

Sophie gave Evan the link to the *Today* app for mobile phones and invited him to their church's Easter worship.

She was thrilled when he came and was greeted warmly by other church members. She continues to pray that God will work in Evan's heart and looks for practical opportunities to show the love of Christ. "At one appointment I brought him a small jar of freshly made blackberry jam."

Chung said he is pleased to know that the "Top Ten Most Wanted" bookmark

has inspired Sophie to pray and look for opportunities to witness to the love of Jesus in practical ways.

"God is stirring in this denomination and in North America," said Chung. "The power of prayer is allowing the Christian Reformed Church to approach its work with renewed energy and focus, to discern where God is leading us. Like Sophie, with prayer, hope, and imagination, we can join God in mission in our own neighborhoods." ■

—by Nancy Vander Meer, Back to God Ministries International, and Scott Meekhof, Christian Reformed Home Missions



Karen's love for animals may one day lead to her becoming a vet.

## 'Angels in My Path'

Just outside of Nicaragua's capital of Managua, Doña Marta helps her 7-year-old daughter, Karen, into her wheelchair. After a few adjustments, Karen wheels over to a bird cage and takes out her favorite bird.

As Karen watches her pet move along her fingers, Doña Marta shares Karen's dream of someday becoming a veterinarian. Despite Karen having spina bifida, that dream may one day become reality.

"When I first heard the diagnosis, I didn't know what to do," recalls Doña Marta. "But the Lord put many angels in my path."

One set of "angels" are the students and teachers at Nicaragua Christian Academy (NCA), a partner school of Christian Reformed World Missions.

A few years ago, NCA's campus in Nejapa, Nicaragua, began an inclusive education program that allows students of all abilities to be in the classroom together. Karen was one of the first students invited into this program.

Although Doña Marta was hesitant to send Karen at first, many of her doubts vanished immediately.

"We thought that these people would treat us differently," said Doña Marta, "but then I saw how they wanted to support us, help us, and play with her."

"It's important for her to go to these classes because she has to prepare to be independent and become a professional," Doña Marta added.

Karen's classmates and teachers have also benefited from having her in the classroom. "Just as I have taught her, she

has taught me so much," said Salazar Gutierrez, Karen's third grade teacher.

Recognizing the role that inclusive education has played in the lives of students like Karen, CRWM missionary Andrew Ippel recently began a similar program for children who attend NCA's larger school, NCA International.

This change meant that for the first time in the school's 25-year history, NCA International accepted students with significant disabilities this August.

"I am so excited to see how God will move through this program," said Ippel, "excited for our school to live out more deeply its mission of Christian education in Nicaragua." ■

—by Brian Clark,  
*Christian Reformed World Missions*

You add.  
God multiplies.

## A Home Restored, a Life Redeemed

**D**orothy Rice, a 74-year-old widow, became homeless in April 2014 after a flood swept through her community of Tweed, Ontario.

World Renew Regional Disaster Response Services (DRS) managers Tony and Jennie DeWeerd assessed the damage in Tweed. They said Rice's home was heavily damaged—the worst they had encountered.

But thanks to volunteer labor and donated supplies from nearby Christian Reformed congregations, World Renew DRS volunteers, and others, Rice was able to celebrate Christmas 2014 in her restored home, say the DeWeerds.

Last spring, the DeWeerds decided to check in on Dorothy Rice to see how she was doing. They learned that Dorothy had cancer and that the treatment wasn't effective.

"The news was shocking and greatly saddened us," Tony DeWeerd said.

They contacted Rev. Steve Brown, pastor of Tweed Presbyterian Church, whom they had asked to visit Rice after they left Tweed.



**Contractor Andy Geertsma, right, makes a presentation to Dorothy Rice (seated on left) during the "Last Nail" dedication ceremony of Rice's home on December 20, 2014.**

"World Renew DRS makes a difference in the lives of many people who are struggling to recover from a disaster," the DeWeerds reported. "While we repair homes in Christ's name as his ambassadors, God is working to repair lives." ■

—by Kellie Scholma, World Renew

The DeWeerds learned he had visited her faithfully and, once it became apparent she would not recover from cancer, had begun to visit daily to read the Bible to her.

The Presbyterian pastor also told them that Rice had given her life to the Lord, publicly professed her faith, and became a member of Brown's church.

Dorothy passed away on March 30, 2015, and a celebration of her life was held at her restored home in May.

## The Continuing Connection between the CRC and the NIV

**I**n 1955, Howard Long, a businessman and member of a Christian Reformed congregation in Seattle, Wash., encouraged his pastor, Peter De Jong, to bring before the consistory the idea of a new English translation of the Bible in the language people actually spoke so that Long could more effectively witness to others about the good news of Jesus Christ.

His suggestion began an effort that would ultimately lead to the production of the New International Version (NIV) translation of the Bible, read today by more than 450 million English-speaking Christians around the world.

Long's idea struggled through—and sometimes against—a classis, a synod, a study committee, an advisory committee, and a couple more synods before eventually being formally commissioned at an ecumenical meeting of evangelical church leaders and scholars at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Ill. That was 1965—50 years ago.

From the beginning, the CRC, through Calvin Theological Seminary, has invested in this effort. Professors Andrew Bandstra, John H. Stek, Bastiaan Van Elderen, Marten Woudstra, and Martin J. Wyngaarden all contributed their time, energy, and expertise to the NIV.

Today Michael Williams, professor of Old Testament at the seminary, continues that CRC participation by serving on the ecumenical translation team, which meets annually to discuss possible updates to the NIV.

Calvin Seminary looks forward to celebrating the NIV at 50 years on October 8 and 9—to recount its history and to recall with humble gratitude God's guidance and grace on this project, which was sparked and fueled by passion for God's Word. ■

—by Michael Williams and Jinny De Jong,  
Calvin Theological Seminary



**Michael Williams, professor of Old Testament**



**Howard Long**

# Let's Be Friends

Having good friends is a wonderful thing. But it's not always easy to meet new people, is it? And once you make a friend, you have to learn how to BE a good friend to that person. That's not always easy either.

Being a friend is about what you can give, not just about what you can get from others. Here are some ideas for making and keeping good friends.



## What Would Jesus Do?

The Bible has a lot to say about friends. Jesus said, "No one has greater love than the one who gives their life for their friends."

Jesus often took time to meet people who needed a friend. In Matthew 25, Jesus even says that when we welcome strangers, we're really welcoming him. So when you meet a new kid, do what Jesus would do!

## The New Kid

If you've ever been the new kid at school, at church, or somewhere else, you know it's hard. You don't know anybody. You don't know if people will like you. You wonder if you'll ever make new friends.

Is there a new kid at your school or church this year? Spend some time thinking about how you can help him or her feel comfortable and welcome. Not sure how to start? Here are some easy **DOs** and **DON'Ts**.

**DO** smile and introduce yourself. Say "Hi, I'm John. What's your name?"

**DON'T** wait for the new kid to talk first. He or she is probably scared stiff!

**DO** ask friendly questions. Ask about where the new kid is from and how her first day is going.

**DON'T** worry if the new kid doesn't talk a lot. When she feels more comfortable, she'll start to relax.

**DO** invite the new kid to do things with you and your friends.

**DON'T** forget to include new kids at recess and lunch-time—those can be lonely times for new people.

**DO** keep trying to be friendly even if the new kid is shy. **DON'T** forget that the next new kid you meet might turn out to be one of your BFFs!



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY



# Friendship Bucket List

Do you have a list of things you want to do someday? People call that a "bucket list." You and a friend can make your own bucket list together. All you need is a clean glass jar, some popsicle sticks, and a marker.

Think of things you'd like to do together, like going fishing, building a fort, or visiting an amusement park. Then use the marker to write each thing on a popsicle stick. Put the sticks in the jar. The next time you need something to do, choose a stick from your bucket list!



# The Best Gift Ever

Want to give a friend the best gift ever? Here's how! Have your friend sit or stand in front of a whiteboard or a big piece of paper. Around your friend, use markers to write nice words that describe him or her. Then take a picture of your friend standing in front of the board. Later, print the photo, put it in a frame, and give it to your friend. It's the best gift ever! Whenever your friend looks at it, he or she will feel great.



# Friend Words

To make your own word searches online, visit [puzzle-maker.com](http://puzzle-maker.com).

What makes a good friend? Here are some ideas. Circle these words in the puzzle below. (The words might be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, or backwards.) Can you think of any other words that describe a great friend?

