



# BANNER

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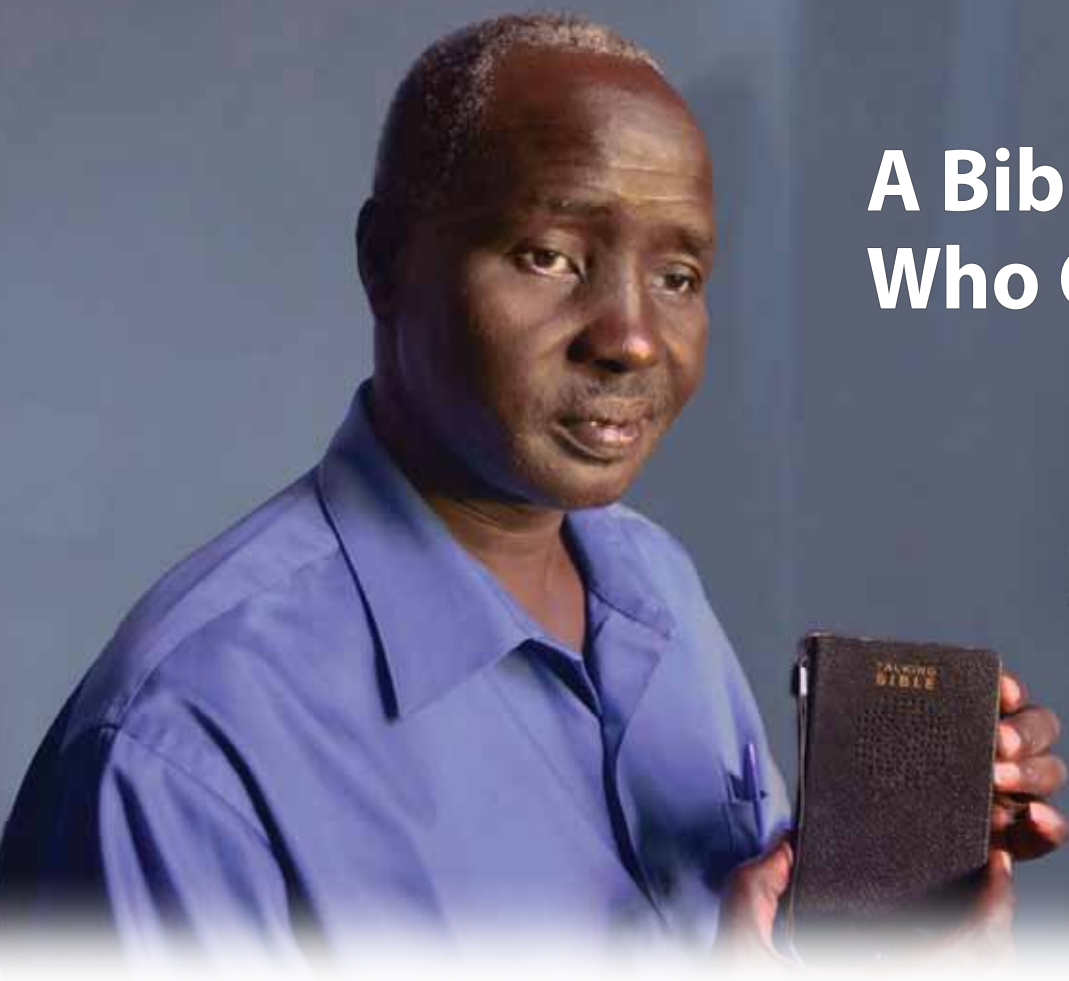
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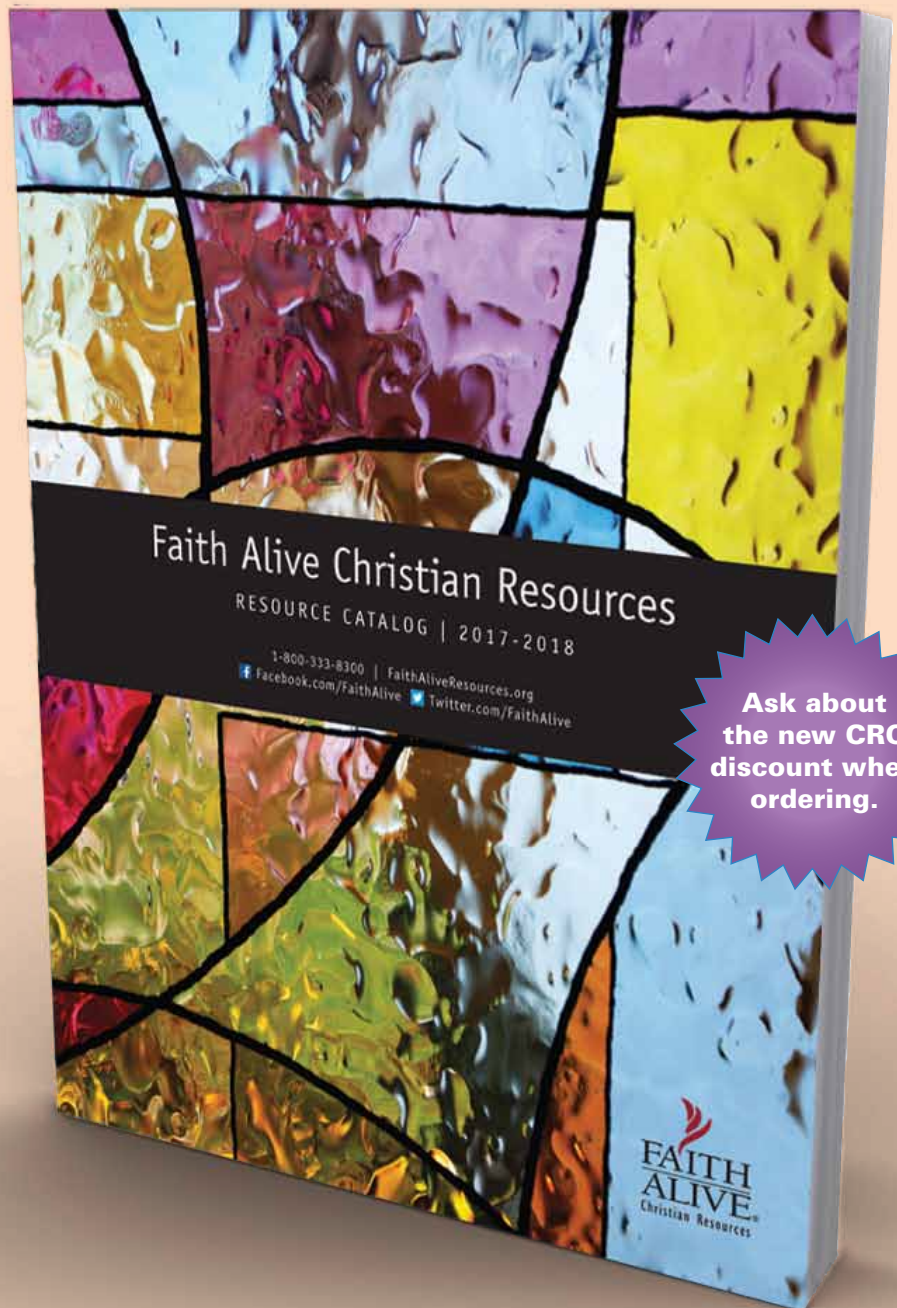
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## FREE Reformation Study Resource:

The Banner presents a free online resource with questions for discussion for personal study, small group discussion, or adult education church groups: **Reformation Themes: Commemorating the 500th Anniversary**. Also available, **Reformed Basics**. [thebanner.org/study-series](http://thebanner.org/study-series)

# We Need a New Reformation

**THIS OCTOBER MARKS THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY** of the Protestant Reformation. Christian Reformed churches and ministries, as well as *The Banner*, have been busy commemorating the event. Commemorating the past is important, but I am also concerned about our future. I believe the Christian Reformed Church needs a new reformation—not of theology, but of our spiritual posture.

As pivotal as Martin Luther was in sparking the Reformation, the Christian Reformed tradition owes more to another Reformer, John Calvin. Calvin certainly influenced our theology and confessions. But he also deeply shaped our spiritual posture—how we approach theology, church, and mission.

William J. Bouwsma, in his biography *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait*, observed that there were, so to speak, two Calvins at odds within the same person. One was a rationalist philosopher who craved intelligibility, order, and certainty. This Calvin was driven by a fear of uncertainty captured by the image of the abyss. The other, however, was a 16th-century humanist, flexible and revolutionary. This Calvin celebrated paradox and mystery, affirmed experience over theory, and tolerated a great deal of individual freedom. The “theologian of the Holy Spirit” Calvin’s fear was symbolized by entrapment in a labyrinth. This internal tension was part of Calvin’s genius.