A S I K G D G N I R A C  
 X T C I U Y G N G W B E  
 V T T E L O Y A L R Z T  
 S V H O H E L P F U L H  
 U P L F K I N D B A Z F  
 O G N I T P E C C A U B  
 R V R C L K X W A N F J  
 E W I C D Z O N O E O S  
 N Y D E P E N D A B L E  
 E D M I P O L J N T D Q  
 G O H O N E S T M D F G  
 F O R G I V I N G M B I

Accepting  
 Forgiving  
 Helpful  
 Loyal

Caring  
 Fun  
 Honest

Dependable  
 Generous  
 Kind

# Would You Rather . . .

Playing games is a great way to get to know people. But some games, like Truth or Dare, can be embarrassing. Here's another idea: play Would You Rather. All you need is a list of questions like these:

- Would you rather spend a year in Antarctica or a year in space?
- Would you rather be super strong, or super fast?
- Would you rather live 100 years ago or 100 years in the future?

You can make up your own questions, or visit [tinyurl.com/ratherquestions](http://tinyurl.com/ratherquestions) for a list of 100 questions.

To play, write the questions on pieces of paper. Put them in a hat or box. Take turns drawing a question and answering it. Don't forget to say WHY you answered the way you did. You and your friends will learn a lot about each other!



**Sandy Swartzentruber** works as a library aide and is a freelance writer and editor. She attends Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich. She has funny friends, serious friends, loud friends, and quiet friends.

BY JULIA PRINS VANDERVEEN



# JOY

## IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING MINISTRY

**H**OW CAN WE NOT FEEL OVERWHELMED? The scope of life's problems—personal, local, and global—is too wide and too deep to imagine that they could be anything but overwhelming. And our constant access to media means we are swamped with details. At times even the little things pile up, causing us to feel ineffective.

This is particularly challenging for people who work or volunteer in the church, who often find themselves responding to a wide range of needs, including situations that seem too big to be handled by the church. The water is up to our necks, and we cry out, "How long, O Lord?"

There is, on the one hand, our personal response to the needs around us and the burden it produces in our minds and spirits. And then there's the calling of the church to provide practical, timely responses to those needs. How do we understand the experience of being personally overwhelmed alongside the painful existential reality that has always burdened humankind and will never just melt away? How do we live well and serve faithfully in the midst of turmoil?

In these overwhelming realities and the feelings they produce, we are given a potent opportunity to join our lives with Christ. We are called to suffer and surrender—to suffer gracefully and to live by the Spirit, to live by faith in the circumstances we currently experience. We can't wait for circumstances to change to begin standing firm in the gospel of peace.

But it may help to look carefully at why we feel overwhelmed and then pay close attention to how we cope so that we can grow in our capacity to live fully alive, even when life is daunting.

### When Ministry Is Overwhelming

The experience of being overwhelmed in ministry is complex because the problems we face are sometimes enormous—and we are also complex. Sometimes we are overwhelmed because we're interacting with an individual or family whose needs are never-ending, and sometimes we feel overwhelmed because we aren't managing our time and resources well. Sometimes we feel burdened because we think that we have to address every request or because we try to act alone, without accountability. Still other times we feel the water rising up to our necks because we've been ignoring the need to take care of ourselves. Our sense of being overwhelmed might eventually be expressed in cynicism or "numbness," irritation with people and situations, loss of hope, feeling ineffective in ministry, and feeling distant from God.

When this happens, we may need to step aside for a while to catch our breath and receive healing. Congregations may need to agree to periods of reduced activity to provide rest for pastors or volunteers. We may think that we can push through and keep ministering even while we're deeply tired, but exhaustion and burnout, left untreated, can result in situations that require significant intervention and cause pain to others as well as to the ones who are overwhelmed.



Biblical examples tell the story. After the prophet Elijah cried out, “I have had enough, Lord!” (1 Kings 19), he finally lay down under a broom tree. It was then that he received the food of restoration and encountered God, full of mercy. And Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, spoke this word of caution to the man chosen to lead God’s people: “The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone” (Ex. 18:18). Jethro went on to give Moses directions about setting up structures to handle all the demands. Moses, we’re told, “listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said” (v. 24). Leaders, including pastors and volunteers, are invited to heed the wisdom of others. Our neglect to do so may contribute to our exhaustion.

### Working with Others

One of the gifts of our church structure is that we already have networks for accountability. But we have to rely on them to function well. This means working *with* others. It’s not as efficient as acting alone, but doing so can provide greater encouragement and synergy. When we make efficiency one of our primary goals—whether we realize it or not—we risk the possibility of missing what God intends to teach us through collaboration and trust. And when we’re caught up with doing things “just right,” we might also miss out on the invitation to cooperate with the Spirit, who not only choreographs our movements in ministry but also instructs us on what *must* be done rather than all that *could possibly* be done.

the memory of being joined with Jesus, whose life and death and resurrection cast a glowing light over every situation. We’re simply called to be children of that light, to stand in it and reflect it wherever we are. We’re called to look like Jesus and smell like him.

When that becomes complicated, the assistance of a coach, mentor, spiritual director, or counselor may be helpful in identifying areas of growth, both for individuals and for congregations.

We can also take practical steps. Our deacons recently took an inventory of all the resources and needs within our own congregation by passing out a survey after a morning church service. We then matched an inventory of the congregation’s skills and gifts with specific unmet needs. Instead of rehearsing our previous narrative of scarcity and limitations, we are able to frame our ministries in terms of availability and abundance.

Our congregation also implemented the restorative practice of a “listening circle.” Someone trained in restorative justice practices led us through a conversation that allowed us to complete a policy outlining our commitment to respond to one of the significant needs in our neighborhood.

The ability to discern what is best and to respond with wisdom and compassion in the face of overwhelming situations can also be taught. Leaders who are empowered with training and education are less likely to feel as if they’re sinking. Empowering takes place as pastors and church volunteers attend workshops and receive gift assessments and encouragement.

## SAYING “NO” TO SOME MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES ALLOWS US TO RESPOND WITH A VITAL “YES” TO OTHERS.

Consider the scenario my congregation faces. Nearly 90 years old, it is located in an area of Vancouver known for its gentrification. However, there also exists a largely under-resourced population in our neighborhood: refugees, single-parent families, transient students, and people on the street. Within a hundred feet of our church, a six-story building is being constructed to house the Immigration Services Society of British Columbia. It will accommodate resettlement agencies and services for immigrants and refugees, all of whom have significant unmet needs to which we could possibly respond.

Our elders and deacons have engaged in long discussions about how to handle all of the ministry opportunities, because in some cases we may have “bitten off more than we can chew.” Understanding that we cannot address every need, we have chosen to focus our energies on doing a few things well. We have accepted that we have to say “no” to some possibilities in order to respond with a vital “yes” to others.

### Practical Steps

So how do we know what we should focus on?

There is no program or formula for finding out exactly how to avoid burnout or how to minimize the feeling of being overwhelmed. But there is an approach. And that is to carry with us

Entire congregations can receive training in prayer and in understanding how the Spirit works.

In the end, what we really crave is the Spirit’s power in our lives. As we relinquish our anxiety—both personal and corporate—to God through prayer, as we remember our identity as Jesus followers and receive the peaceful guidance of the Holy Spirit, our responses are transformed. We become more capable of loving people wisely.

And when we’re reminded that the extravagant gifts we have in our baptized identity and eucharistic worship are the antidote to burdened living, we will be released with sudden joy in the face of otherwise daunting scenarios. Our bedrock confidence comes from knowing that the One who sits upon the throne, who reigns with grace and truth and gives us the identity of being overcomers, invites us to participate in the hope-filled reign of God.

For nothing is impossible with God. ■



**Julia Prins Vanderveen** is copastor of First Christian Reformed Church in Vancouver, British Columbia. She and her husband have enjoyed living on the coast for the past eight years, along with their three young sons.

## VidAngel Cleans Up Movie Night

**SOMEWHERE IN THE STATE OF IDAHO**, four brothers are working hard to help individuals and families keep control of their own moral code.

Neal, Daniel, Jeffrey, and Jordan Harmon are the brains behind VidAngel, a service that digitally flags potentially objectionable content in films and TV shows so viewers can remove or allow specific instances of those elements before they watch.

Intrigued? Here's how it works. Once you complete your free registration at *VidAngel.com*, you gain access to the site's growing selection of 700-plus films and TV shows available for purchase. Choose one and VidAngel generates a listing of elements that its team has flagged as potentially offensive. Categories include language, sex and nudity, alcohol or drug use, violence and gore, and "other negative elements." You choose to "Show" or "Remove" each of those elements based on your own standards. Making these choices is a thought-provoking exercise, since you have to give very specific direction to get the results you want.

Making these choices is a thought-provoking exercise.

Once you've chosen your settings, click to purchase the show and stream it to your computer or to a number of compatible devices such as AppleTV, iPad, and more.