When I look over our denomination’s history, I believe our dominant spiritual posture defaults to the rationalist Calvin, losing the counter-balancing side. We crave boundaries, order, and certainty, fearing our own versions of the abyss. But in the process, we may have unwittingly entrapped ourselves in a rationalist labyrinth of our own making. As a result, have we insulated ourselves from embracing the Holy Spirit’s untamed flames and unpredictable winds of revival?

Don’t get me wrong. I believe the Holy Spirit uses our intellect and reason. But is it possible that we have excessively relied on rules, boundaries, and theological certainties and so fallen into spiritual pride, losing sight of freedom and flexibility?

Many factors account for our denomination’s declining membership. But I believe it will take more than our rationalist defaults—five-year plans, structural changes, church order revisions, study committees, church growth techniques, retrenchments of tradition—to turn us around.

We need a new reformation. I see signs of this in the CRC. I see some of us leaning more into Calvin’s more flexible side. I see many putting God’s mission above their need for certainty and fear of chaos. I see churches taking more risks, being more flexible, allowing more freedom, and getting messy, in order to seek the lost. I see young people daringly and unconditionally love prodigals. I see more people being sensitive to the Spirit’s guidance—even when they are not sure how it ends. I see these as signs of relying more on God and less on ourselves. We need more of this. We need to embrace a new reformation. The future of the CRC depends on it.

*Editor’s note: The Banner is commemorating the Reformation’s 500th anniversary by publishing a series of articles on each of the five solas, culminating with Karin Maag’s feature in this issue (p. 18). We have compiled all these articles, with discussion questions, into a Banner Study Series for online and free PDF download at [thebanner.org/study-series](http://thebanner.org/study-series).*

*P.S. In response to the anti-Semitic and racist acts at Charlottesville, I have called us to prayer, self-examination, and action. Please see my online article “Are We Part of the Problem?” [[tinyurl.com/thebanner-problem](http://tinyurl.com/thebanner-problem)] Also see Colin. P. Watson’s statement on page 8. ■*



**Shiao Chong is editor-in-chief of *The Banner*. He attends Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Toronto, Ont.**

I see young people  
daringly and  
unconditionally  
love prodigals.

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## Robed in White Apparel

**I****N THE HEAT** and humidity of a July afternoon, I stood by my mom and dad in the small-town cemetery as Rev. Stockmeier presided over the interment of my 11-year-old brother, Roger. I felt nauseated, a feeling I had become accustomed to over the last few days. I thought about touching the bronze casket one final time, but I suddenly became intimidated by the large gathering of townspeople, neighbors, and Roger's classmates who surrounded the gravesite.

Rev. Stockmeier's compassionate voice interrupted my glance over the crowd. "Roger's family has asked that we sing the first verse of 'By the Sea of Crystal.'" Everyone knew the familiar hymn, but the words came slowly and haltingly. I tried to sing, but the words wouldn't come through the numbness that enveloped my whole body.

*By the sea of crystal, saints in glory stand,  
Myriads in number, drawn from every land.*

*Robed in white apparel, washed in Jesus' blood,  
They now reign in heaven with the Lamb of God.*

As Rev. Stockmeier began reciting the Lord's Prayer, I began to ponder the phrase "robed in white apparel." As much as I tried to imagine my brother Roger "robed in white apparel," the image wouldn't appear.

Neither Roger nor I had ever had a robe; in fact, a couple of years before we had discarded our boyish pajama bottoms in favor of wearing our boxers to bed. My thoughts went to our bedtime ritual for the past two summers: a visit to the bathroom, the quick flight upstairs, a hurried prayer—Mom always asked if we'd said our prayers—and then pulling out our shoeboxes full of baseball cards from underneath our beds. Roger and I would arrange and rearrange the cards, sometimes according to teams, other times according to stats. Fingerprinted and bent at the edges, the cards of Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, Ernie Banks,

Sandy Koufax, and many others provided the basis for lively conversation and possible trades from one shoebox to another.

Tonight, though, I knew I would peruse the baseball cards in solitude. There would be no one in the bed next to mine. My nausea returned. But suddenly, in the now eerie silence of the cemetery, I saw Roger dressed in a white baseball uniform. *That's it*, I thought. *Jesus has Roger dressed in a white baseball uniform—home whites!* And not only would it be white, but it would stay white—even after Roger made a headfirst slide into second base.

Uplifted by that image, I managed a smile as my dad turned toward me. He put his hand on my shoulder, and together we turned away from the harsh reality of the grave into a future with remembrance, imagination, and hope. ■



**Gordon Van Zanten** is a retired Christian school educator. He lives in Golden, Col.

Our lives are  
unique stones  
in the mosaic  
of human existence—  
priceless  
and irreplaceable.

— HENRI J. M. NOUWEN



PHOTO BY STUX/PIKABY

# Statement on Charlottesville, Virginia

*Editor's note: In response to recent events in Charlottesville, Va., involving a rally of white supremacists and the violence and deaths that followed, the Christian Reformed Church released the following statement from Colin P. Watson Sr., director of ministries and administration, that calls Christians to love, repentance, and prayer.*

**THE BIBLE SAYS,** “The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit” (Prov. 18:21).

On Friday night my wife and I watched in horror as a coalition of white supremacists, the Ku Klux Klan, and alt-right groups marched in Charlottesville, Va., to protest the removal of a Confederate statue from the public square. Young white men, fearful of being subservient to immigrants, Muslims, black men, and women, and those who don't look like them, took to the streets with tiki torches, chanting “Blood and soil,” “One people, one nation, end immigration,” and other slogans.

This story is particularly poignant for us, since last week our daughter Allison and her husband, Kirk, moved to Charlottesville so that Allison can begin to study for her MBA at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

There's an old saying that “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” The Bible shows unequivocally that this statement is false: “The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit” (Prov. 18:21).

The biblical truth of this statement became painfully clear when, during the day on Saturday, the white supremacy groups continued to march toward an inevitable altercation with those who felt otherwise. They soon engaged in violence with their detractors and the police.

Saturday afternoon, our worst fears were realized when a member of the white supremacist group drove a high-powered sports car into a group of individuals whose only crime was to hold a counter-demonstration, which declared that we must live together in love. One person died in the attack and 19 others were injured. Two law enforcement officers also died in a helicopter crash while trying to lend assistance to officers on the ground.

What does the Bible have to say in situations like this?

We are called to love and to lift up each other, in deed and in word.

The response to this horrific incident laid bare the divide that still exists in this country. Oppression and injustice are alive and well. The aftermath of the violence was telling.

Some people forcefully and unequivocally condemned the action, drawing a straight line from words of hate to the inevitable results of pain and death. This is a biblical response.

Some others did not react in the same way. They sought to justify or normalize these actions as being societal, presenting no reason for condemnation of particular groups. This is sinful!

As Christians, our choice is clear: we are called to love each other as God has loved us. This is not an option. This is a command. The Bible also says that those who love are of God, but those who do not love are not of God, because God is love (1 John 4:7-8).

We have drifted so far away from God, so far away from his love as a nation and as a people. We need to repent. We need to come back to the basic principles of our faith. And we need to challenge those who aspire to lead us to do no less.

We are called

- to love each other as we love ourselves.
- to not speak evil of each other, because words have consequences.
- to speak up for our brothers and sisters who are poor, needy, or in pain; being a good Samaritan is a command.
- to pray for our leaders, that they will lead in accordance with God's will.
- to pray for and love our enemies, difficult though it may be; this is also God's command.
- to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God (Mic. 6:8).

There are opportunities for us to pray and rally today . . . to lift up our pain and sorrow to God, to pray for healing for those who have been hurt, and to pray for peace to reign in Charlottesville, and in our nation as a whole.

May the God of love have mercy on us all.

*Colin P. Watson Sr.*

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# LETTERS



## Path toward Unity

Shiao Chong's article "The Path toward Unity in Christ" (Jul/Aug 2017) was an excellent contribution to the call for unity and reconciliation in the body of Christ. With over 43,000 denominations in the world, we continue to live in flagrant disobedience to clear and persistent biblical commands and assume an impunity from resisting calls to unity or even sanctioning further division.

Calvin warned of "dismembering" Christ's body. We in the Reformed community should heed advice like that given in this article.

*Wes Granberg-Michaelson  
General Secretary Emeritus,  
Reformed Church in America  
Grand Rapids, Mich.*

## Accreditation Denied

The news item about Operation Christmas Child upset me ("Operation Christmas Child Denied Accreditation for CRC Offerings," Jul/Aug 2017). I, along with other ladies of my church, have been knitting hats, mittens, and scarves for the shoeboxes [for Samaritan's Purse] for years. An older lady had been knitting while visiting her husband at the hospital.

A nurse from the Philippines asked her about it, and the lady said she was going to quit knitting after so many years. The nurse started to cry and said, "Don't quit! I was a little girl in the Philippines who lined up at Christmas time to receive one of the shoeboxes. It was the only gift I ever received."