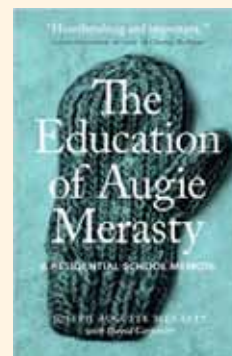
The Harmon brothers, who are people of faith, are clear that they didn't create this service to help people adapt obviously adult content for children. So, *Game of Thrones* with your 10-year-old? Um, no. Not even with filters in place.

Nor is VidAngel intended to "Christianize" objectionable entertainment. The brothers say, rather pointedly, "If the content of the movie as a whole is against your standards, don't use VidAngel to justify watching it." But if you'd rather not hear 19 instances of the "f-word" in an otherwise laudable film, the Harmon boys are there for you.

*Note:* VidAngel is a work in progress. The site instructions can be a bit unclear—a situation that definitely needs to be addressed—but customer service is very responsive. ■



**Sandy Swartzentruber** works as a library aide at Grand Rapids Christian Schools and is a freelance writer and editor. She and her family attend Sherman Street CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.



## The Education of Augie Merasty: A Residential School Memoir

by **Joseph Auguste Merasty with David Carpenter**  
reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**

In 1935, when Augie Merasty was 5 years old, his father enrolled him in St. Therese School in Manitoba. There several priests and nuns subjected Augie and many other students to sexual abuse, violence, and neglect. Many priests and nuns loved and cared for the children, but no amount of loving could justify the systemic injustice—approved by the Canadian government and the Roman Catholic Church—that took children out of their culture with the express purpose of taking their culture out of them. Painful to read, this slight volume cries out against the sin of those who said they acted in Jesus' name. It asks why no one stepped in to stop the violence and save the children. (University of Regina Press)

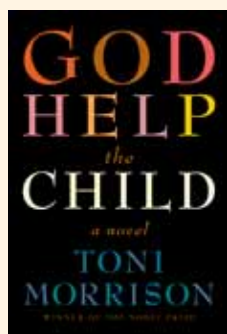
**MORE REVIEWS ONLINE**

## Say You Will

by Eric Walters  
reviewed by Sonya  
VanderVeen Feddema



Sam is painfully aware that his extraordinary intelligence and awkward social skills set him apart from his high school peers. When his high school erupts in a frenzy of “promposals”—elaborate, expensive, and public invitations to the prom—Sam wonders if he’s capable of pulling off a “promposal” of his own. This winsome young adult novel introduces readers to realistic characters with strength and depth. It also offers a subtle critique of teen culture, social media, and the contrast between the excesses of North American culture and the privations experienced in many African countries. (Doubleday Canada)



## God Help the Child

by Toni Morrison  
reviewed by Adele Gallogly

Toni Morrison’s latest novel tells the story of a stunningly beautiful woman still wounded by childhood mistreatment. Once again, Morrison has written a vivid book that may haunt readers. But in it she also demonstrates her hope in humanity’s ability to help the agonized young. After all, even the book’s title can be read as a kind of hopeful prayer and cry for mercy—even if, in the novel itself, it is uttered by a mother who takes years to admit to herself that “What you do to children matters. And they might never forget.” (Knopf)

## Two Days, One Night

reviewed by Kristy Quist

Sandra is distraught when she finds out that her coworkers have voted to have her job eliminated rather than give up their own much-needed bonuses. After talking her boss into another vote on Monday morning, she spends the weekend trying to secure enough votes to keep her job. The process of finding her coworkers, explaining her need, and

listening to theirs is grueling for a woman whose confidence has already been shaken. In this Belgian film, directors Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne capture both the disconnectedness of modern society and our need for understanding and community. Marion Cotillard gives an astonishing performance as Sandra. On disc now. (IFC)



## The Big Boy Bunch; Northern Michigan

contributed by Bert VanAntwerpen

My alarm goes off at 6:00 a.m. and I ask myself, “Why am I getting up at such an unearthly hour?” Then it dawns on me: this is Wednesday, and in an hour it’s time for the Big Boy Bunch.

Every Wednesday morning at 7:00 a.m. about 25 men from several Northern Michigan communities and all walks of life gather at the Big Boy restaurant in Cadillac, Mich., for books, breakfast, and blessings. Blue collar, white collar, no collar; retired, employed, unemployed; believers, seekers, questioners. Everyone’s perspective is welcome, and we are learning from each other.

Some of the weekly fare recently dished up has included:

- *Vanishing Grace* by Philip Yancey
- *The Politically Incorrect Jesus* by Joe Battaglia and Eric Metaxas
- *The Blue Parakeet* by Scot McKnight
- *The Reason for God* by Timothy Keller
- *King’s Cross* by Timothy Keller

The unity in our diversity is refreshingly evident in the prayers offered for each other and for existing needs in our communities. Suggestions are given as to how we can help meet those needs, and volunteers are quick to respond. Once again we are blessed and thankful.



## Home

by Josh Garrels  
reviewed by Robert N. Hosack



In this album, produced in his home studio, Portland-based Garrels’ music is more acoustic in feel than his last—yet still lush with piano, strings, and other instrumentation. A 70s, silky, blue-eyed soul sound marks most of the record, setting the tone for introspective confessional lyrics. Garrels uses family and human relationships as a prism through which to catch glimpses of God in everyday life. The made-at-home album captures the themes and rhythms of family, thanksgiving, and homecoming. *Home* masterfully captures the idea of heaven as our ultimate home: “Home at last, one family.” (Small Voice Records)

## Our Church Planting Effort Failed—Or Did It?

**W**E MOVED to Washington, D.C., in 2012 to plant a new church. To do so, we had to leave a community we cared deeply about—a church we had successfully planted in Michigan. Less than two years later, we left D.C. The community we had begun, Roots DC, was not able to continue.

This one goes in the “didn’t make it” category. The “failure” box. The loss column. At least, that’s how anyone looking from the outside in would perceive it.

From the inside, the story is much more complex. Discrete categories of success and failure are shorthand for what “worked” and what “didn’t work.” But those categories don’t adequately explain or describe what we experienced.

In many, many ways, our time in D.C. feels like it was a success. We moved there knowing almost no one. A new city. A major urban area. A daunting place to move for any reason, let alone with the hopes of forming a close community of people we’d never met. Yet form a close community we did.

After only three months in D.C., we had begun gathering with folks in our home. We dreamed together of what a new community of faithful disciples in an urban, international context might look like. We prayed. We visioned. We posted sticky notes around the fireplace. There was good energy—we were excited and encouraged about what was beginning to unfold. We continued gathering in our home for a year while keeping our eyes out for a public meeting space.

In the meantime, we developed relationships. We made friends in our neighborhood. We found jobs to help with the exorbitant cost of living—jobs that led to new relationships and connections and



**We began eventually to meet in a historic bar. . . . It was informal, accessible, familiar, welcoming. Also unconventional.**

that also felt deeply satisfying. We connected with other parents in the neighborhood public school. I coached a Little League team comprised of urban kids along with two of my sons and had a blast engaging with the kids and teaching them a bit about baseball and life.

Over time, D.C. was beginning to feel more and more like home. We had impromptu evenings of conversation and wine on the front porch with neighbors. We got to know people: from bus drivers to crossing guards to coffee shop baristas to high-profile government employees.

We explored parks that allowed us to feel a connection to nature amid our urban context. We connected with clergy and with people in the city who had been working intentionally for years in some tough ministry settings. We got involved in justice causes we felt strongly about. Simply by living in this busy, international city, with its challenging mix of “haves” and “have nots,” our worldview expanded.

Meanwhile our community slowly grew, both in depth of relationships and in connecting with new people. Our organic approach was measured, allowing us the time and space to create relationships in a city where the pace of life often precludes such connection.

We began eventually to meet in a historic bar in the Dupont Circle neighborhood, a place where we had already been gathering for weekly pub theology conversations for more than six months. It was a fitting setting for our community: informal, accessible, familiar, welcoming. Also unconventional.

And yet, with all of those good things happening, we had to pull the plug.

It simply cost too much for our family of six to live in one of the most expensive cities in America. Some are blessed with salaries that make this manageable. Others work multiple jobs, as we were attempting to do. In the end, we simply couldn't raise the kind of money we needed to continue. Our other jobs were a nice complement to my church salary, but they were not able to replace it. Other job possibilities fell through. We were reaching young people who had left the church or were considering leaving, many themselves struggling to survive the cost of living in D.C. Our community, in its embryonic form, wasn't able to provide much internal support. Calls and emails to potential supporters didn't generate enough—and yet we remain deeply and profoundly grateful for

those who did support us, and for our sponsor Silver Spring Christian Reformed Church, who provided great encouragement and support along the way.