Many children have no father and never receive a gift. We will keep knitting.

*Joanne Beukema  
Abbotsford, B.C.*

In the *Banner* news report "Operation Christmas Child Denied Accreditation for CRC Offerings," three delegates were quoted; one in favor of Operation Christmas Child and two opposed. In the very same *Banner* is an appeal from World Renew: "Free a Family from poverty for less than \$1 per day." Does that program rob the dignity of the family? What about other efforts, local and worldwide, to share resources with needy neighbors?

Is the objection "robs the dignity . . . of the fathers in being able to provide for their families" to be applied evenly? Were any other charitable social giving programs subjected to the same standards?

*Susan A. Boer  
Kent, Wash.*

Let's not deny children and their parents around the world the joy of receiving something because people in our rich country want to share Christ's love with them ("Operation Christmas Child. . ."). As a denomination, we do vacation Bible school programs throughout the U.S. and Canada. Samaritan's Purse Shoebox program is another way of reaching children and their families in other countries. It teaches our children to share with others in countries that don't have what we have. We do not "throw things" at these children. [These gifts] are given in love, with

prayers that the children and their families will experience and find God's love for them

*Peter and Minnie Herfst  
Kitchener, Ont.*

## Resonate Global Mission

As a denomination we are slowly losing our identity ("A New Name for a New Agency," Jul/Aug 2017). Our Christian Reformed World Missions and Christian Reformed Home Missions are now called Resonate Global Mission. What gives? Are we afraid of using the word Christian? It was bad enough that CRWRC was changed to World Renew. Christian World Renew would have sounded a lot better.

We are Christians and we are known for our love. We all should be very proud of this fact. Now with these name changes the word Christ is nowhere to be found. It sounds to me that Synod 2017 is ashamed of using the word "Christian." Our forefathers fought very hard for our denomination since we separated in 1834.

*Gerry J. Segger  
St. Albert, Alta.*

*Editor's Note: Please see the letter from the New Mission Agency board printed on page 8 of the July/Aug issue for the rationales for the agency's new name, which include the inability to protect the name "Christian Reformed Global Missions" in Canadian patent court and security for some of our missionaries.*

[MORE ONLINE](#)

## Correction

In "Gathered to Inspire Ministry" (Sept. 2017), Mountainview CRC was incorrectly placed in St. Catharines, Ont. Mountainview CRC is in Grimsby, Ont. We regret the error.

# NEWS

## Educating Behind Bars: From Guantanamo Bay to Canadian Federal Pri

**A**rlette Zinck, associate professor at The King's University in Edmonton, Alta., and a team of colleagues from King's and two other universities in the city, volunteer every week to tutor inmates at the maximum-security Edmonton Institution. Earlier this year they established the Postsecondary Prison Education Foundation, also known as The Prison Project, to help raise money to support inmates' tuition expenses.

For the majority of the faculty from King's, an institution supported by members of the Chris-

tian Reformed Church, the engagement in prison education began at Cuba's notorious Guantanamo Bay detention camp with a young man named Omar Khadr.

Khadr is a Canadian citizen who was held for 10 years at Guantanamo and tried for war crimes he was accused of committing as a 15-year-old involved in a fire-fight with U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan.

A relationship later developed between Khadr and students and faculty at King's. Zinck was invited by the U.S. military to develop a curriculum for distance learning that Khadr could follow from his Cuban cell. Many King's faculty became involved. After he was transferred to Corrections Canada federal prisons in Alberta until his release in May 2015, they continued tutoring him. Khadr was able to complete a high school diploma and went on to earn postsecondary credits from King's. "Tutoring him," said Zinck, who visited Khadr several times in person at Guantanamo Bay, was "a gesture of mercy and compassion to a young man who has had precious little of that."

From the outset, King's supported the engagement with Khadr. "They blessed the work," said Zinck. "It stretched King's, but they blessed it. It's implicit that if we are to be Christ's hands and feet, this work matters."

"We were welcomed at the Edmonton Institution with Omar," explained Zinck. "That was a wonderful thing. Within a month, we had a request to teach another student. Since then, we've taught eight men over the past three



**Edmonton Institution, Correction Services Canada's maximum security facility in Edmonton, Alta.**

years." Although they helped Khadr complete high school requirements, the group of educators now offers only post-secondary education. Potential students are identified by Corrections Canada and must have finished grade 12. Zinck interviews each potential student to explore his interest, then asks him to engage in a non-credit interdisciplinary course. The next course may be taken for credit through one of the participating universities. The professors teach one-on-one, wear personal alarms, and are closely monitored by guards. In

spite of this, Zinck said, "We bring our presence and we engage with the prisoners like any other university student."

"I had no interest in prisons," Zinck said of her attitude at the outset. "I couldn't have been more disengaged or uninterested. But the experience of going to the prison did something to me. I think perhaps the best way to talk about it is in terms of call. Now when I walk onto that prison campus—and it's a fairly austere place—for reasons that remain mysterious to me, I feel such a sense of joy. If there ever was a moment in my life when I have felt the presence of the Holy Spirit working through me, it's been there."

**For more news** about the churches and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church, visit [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org). Or get the free app by searching for "CRCNA Banner" in your app store.



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Zinck has dreams for The Prison Project to grow. Her vision is to take this experience and tap the shoulders of colleagues in other cities to which inmates get transferred so that their education can continue. She dreams of a community where there is more support for those who leave prison, and more people willing to engage.

"Here's the heart of it for me and what I want *Banner* readers to know," said Zinck. "That what we preach in our churches about reconciliation is life-giving, not only for those who have offended, but for the entire community." She cited Frederick Buechner: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and

the world's deep hunger meet. For this group of volunteers from King's, it has reconnected us to the central work of the church—to minister to one another. And the experience of doing that is such an incredible access point to renewal and reconciliation that I really do think it can transform the world. This work is critically important at this hour, not just for those who are incarcerated, but for the rest of us."

—Janet A. Greidanus



Rick's Place work team from Second CRC in Byron Center, Mich.

## Helping Returning Soldiers and Their Families Reconnect

More than a decade has passed since U.S. Army Sgt. First Class Rick Herrema died during battle in Iraq in 2006.

But members of Second Christian Reformed Church in Byron Center, Mich., haven't forgotten Herrema's service and sacrifice for his country. This year some of them have worked toward creating a retreat center for military families near Fort Bragg, N.C., named in his honor.



A 56-member team, including Rick's father, Dick, spent a week in early April to establish Rick's Place, a 50-acre retreat center that will offer a place for soldiers returning from the battlefield to reconnect with their families at no cost. About half of that number planned to

return in October to add an obstacle course to the facilities.

Participants had an opportunity to meet some of the military families who are expected to visit Rick's Place. "It gave me a very deep appreciation for military families, the struggle they go through day by day, especially when a member of the family is on deployment," said Kendra Arendsen, one of the church members who took part in the project.

The work team cleared away trees, built a footbridge, two pergolas and benches, and also worked on a playground as part of the week's activities.

Rick's Place is located about three miles from Fort Bragg.



—Greg Chandler

# NEWS


## Pastors, Churches Respond to Charlottesville Protests

This summer's violence in Charlottesville, Va., tied to a protest over the removal of a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee, prompted a strong response by some in the Christian Reformed Church.

One pastor, Meg Jenista of Washington DC CRC, was in Char-

lottesville on Aug. 12, as part of an interfaith group of volunteers handing out bottles of water to people near the planned protest site at Emancipation Park. She said she was not near the site of the crash where one woman was killed and several others injured when an Ohio man drove his car

### Not Following Us on Facebook?

 Here's some of what you are missing!

News and photos of **Exeter (Ont.) Christian Reformed Church's summer soccer camp** with students from Redeemer University College serving as coaches from Athletēs in Action ministry.



Exeter (Ont.) CRC Soccer Camp



Church in the Heart of the Park

Some great photos of an **August worship service in Presqu'île Provincial Park** near Brighton, Ont. where **Rev. Ryan Braam**, pastor of Fellowship CRC in Brighton, took his turn leading the ecumenical Christian service, part of a park program for their several hundred summer campers.

News and a link for the fourth grade class of Lafayette (Ind.) Christian School's fundraiser, in memory of their teacher's son. They sold **Love for Logan** bracelets supporting Sunrise CRC members Lisa and Drew Vanderkleed, whose 2-year-old son died, from injuries in a tragic accident, August 24.



Love for Logan bracelets.

Follow us at [facebook.com/crcbanner](https://facebook.com/crcbanner).



Madison Church senior pastor **Dave Beelen** (third from left) leads prayer before the rally.

into a crowd of people who had gathered in opposition to the protest. The protesters, chanting racist slogans and displaying Nazi and white nationalist symbols, were eventually barred from the park by police.