And so despite creating a community of people coming from diverse backgrounds, many of whom said this was the first real community they had experienced in the city, despite a deep sense that this was where we belonged—in the end, we had to leave.

We made that difficult decision and informed our community almost two months before we would move. This gave us time to continue gathering on Sundays, sharing meals and celebrating each other and what had happened among us and entrusting one another to God, knowing our parting was imminent. In one of the most transient cities in the nation, where one- or two-year stints are common, we had simply become one more temporary relationship: good, meaningful, and coming to an end too soon.

One of our early community members was Abby. She serves in the Navy and knew she would only be with us for a short time. She told us a bit about why Roots was a blessing to her:

I have been thinking about the name “Roots” in terms of putting down roots, of making a new place home. Moving to a new city, even with a connection to college or a job or a relationship, can be a challenging time. . . . The imagery that suggested itself to me was of a soft landing site created by the community for those seeking a home here . . . a little garden patch amidst the city's concrete in which each one might help to plant and tend something, no matter whether the gardener is destined to see the century plants bloom, or just the annuals.


Little did we know at the time that we too would be among the annuals. And yet all we experienced made it feel as though we'd found a garden patch in which our family was immensely blessed and nurtured—by our Roots community, by our neighborhood, by our coworkers, and by our new friends.

So was this a “failure”? It's probably written up that way in official reports. And we certainly are going through a grieving process at leaving people and a place we were growing to love. Yet to my wife, who was able to bridge her passion for politics and faith in working with the Faith and Politics Institute and was able to work with a local nonprofit on urban justice issues; to my kids, who fell in love with the neighborhood and the friends they found in it; and to me, who enjoyed the challenge of urban ministry and was gifted with a newfound appreciation for the contemplative side of faith with the Shalem Institute; and finally, to our Roots community who became our family for a while—it feels like we gained a whole lot. And that, on many levels, counts as a success. ■



Bryan Berghoef is an ordained CRC pastor and church planter. He lives in Holland, Mich., and works remotely supporting online contemplative learning and curating social media content for the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Washington, D.C.

# The Wisdom of Corporate Confession



SINNER

Confession is a wise practice because it forms our faith and identity.

*Wise is the preacher who invites hearers to receive God's lavish grace, to repent from sin and evil, to turn toward Christ. . . .*

*Wise is the church that . . . encourages honest and trusting prayers to God that express the full range of human experience . . . prayers of celebration and lament, trust and desperation, supplication and intercession, thanksgiving and confession, healing and hope.*

—from *Worshiping the Triune God*, World Communion of Reformed Churches

**WHY DID A 2010 GATHERING** of Reformed denominations from around the world think it wise to include confession of sin and the assurance of pardon in worship? Why has confession found a place in worship liturgies, from the early church, to the Roman Mass, to the Reformers? Even our own denomination's Church Order stipulates the inclusion of prayers of confession (see Art. 61). After a time of dwindling use, they seem to be on the rise. But what is the wisdom behind the practice?

As Reformed Christians we see worship as a reenactment of our covenant with God, a renewal ceremony with God and those gathered in dialogue. God calls us to worship; we respond with praise. Faced with God's holiness, we become aware of our own sinfulness and our need to confess—to which God responds with words of forgiveness. Then, desiring to

live a life that more fully emulates the life of Christ, we turn to the Word to hear God's message to us. Week after week we respond to that message and are sent out with God's blessing to be a blessing to others. The practice of confessing our sin in worship is wise, first of all, because it is based in Scripture and is part of the rhythm of all relationships, especially our relationship with a holy God.

While we can certainly confess and experience forgiveness on our own, covenant renewal occurs within community. God is never in relationship with us only as individuals but also within a community of believers. In our baptism we are united with Christ and with one another. When one person rejoices, we all rejoice; when one mourns, we all mourn. And when one sins, it becomes our sin. And so we come as God's united people confessing our sin together: individual and corporate sin, actions we have done and things we have failed to do. It is a wise practice because it places us in a community of believers honestly struggling in Christ to overcome temptation, to challenge unjust systems of which we are a part, to declare that Jesus is victor over our idols, and to be assured of our pardon.

We need regular reminders of our sinfulness and God's abundant grace. While we don't want to focus on our depravity, without the act of confession and forgiveness we won't fully understand or experience God's grace.

In worship we are reoriented; we are reminded that we have been set apart for holy living. Confession is a wise practice because it forms our faith and identity.

Within the regular practice of confession, there is plenty of room for variation. We might want to begin worship with it, for example, or respond to a sermon with a time of confession, or include it in our preparation for the Lord's Supper. The context will suggest whether the prayer of confession should be read by the pastor, recited by the congregation, or spoken extemporaneously. It may or may not include a spoken or sung response. It may be a part of a song or offered during an extended time of silence. Various postures may be employed: from bowing to kneeling or even lying prostrate before God. It may also be instructive to lead from the baptismal font.

Far from being an empty ritual, the regular confession of sin and the assurance of pardon are packed with meaning. We are a sinful people, and we need the weekly reminder of our dependence on God's grace.

In that there is great wisdom. ■

[STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE](#)



**Joyce Berger**, an ordained pastor, is the director of Worship Ministries for the Christian Reformed Church and editor of the quarterly journal *Reformed Worship*.

# ADS

**Deadlines:** October issue is 9/7/15; November issue is 10/5/15. Details online.

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

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

## Denominational and Classical

### Announcement of Candidacy

We are pleased to announce that **MARY VANDENBERG** has now completed her academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word.

Dr. Steven Timmermans, Executive Director

### Available for Call

**PASTOR PETER JANSSENS** – The Council of Faith Christian Reformed Church of Burlington announces that Pastor Peter Janssens is available for Call. Pastor Peter can be reached at [pjanssens65@gmail.com](mailto:pjanssens65@gmail.com), or (905) 635-7129.

### Eligible for Call

We are pleased to announce that **JOE NASVYTIS** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word. Dr. Steven Timmermans, Executive Director

### Retirement

**RETIREMENT** After serving as Pastor faithfully in three congregations, Burlington, Barrie and Chatham Ontario, Pastor Jack Kerkhof and his wife Janet, are retiring from fulltime ministry September 2015. They have been a blessing and support to many people over the years, and we pray that the Lord will continue to bless you both with good health with the ability and desire to work and serve in His Kingdom wherever He places you.

## Congregational

### Church's 150th Anniversary

**1ST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH** of South Holland, Illinois will celebrate their 150th year of ministry on Sunday, September 20, 2015. We cordially invite all former members and friends to join us in a 9:30 a.m. Worship Service and a potluck noontime meal. Please R. S. V. P. to [FirstCRCSH@sbcglobal.net](mailto:FirstCRCSH@sbcglobal.net), or call 708-333-8211 by September 10.

**CENTRAL AVENUE CRC, HOLLAND, MICHIGAN**, will celebrate 150th years of God's covenant blessings on Sunday, November 8, 2015. Former members and friends are invited to the 9:30 am and 5 pm services, 259 Central Ave. For more information: 616-396-6230 or [info@centralavecrc.org](mailto:info@centralavecrc.org)

### Church's 125th Anniversary

**FIRST CRC OF SIOUX CENTER**, Iowa will be celebrating their 125th anniversary on Sunday, September 27. All are welcome to join us as we celebrate "Seeking First the Kingdom of God". Services are at 9:30 am at 4:00 pm led by Pastor Mark Verbruggen, and former Pastors John Witvliet and John Hellinga.

### Church's 100th Anniversary

**FAITH COMMUNITY CRC** of Colton SD plans to celebrate 100 years of God's faithfulness on Sept 20, 2015 All former Pastors, members and friends are invited to a 9:30 AM worship service followed by a noon luncheon (free will donation). Questions call Rod VanDer Vliet 605-941-8030 or email at [rvliet@siouxvalley.net](mailto:rvliet@siouxvalley.net)

**NELAND AVE. CRC** its 100th anniversary this fall. Events include worship services led by former pastors: Duane Kelderman on Sep. 27, Rich Hamstra on Oct. 4, Ruth Boven on Oct 18, Len Kuyvenhoven on Nov. 8, and Carl Kammeraad on Nov. 22. A Celebration Program will be held the afternoon of Sunday, Nov. 22 and banquet on Saturday

evening, Dec. 5. The centennial worship service will be December 6. Friends and former members are cordially invited to these events. Visit [Neland.org](http://Neland.org) for more details.

### Church's 50th Anniversary

**PEACE CRC** South Holland, Il. plans to celebrate 50 years of God's faithfulness this fall. Visit [office@peacecrc.org](mailto:office@peacecrc.org) or phone 708-331-7755 for further details.