Jenista said she met a young person at the event who also opposed the protest. He asked if she was a person of faith, admitting that he wasn't—but after seeing the response of Christians to the protest, he told her he'd consider changing his position.

"It spoke to me about the importance of the church showing up. There are plenty of people out there who have a narrative . . . that the church is irrelevant," Jenista said. "The white supremacists, I imagine, have a narrative that says the church doesn't mind what we're doing, and there's a whole bunch of observers who don't know what to make of faith."

Meanwhile, Madison Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., organized



**Christina Edmondson**, one of the prayer service organizers, leads a responsive reading.

a Churches United prayer service for Aug. 14 in response to the violence and expressions of racism. About 300 people gathered at Madison Church's Square campus two days after the Charlottesville violence. Pastors and laypeople alike prayed for peace and reconciliation, some offering prayer for those who are part of hate groups. At times, the service became highly emotional, with one pastor fighting back tears as she prayed.

PHOTO CREDIT GREG CHANDLER.



Eric Nykamp, a worship leader at Madison Church's North campus, and Christina Edmondson, dean of intercultural student development at Calvin College, put the service together almost immediately after hearing the news of the violence. The service drew not only people from various Christian Reformed churches but also from other faith backgrounds.

"We wanted it to be for the city, not just the church," Nykamp said. "This isn't about politics, it's about heart change, it's about God."

Brad Knetsch, pastor of Madison Church's Ford campus in Grand Rapids, said the service was needed for the community.

"Often times, churches are quite slow in mobilizing to respond to issues that are so pressing," Knetsch said. "People are asking, 'Where is God in this? Where is God at work in this?' That's the big question."

Edmondson reminded participants during the service to see themselves in the light of God's compassion and holiness even in difficult times.

"Our God is bigger and greater, and our God has the final word on bigotry. Reflecting on the goodness of that God helps us go forward," Edmondson said.

Participants from Grace CRC, also in Grand Rapids, were involved in a Sunday night solidarity march and candlelight vigil in the city's downtown area. Grace promoted the two events, organized by other groups in the city, on its Facebook page.

—Greg Chandler

## Two Cultures Worship Together in Edmonton Church

"As a very traditional Christian Reformed church, it's quite unbelievable and certainly an amazing blessing from God what has happened to our church in the last number of years," said Donna Dost, member of Maranatha CRC in Edmonton, Alta. She's talking about the influx of Karen (*Ka-wren*) Christians, originally refugees from Myanmar, that began when the church sponsored one family in 2007, and the subsequent growth of a culture of blended worship at Maranatha.



Baptism and new member welcome at Maranatha CRC.

Ten years after the arrival of that first family, Karen members make up about one-third of Maranatha's membership. Ministries have progressed from English classes and introduction to Canadian life to bilingual music ministry and leadership inclusion.

"We are working to be deliberate in integrating [Karen] cultural expressions into our worship," said Rev. Pete VanderBeek, pastoring at Maranatha as a Specialized Transitional Minister. During a service in July where 20 individuals from the Karen community were accepted as members and three children were baptized, VanderBeek wore a Karen garment over his usual Sunday clothes. He often does this



Sunday school children singing at Maranatha CRC.

for joint services that happen once a month. The other Sundays, the Karen people hold separate worship services in the Sgaw language.

Law Ple, a young Karen father who has just become an elder at Maranatha, suggested a further connection for the Sundays the groups meet separately. He asked that Karen worship leaders meet with the leaders of the English service together in the council room for pre-service prayer.

When both groups worship together, two languages are used. There is usually at least one musical number sung in Sgaw, often with projection of the English translation or a brief description. Scripture reading is often read first in English and then read by a Karen member in Sgaw. "Both groups have a rich tradition of singing hymns," said Kathleen Seutter, the church's worship ministry leader. For musical expression in worship, "there is a lot more that is similar between the two groups than is different," she said.

In Sunday School "we have Karen helpers almost every week," said Brenda Paszek, who has been involved in the Karen ministry for many years. "They are not yet confident to teach in English, but by watching us teach, they are increasing their knowledge of the Bible and learning the basics of teaching it also."

A praise group called FISH ministers to the congregation about every six weeks. Led by Chelsea Dost and including members from both groups, FISH sings in Sgaw and English and has phonetically translated a few songs so the whole congregation can sing together when singing in Sgaw.

The church is "working more on ways where it is not obviously two different groups coming together, but one body of Christ praising God," said Seutter.