### Church's 40th Anniversary

**MARANATHA CRC** of Lethbridge AB is celebrating 40 years of God's faithfulness. Events will be held on Oct 9-11 including a talent show, banquet and a special Thanksgiving service. Friends and former members are welcome to join us. Check out [www.maranatha-crc.ca](http://www.maranatha-crc.ca) or call 403-381-7744 for more details.

## Birthdays

### 100th Birthday

**ALICE DEN BESTEN** will celebrate her 100th birthday on Sept. 24. Her address is 630 Hastings Ave., Apt 317, Holland, MI 49423. Her family thanks God for her life and her family.

**MINNIE DEYOUNG** will celebrate her 100th birthday on Sept 9. Her children Bernie/Kathy DeYoung, Grace/Ron DeVries, Maury/Cher DeYoung, Grandchildren & Great Grandchildren thank God for His faithfulness. An Open House will be held on Sept 12, 2-4 at Fulton Manor, 1450 E Fulton Grand Rapids MI 49503.

**FEMMIE MARTENS** (nee Sikkens) will celebrate her 100th Birthday on September 3rd, 2015. God has blessed her with 6 children, 21 grandchildren, 36 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great grandchildren. As a family, we have been blessed to have her in all of our lives for such a long time. Congratulations and Happy Birthday Mom and Oma! She resides at Grace Manor #208S, 45 Kingknoll Drive, Brampton, Ontario, Canada L6Y 5P2.

**AILEEN (SCHILTHUIS) ROELOFS** celebrated her 100th birthday with family on August 7, 2015. God has blessed her with 5 children, 14 grandchildren, 32 great grandchildren, and 6 great great grandchildren. She resides at Sunset Manor 725 Baldwin, apt 215, Jenison, MI 49428.

### 97th birthday

**LILLIAN (DYKSTRA) DE BOER** celebrated her 97th birthday July 29. She resides at 725 Baldwin, #1061, Jenison, MI 49428. God has blessed her with 3 children, 8 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren and 4 great great grandchildren. We thank God for his goodness and faithfulness through the year.

### 95th Birthday

**ANGELINE PASMA DEN OUDEN** of 913 Second Street, Ripon, CA 95366 celebrated her 95th birthday on August 29 with her children Judy and Francis Groen, Bud and Deanna Den Ouden, Sandy Visser, and Robin Meeuwse along with 10 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. Great is Thy faithfulness.

**MAXINE (RYSKAMP) LEENSVART** - 2479 S Clermont St., #222, Denver, CO 80222, will celebrate her 95th birthday on September 4, 2015. Mickey, you are respected and loved by your family and friends. Congratulations and God bless you.

### 90th Birthday

**EDWARD H DEVRIES & MARVIN H DEVRIES**, turn 90 on September 17. Their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are thank-

ful for God's love, grace, and faithfulness in the lives of these two beloved men who have blessed us in countless ways!! Ed - 343 Williams St, Uxbridge, MA 01569-1181. Marv - 2320 W 113th Pl Unit 4313, Chicago, IL 60633-4178.

**NICHOLAS HUIZENGA** will celebrate his 90th birthday with family and friends on Sept. 14. He and his wife Joan of 64 years have 5 children, 13 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. 2842 Mulford Dr SE., Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

**CLARA (KLEIN) OOSTEMA** celebrated her 90th birthday on August 19th. Cards can be sent to 368 Wilma Ave. #20 Ripon, Ca 95366. She is much loved by family and friends. We give thanks for the Christian example she has been for us.

**MARGARET RUTH STORY (MAST)** celebrated her 90th birthday on May 29. Her children, Stan, Doug, and Dianne, along with her grandchildren and great grandchildren are grateful to God for her loving presence in our lives. May God give you many more years of health and service in his Kingdom!

**IRENE TERPSTRA-HUIZENGA** Praises the Lord for 90 years of His goodness. On Sept, 11 she and her husband Bob and their children Susan & Vito Zukauskas, Hope (late Jim) Terpstra, Dr. Dan & Dr. Peggy Terpstra, Denise (late Tom) Chambery, and Toni and Edward Bulthuis, 17 grand children, 15 great grandchildren, 5 step children, 10 step grand children and 1 step great grand child will celebrate this happy day. 8740 Cottage Grove Ave, Highland, IN 46322.

**MARGARET VANDER SCHUUR** celebrated 90 years of a 'one day at a time' walk with her Lord on August 27, 2015. Her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren 'rise up and call her blessed'. To God be the glory.

**EVELYN (WICHERS) ZEILSTRA** will celebrate her 90th birthday on September 17. She resides at Park Place of Elmhurst, 1050 S. Euclid #3204, Elmhurst, IL 60126. Her family thanks God for her faith, Christian example, and faithful prayers - Great is His faithfulness! We love you, Mom. Happy Birthday!

## Anniversaries

### 70th Anniversary

**FLORIDO** Julio A. and Dulce M. will celebrate their 70th anniversary on September 23, 2015. They are blessed with 4 daughters, 2 sons, 16 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren, and 1 great-great grandson!

**TIMMER** Jay and Marie of Jenison, MI will celebrate 70 years of marriage on September 27. Their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are thankful for God's faithfulness.

### 65th Anniversary

**BAYLOR** Nathan & Janet (Visscher), of Kalamazoo, MI (Bloomington, MI & Bonita Springs, FL) celebrated 65 years of marriage on August 26, 2015. Their faith in God and love for each other have sustained them and blessed so many. Children Nate & Brenda, Ron & Mary Jane, David & Elizabeth, Tim & Joan, Mary & Andy Potts, 13 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren join them in giving thanks to God for his faithfulness and abundant blessing!



**HOEKMAN** Steven & Jeanne of 601 Vera Ave., Ripon, Ca 95366, will celebrate 65 years of marriage on Sept. 1, 2015. Their 6 children, spouses, grandchildren and great grandchildren are thankful for God's goodness and faithfulness. Thanks be to our covenant Father!

#### 60th Anniversary

**BROUWER** Rev Peter & Maaie (nee Venema) of #7-9088-158th Street, Surrey, BC V4N 5G4 will DV celebrate 60 years of marriage on August 6th, 2015. We are so thankful to God for His continued guidance and blessings through the years! Their children: Garret & Wendy, Sonya & Ray, Pete & Joanne, Tricia & Dave, Fred & Jacquie, Mike & Marguerite, Annette & Vince praise God for their abiding faith in their Heavenly Father, the love and devotion that they have shown to each other,

their children, 24 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren. Congratulations and much love!

**GORIS** Gerrit Jan and Johanna will be celebrating 60 years of marriage on October 14, 2015. Their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are thankful for God's faithfulness.



**JANSEN**, Edwin and Arlyn (Boot) of Cutlerville, MI celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary September 7th, 2015. Their 4 boys, their spouses, 10 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren, and countless "adopted family members" look back over those years with thanks to God for your influence in our lives, and his constant faithfulness and blessings. Looking Forward in Love.

**JANSEN**, Edwin and Arlyn (Boot) of Cutlerville, MI celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary September 7th, 2015. Their 4 boys, their spouses, 10 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren, and countless "adopted family members" look back over those years with thanks to God for your influence in our lives, and his constant faithfulness and blessings. Looking Forward in Love.

**KAASHOEK** Adrian and Charlotte (Ribbens) of Grandville, MI celebrated their 60th anniversary on August 12. They, along with their 4 children, 9 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren are grateful for God's care and faithfulness.

**VISSCHER** Sherm & Lois (Van Roekel), Box 511, Platte, SD 57369, were married 60 years on August 24. Children & Grandchildren: Lew & Beth Visscher: Mandy (Koda), Casey, Kayla, Krista. Jaris & Renee Visscher: Patrick & Kaitlyn Visscher, Jonathan & Paxton Holwerda, Paige. Brian & Heidi Sikkema: Duncan, Bailey, Brin.

#### 50th Anniversary

**BLANKESPOOR** Ed and Carol (Nanninga) of Grand Rapids, MI celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 20. We give thanks for God's faithfulness and blessings. We love you, Mom and Dad! Steve and Cathy, Cindy and Mark, Karen and Karl, Jay and Elizabeth, and 12 grandchildren.

**LEERAR** Raymond and Beverly (Orland Park, IL) celebrate 50 years of marriage on September 25. We give thanks to God for His blessings. Celebrating with them are Phil (Sharon) Leerar (John, Allie) and Pam (Rob) Kikillus (Benjamin, Andrew).

**LEESE** Pastor Marvin & Martha (Vander Pol) PO Box 67 Hopsers IA 51238 celebrate 50 years of marriage August 6.

**STEIGINGA**, Ronald and Karen (De Graff) of Hawthorne, NJ, 07506. Their children are Cheryl and Wayne Schipper, Laura and Robert Dykstra, Jeff and Mary Beth. They have 10 grandchildren. God has blessed us greatly over the years

#### Obituaries

**BANGMA** Louis, Jr, 85, of Uxbridge, MA passed away on July 2, 2015. He was the husband of Shirley Kooistra, father of Kevin and Sue Bangma, Shari and Michael Cronin, and Randall and Kathleen Bangma; and the grandfather of Jennifer and Julie Bangma, Jacqueline and Michael Cronin, and Lauren and Kristen Bangma. His son Dwayne, and his two brothers, Raymond and William preceded him in death. *It is well with my soul.*

**BONNEMA** Douglas, age 82, 2500 Breton Woods SE #2006, Kentwood, MI 49512. Surrounded by his family, went to be with his faithful Savior Jesus Christ on June 19. He will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 62 years, Dorothy (Wieberdink) children Duane (Nancy), David (Marilyn), Doreen (Loren) Gunnink. Dale (Linda). 12 grand children, 22 great grand children.

**BOOT** Kornelis, On June 23, 2015 the Lord took our dear father, grandfather and great grandfather home to his eternal home at the age of 83. Throughout his life as baker and college professor, as father and husband he sought to serve the Lord. Even after he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease he felt that he could be useful to others. He was preceded in death by his wife, Aly and son Tony. Survived by his daughters Teresa (Wes) Jeltrema, Deb (Brian) Zuetenhorst and son, Reggie (Dyanne) Boot, eleven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. As an expression of sympathy, those who wish to do so may send memorials to the Boot family Study Abroad Scholarship, Dordt College, 498 4th Ave NE Sioux Center IA 51250

**DE BOER** Hilda (Wesseling), age 86, went to be with her Lord on April 29. She was preceded in death by her daughter, Wendy Brouwer, as well as by three brothers and a sister. Surviving are her husband of 59 years, Frank, daughter Anna (Neal) Uitvlugt, son Peter De Boer and daughter Kristen (Jim) Beauchamp, son-in-law Jerry Brouwer, as well as by two sisters. Also surviving are 13 grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.

**DE KOEK** Ben, 93 years old. Born Oct 30, 1921 in Edgerton, MN passed into glory August 1, 2015 at the Artesia Christian Home Artesia, Calif. Married to Betty Ann De Koekkoek for 33 years. Lived a very eventful life while loving his Lord and Savior each and every day

#### Church Position Announcements

**PASTORS** Hope Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Courtice—near Oshawa—Ontario, is looking for two pastors who will serve in a team ministry that will take our church into its next chapter. The pastors will succeed our current pastor when he retires. We are a growing, diverse congregation committed to vibrant, contemporary worship. We are excited about pursuing ways to implement our mission to believe, belong, bless, and we're eagerly anticipating what God has planned for the next phase of our development. If you can see yourself as part of a team ministry in an ethnically diverse church in which nearly half the members are under the age of 25, we'd love to chat with you. Contact our Succession Planning Committee at [hfsuccession@gmail.com](mailto:hfsuccession@gmail.com) or call the Committee's chairperson, Stan Baker at 905-440-6583.

**CHURCH PLANTER** - Seeking full time Ministry Leader for a Church Plant with a heart for students / young adults. The goal is to develop a new self-sustaining Christian community. Key roles will include developing relationships and nurturing spirituality, evangelizing and discipling new Christians, establishing a permanent presence in the community where people can regularly worship and hear God's word, creating missional ministry opportunities and developing Christian leaders in service to Christ's church. The ministry will be located in Oshawa, Ontario near the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT). For more information please contact us at [SC.NOCP@gmail.com](mailto:NOCP@gmail.com).

**PASTOR OF YOUTH & CONGREGATION** at Clinton CRC, located in Southwestern Ontario, surrounded by natural beauty. We are looking for a person to work with new and mature Christians to use their God given gifts for service within our congregation and community. This person must be enthusiastic about God, organized, self-motivated, and willing to work in a team environment. Some preaching throughout the year will also be expected. Our church profile is available at [www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org), visit our website [www.clintonchristianreformedchurch.ca](http://www.clintonchristianreformedchurch.ca) or contact search committee at (Phil Dykstra) [ddykstra@fastgenetics.com](mailto:ddykstra@fastgenetics.com).

**DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES** The River CRC in Redlands, CA, is seeking a Youth Director of middle and high school students. See the job description at [www.therivercrc.com/#/contact-us](http://www.therivercrc.com/#/contact-us). Send a resume and cover letter (including personal introduction and reason for interest) to [Langley@therivercrc.com](mailto:Langley@therivercrc.com).

**PASTOR:** Pastors—still looking for a broken church looking to become relevant in the community, but keep finding tidy congregations that have it all together? Well look no more! Unity CRC in Prospect Park NJ (only 737 miles from Grand Rapids!) is seeking a dynamic leader, enthusiastic about urban ministry and church redevelopment, to help a dedicated urban church welcome its neighborhood into a relationship with Jesus (and us)! We're ready. Are you? Send profiles to Brenda at [unitycrnj@gmail.com](mailto:unitycrnj@gmail.com), and let's consider God's plans for each other.

**STUDENT MINISTRY COORDINATOR** New Westminster CRC in Burnaby, B. C. has an opening for a half-time staff position to give leadership to a vibrant and growing ministry to international students

and scholars. The "Coordinator of Mosaic and Campus Connections" will provide coordinating responsibilities and visionary leadership to the ministry and foster a chaplaincy type presence on local post-secondary campuses. Working hours are flexible. To view full job posting, or for more information, or to contact visit [www.nwcr.ca/jobs](http://www.nwcr.ca/jobs). Application deadline Sept. 15, 2015.

**SENIOR PASTOR** The American Protestant Church of the Hague, Netherlands, is seeking a Senior Pastor for its international, interdenominational, English speaking congregation. For details see: [www.APCH.nl](http://www.APCH.nl)

**YOUTH PASTOR** First CRC, Red Deer, AB. We are a growing congregation located in Central Alberta. We are seeking an energized full-time Youth Pastor to work alongside our Associate Pastor and Senior Pastor to grow and learn about our diverse congregation. B. A. is preferred and experiences can be varied. If this position interests you please contact us at [firstcrrcrt@gmail.com](mailto:firstcrrcrt@gmail.com). Visit our website at [www.firstcrrcdeer.org](http://www.firstcrrcdeer.org) to learn more about our church and current programming.

**PASTOR** Centrepointe Community Christian Reformed Church in Edmonton, which shares facilities with North East Christian School, is looking for a spiritual leader who primarily through preaching and pastoral care will provide creative leadership as we together seek transformation into Christ, the deepening of Christian community and serving our neighbors. The position is approximately 70% and involves working alongside other part-time staff. If interested please contact Gord Van Gaalen at [gcvangaalen@pcl.com](mailto:gcvangaalen@pcl.com) or [info@centrepointechurch.ca](mailto:info@centrepointechurch.ca)

**YOUTH PASTOR/DIRECTOR** Drayton CRC, located in beautiful southwestern Ontario, is seeking an outgoing, highly relational youth pastor/director who will engage the youth of DCRC in spiritual growth by developing, coordinating and administering an effective and comprehensive youth ministry. As a member of the pastoral team you will also provide discipleship and pastoral care for the youth and young adults as well as lead the congregation through preaching. Church profile upon request. Please contact Teresa Rumph at [rumph@hsfx.ca](mailto:rumph@hsfx.ca).

**DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC** Visalia CRC in CA is seeking a full time worship leader that will work closely with our pastors to cultivate worship services and worship teams that help lead our congregation to see and savor the greatness of God in Jesus Christ, in the power of the Spirit. The worship leader will foster dynamic congregational worship, with a blended style of historical hymns and contemporary praise songs. We are seeking someone who is called and gifted by God to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Planning weekly Sunday worship services
- Modeling and leading heartfelt worship, including the ability to play a lead instrument.
- Recruiting and training musicians in the church.

Qualified applicants will possess a combination of education and experience in leading church worship. For more information please visit [www.visaliacrc.com](http://www.visaliacrc.com).



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**DEKRYGER** Maynard, age 81, of Fremont, MI passed away on May 28, 2015. He was preceded in death by his wife, Lavina DeWeerd, also his brother Case DeKryger and brother-in-law Norman Unema. He is survived by his children Malcolm (Donna) DeKryger, Jane (Dan) Visser, Todd (Carolyn) DeKryger, and Cheryl (Dan) Olson; 12 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren: sisters and brothers, Frances Siems, Christine (Charles) Vandersloot, Lewis (Sandy) DeKryger, Perry (Dee) DeKryger, and Priscilla (Larry) Grinwis; sisters-in-law Jean DeKryger, Crystal Unema, Mary Jane (Willis) Byker; brother-in-law Norman (Karol) DeWeerd and his uncle, June Bazuin

**FABER** Chester W. 84, 1175 La Moree Rd. #54, San Marcos Ca.92078, was suddenly taken to his eternal home on June 16. He is survived by his devoted wife of 63years, Marilyn. Children: Lyle and Marg Faber, Carla and Kees De Jong, Harley and Vic Faber, Sheri and Bill Walden. 17 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, 2 great great grandchildren.

**GESINK** Carolyn (Sweetman), 83, of Denver entered heaven June 18,2015, preceded in death by her husband Melvin in 2008. She is missed by children Marc, Stephanie (Frank) Hiskes, Joel (Mary), grandchildren Kristy (Josh) Manion, Melanie, Allison (Josh) Hettinga, Brett Hiskes, Jon, Colin, Pieter, and great grandsons Micah and Isaac Manion.



**HANSUM** Marion, age 93, of Platte, SD, went home to be with his Lord and Savior on June 11, 2015. Preceded in death by parents Tony & Trina, brother Adrian, sister Fannie Van Zee, three brothers-in-law and five sisters-in-law. Survived by wife Allis; six children: Ron (Virg) Hansum, Dee (Lyle)

Nepodal, Donn (Pamela) Hansum, Larry (Jan) Hansum, Anthony (Judy) Hansum, Eva (Randy) Hedman; 20 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren and brothers- and sisters-in-law. He faithfully served his Lord and the church in many ways for his whole life.

**HOGUE** Ray, went to be with his Lord and Savior on May 27, 2015, at the Artesia Christian Home in California. He was the beloved husband

of Marcia Broekema Hogue for 52 years. He is the loving father to Ty & Dawn (Ella and Megan) of Holland, Michigan, and Laura & Lance McCollough (Victoria, Rebecca, and Isabella) of Temecula, California; brother Tom & Brenda and family, and sister Sally & Parker. Ray will be sorely missed but now he is free from pain and safe in the arms of Jesus.

**HOLKEBOER** Helen Biddle - A teacher of many years, beloved Helen, passed away on June 19, 2015. Helen was 93 years of age.

**HOLWERDA** Donald, age 93, went to be with his Lord and Savior on July 29, 2015 - WWII U. S. Army SSGT, Silver Star Recipient for bravery and courage. Beloved husband of the late Ruth (nee Bandstra). Loving father of Donald (Karen), Linda (Thomas) Sperling, James (Debbie) and Robert (Elaine). Cherished grandfather of 15 and great-grandfather of 21. Dear brother of Catherine Solle and the late Jeanette Van Iddekinge and Sophie Jongsma. Fond uncle of many nieces and nephews. Don faithfully served his church and Christian community in many ways. He will be greatly missed by all.

**LEENSVART** Harriet, age 91, of Ripon, Ca. went to glory on July 16. She was preceded in death by her husband and son; survived by her children Don, Dale, Sharon and Joyce; 12 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

**LEO** Johanna, nee DeVries, age 86, of Tinley Park, IL, entered Glory on July 27, 2015. Beloved wife of 62 years to the late Frank T. Leo, Sr. (2012). Loving mother of Frank Jr. (Jennifer), Gary, Timothy (Tracy), Philip (Lisa), Jane (Kostas) Papadimitriou and the late David (Judy Ozinga). Cherished grandmother of 11. Dearest great-grandmother of five. Fond sister of Teresa TerMaat, Tena Vander Muil and the late Louis DeVries, Jenny Lenters, Gertrude Tibstra, Geraldine Wodrich, Clara Spoelma, and Winifred DeVries. Dear aunt of many nieces and nephews.

**PUNT** Gary, 61, of Appleton WI, is safely home. After a battle with cancer, he passed peacefully with his family at his side on August 1, 2015. He is survived by his wife, Sue (Williamson); two sons and daughters-in-law, Nathan (Carolyn) Punt, Matthew (Destiny) Punt; one

grandson, Lucas; his parents, Neal and Betty Punt; five siblings, Jan (Bill) Buikema, Jim (Gail) Punt, Beth (Dave) Huisenga, Gordon (Meg) Punt, Laura (Mike) Stoub; and many nieces and nephews.

**VER HOEF** Albert Henry, age 87, of Jenison, passed away on Tuesday, July 28, 2015. Survived by children, Marcia & David Vander Ploeg, Sue & Tom Van Dyk, Sherry & Dirk Van Wyk, Karen Ver Hoef, Steve & Barb Ver Hoef; 17 grandchildren; and 8 great grandchildren.

**WOLTERS** Theresa (nee Elzinga) was called home to Jesus at age 79 on March 12, 2015. She is survived by Edward, her devoted husband, her children: Agnes (Franklin) Bestebreuer, John, Thelma (Gene) Vandenberg, Larry (Jean), Sylvia (Gilbert) Newhouse and Nancy (Chad) Buckles; 16 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren.

## Employment

**CEO** Salem Christian Homes in Chino, California is seeking a highly engaged, experienced, and dynamic leader to fill its CEO position. The organization has a fifty four year history of providing Christian care for individuals who have developmental disabilities. At present 112 adults are being cared for in nineteen community homes in Chino, Ontario, Upland and Lakewood, California. Applicants are invited to send a letter of interest with a brief biography to: Robert DeJong, Salem Christian Homes, 6921 Edison Avenue, Chino, CA 91710. Attention: Search Committee or to rjdjong@yahoo.com. A complete application packet will be sent to all interested applicants.

**AUTOMOTIVE TECHNICIAN** Seeking an experienced automotive technician to join our team in the beautiful Gallatin Valley, Bozeman Montana. This is a full time position at a well established family owned repair shop specializing in European Import Autos. Wage DOE, submit a resume with employment history and references to The Auto Works Inc. theautoworksinc@mtopticom.net 28797 Norris Rd. Bozeman, Montana 59718 406-586-3709

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Initial consideration will be given to applications received by **October 2**.



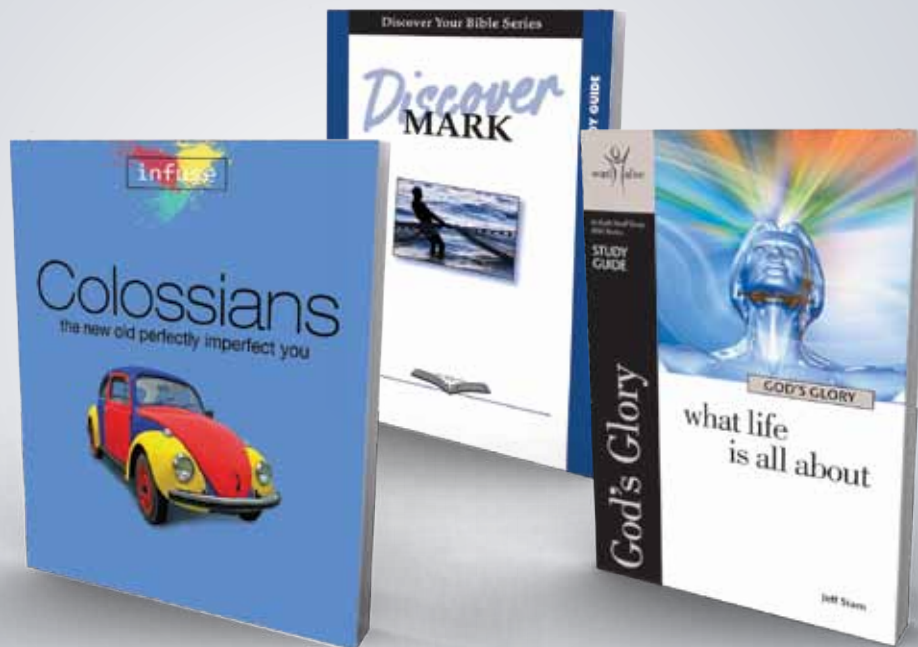
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**SR DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIVE** Kuyper College is seeking applicants for the position of Senior Development Representative. As a key member of the advancement team, the Senior Development Representative is responsible for establishing and growing relationships with individuals, businesses, and churches, on behalf of the College. While managing a portfolio of prospect and donor relationships, the Senior Development Representative will identify, cultivate, and solicit major gift support for the College. A successful candidate for this position will have strong interpersonal skills, experience in fundraising, excellent oral and written communication skills, and knowledge in planned giving methods. More detailed information about this opportunity and the application process can be found at [www.timothygroup.com](http://www.timothygroup.com).

## Real Estate: Sales and Rentals

**ANNA MARIA ISLAND, FL CONDOS** pool, beach access, linens, fully equipped. 1 and 2 bedrooms. \$650-750/wk. D. Redeker, 941-778-1915. [redekercondos.com](http://redekercondos.com)

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**BONITA BEACH FL VACATION CONDO** 1BDR, 1BA, across street from beautiful Gulf beach, 2 pools, fully equipped, tasteful décor, sleeps 4, reasonable rates, 1 week minimum. Don't snooze and lose - call now 616-977-0039

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**LAKE HOUSE FOR SALE** Beautiful landscaped lakefront year round home on beautiful cedar lake. Completely furnished 219-374-9321 Cell 708-284-7608 E-mail. [Colonelscutie@aol.com](mailto:Colonelscutie@aol.com) Com 219-374-9321

**WEEKLY RENTAL:** Douglas/Saugatuck, MI: Newly built Lake Michigan family guest house, 2br, loft w/ 2.5ba - sleeps 8. Lake Mi view & private beach. Call Ken @ 630-268-1531 or email [Groenjk@aol.com](mailto:Groenjk@aol.com)

**CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY:** Bethany Gardens four season home Sawyer MI for sale. 2story 5br 3ba 2car garage Swiss chalet on 1/2 acre. Association has Tabernacle, community house, tennis, large beach rights much more. Great area to live and enjoy family and friends. Call Paul 773-870-6860

**HOUSE FOR RENT** in Middleville MI. 4 bedroom, 2 1/2 bath, 2 stall garage, all appliances, large yard. \$1200/mo Contact [micky.jelsema@gmail.com](mailto:micky.jelsema@gmail.com)

**COASTAL, NC 4 cottages:** 3 br on water; two 1 br and 1 effc. in historic Beaufort. WiFi, TV, grill, ac & more. [www.theshellcottage.com](http://www.theshellcottage.com) (252) 504-6262 (w) or 252-504-6201 (h).

## Travel



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**CALL@ARTPRIZE** The Calvin Academy for Lifelong Learning (CALL) is hosting a four-day experience on October 3-8, 2015, in Grand Rapids, MI., that guides visitors through the myriad of venues and countless exhibits that define ArtPrize in Grand Rapids, MI- an independently international art competition. Designed for persons over the age of 50 and outside West Michigan, participants will explore more than 1,500 pieces of art, with background lectures provided by the Calvin College art community and accommodations at the Prince Conference Center. Visit [www.calvin.edu/call](http://www.calvin.edu/call) for more details or call (616) 526-8777. Join us and prepare to be fascinated!

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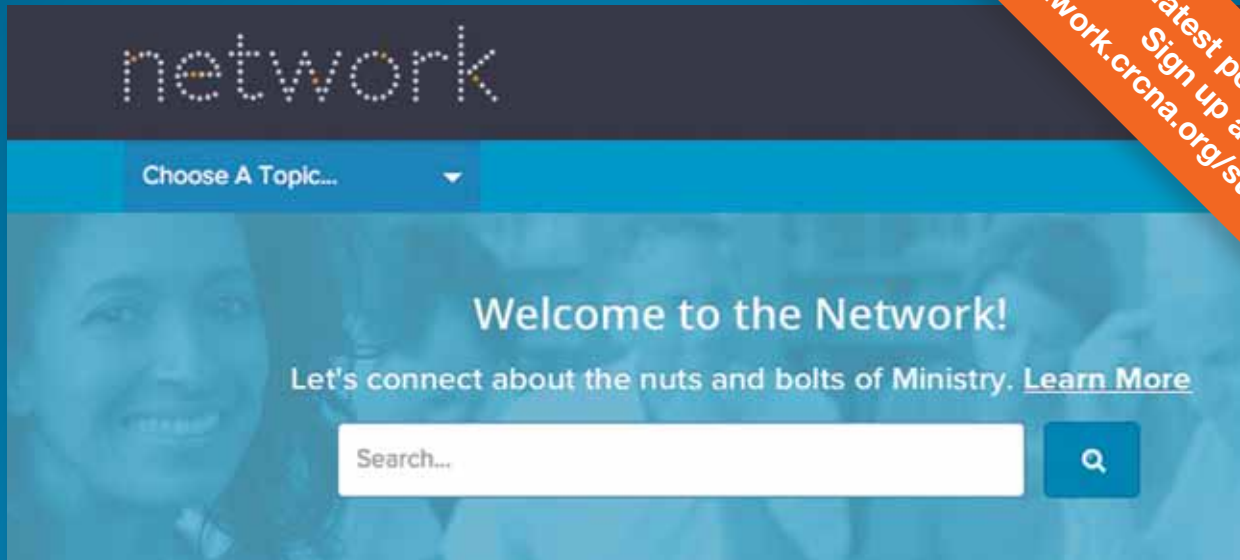
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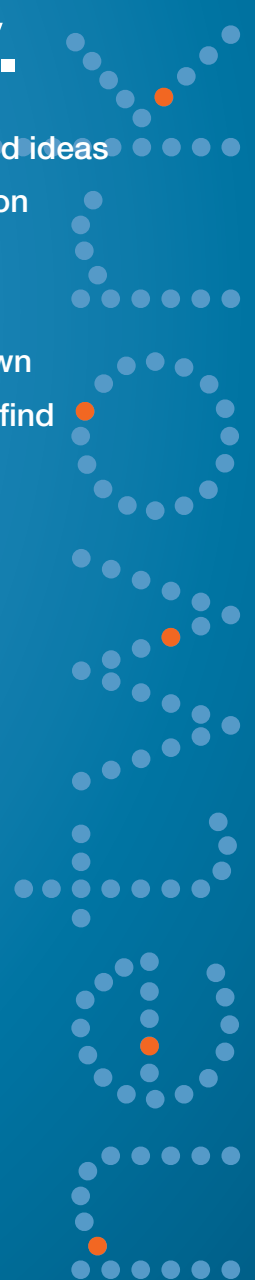
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# Punch Lines

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 49508-1407; or email it to [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org). Thanks!

**A**t the breakfast table our 9-year-old daughter, Hannah, had a computer question: "How do USBs work?"

"The same as Canadian bees," I replied. "They go from flower to flower. . ."

—David Bacon

**A** minister had just finished an excellent fried chicken dinner at the home of a congregation member when he saw a rooster strutting through the yard.

"That's certainly a proud-looking rooster," the minister commented.

"Yes, sir," replied the farmer. "He has reason to be proud. One of his sons just entered the ministry."

—Clarence Wildeboer

**O**ur 4-year-old grandson loves to eat at grandma and grandpa's house. He loves omelettes, and will ask, "Grandma, will you please make an egg pizza?"

—Ruth Kuipery

**M**y sisters and I started studying the Bible at a young age. One day, the teacher asked the question "Who is God?" and taught us this answer: "God

is the Supreme Being above all creatures." When she asked the question again, my little sister, Nancy, who was too young to understand, raised her hand. Happy to be called on, she responded, "God is a string bean above all creatures."

—Susan M. Vaughan

**T**houghts to remember:

- Most of us could retire nicely in old age if we could sell our experience for what it cost us.
- Worry is the interest you pay on trouble that never comes.
- The best vitamin for friendship is B-1.

—Ray Kerkstra

**M**y husband described his coming shoulder replacement surgery to our son, explaining that he would have a metal ball in his shoulder socket. Our granddaughter was listening intently, eyes wide. Then she turned to her father and asked, "Is Grandpa going to be a robot now?"

—Elizabeth Westra

**D**ear Lord: please keep your arms around our shoulder and your hand across our mouth. Amen.

—Robert W. Lubbers

**A** mother was preparing pancakes for her boys, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys began arguing over who would get the first pancake. Seizing the opportunity for a moral lesson, their mother said, "If Jesus were

sitting here, he would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.'"

Immediately Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"

—Bruce D. Quinn

**W**hat's wrong with your car?" a police officer asked the elderly man at the roadside.

"I don't know," he replied. "It just stopped running."

Leaning in for a closer look at the dashboard, the officer said, "It's out of gas. See, the needle is pointing to Empty."

"Empty?" the man replied. "I thought the 'E' stood for 'Enough.'"

—Dick Bylsma

**M**y sister sometimes struggles with keeping her young children quiet during church. One Sunday was no exception. Without saying a word, her husband took out his cell phone, typed himself a reminder, and handed it to the kids. Stunned into silence, they read, "Discipline kids when we get home!"

—Diana Leyendekker



"Don't judge me until you've walked a mile in my shoes!"

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