—Janet A. Griedanus



# NEWS

## IN MEMORIAM



**Rev. Kenneth Jay Verhulst**  
1940-2017

Ken Verhulst ministered with a passion for social justice spurred on by his experiences as a seminary intern at Manhattan Christian Reformed Church in Harlem, N.Y., and his walk with Martin Luther King Jr. from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. He sought to live out Jesus' call to extend love, justice, and mercy to people who are marginalized. Verhulst died on June 22 from complications related to Lewy body dementia.

Verhulst served Christian Reformed congregations in Alberta, Toronto, and New York. He retired in 2006.

Verhulst was a playful and loving grandfather and an avid lover of music. In Toronto he took up the autoharp so he could help lead the singing during services at The Lighthouse, a Christian Reformed outreach ministry. He sang in choirs in New York until his illness took his voice away. After retirement, Verhulst was an active member of Sherman Street CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich. Many there were touched and inspired by his openness and honesty about his disease.

Verhulst is survived by three children and their spouses and by two grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife, Kathy, in 1995.

—Janet A. Greidanus

## IN MEMORIAM



**Rev. Kenneth Vander Heide**  
1931-2017

Kenneth Vander Heide served in parish ministry in several Christian Reformed churches, spent almost a decade in hospital chaplaincy, and filled his retirement years with travel and volunteer work with World Renew's Disaster Response Services. At age 86, he died in the house where he was born in McBain, Mich.

Vander Heide served Christian Reformed congregations in South Dakota and North Carolina and served in hospital chaplaincy in New Mexico. He spent retirement volunteering as a campground host and with World Renew Disaster Response Services.

Able to put people at ease with his engaging sense of humor, Vander Heide enjoyed reading and loved word play. He will be remembered for the way he sang and hummed through each day. His fellow parishioners at Prosper CRC will miss his "hallelujahs" and "amens" during worship.

Vander Heide is survived by Sena, his wife of 66 years; by five children and their spouses; and by 21 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

*Further information on recently deceased ministers is available at [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org).*

## Alberta Church's Garden: Growing Side by Side



Since 2010, after its city's public community garden was shut down because of construction and underground service work, Brooks (Alta.) Christian Reformed Church has operated a unique community garden that has become an important resource for the church's neighbors.

The Growing Together Community Garden uses a square-foot gardening technique to achieve better yields with fewer resources than a conventional tilled row garden.

"We have raised garden beds that are 4'x8', and they're gridded into one-foot squares. A 4'x8' garden box would have 32 squares in it," said Murray Denoudsten, who oversees the garden project. "[A square-foot] planting guide explains how many seeds of whatever you want to plant in each square. The idea is that you optimize growth, you conserve the amount of seeds you use, and you also economize on water by sim-

**Denoudsten's 10-year-old daughter in the garden in August 2016.**



**Brooks CRC's garden prepped and ready for the growing season.**

ply watering the root balls throughout the growing season."

Brooks CRC's garden started out modestly with 12 garden boxes. An overwhelmingly positive response from the community prompted them to approach local service organizations to raise additional funds to expand. The garden now includes 13 more boxes, a protective fence to keep out wildlife, and heavy-duty weed

# News Digest

## Coffee Connects International Neighbors in Lacombe, Alberta

Rick Abma is a Christian Reformed pastor at Neighbourhood Life in Lacombe, Alta. The opening of Good Neighbour CoffeeHouse earlier this year has offered another place for him to minister. The downtown coffee shop is not just another place to grab a good cup of coffee; its value of direct-sourcing sustainably grown beans is centered around the call to love God and love our neighbor.



This year, Abma will obtain almost 10,000 pounds (4,500 kg) of green coffee beans directly from Honduran farmers. More than 55 farmers are now involved in the Honduras coffee project, with which Abma connected in 2009. Two-hundred-fifty families in central Honduras are benefiting from the project.

## Michigan Church Builds on Ethiopian Development Partnership

EverGreen Ministries, a Christian Reformed congregation in Hudsonville, Mich., has built a partnership over the past five years with a child sponsorship program in Ethiopia called Children's Hope Chest. Recently four EverGreen members visited two of the organization's care point sites in two communities near the capital city of Addis Ababa. They met with families of children sponsored through Children's Hope Chest as well as representatives of the local church they partner with. During their visit, the EverGreen members offered a vacation Bible school-type event for children in Aware, held a feast for families of the children, and discussed upcoming projects with local church leaders, said Jodi Cole Meyer, who organized the visit.



Learning hoop dancing at IFC.

## Indigenous Ministry's Kids Camp Offers Positive Learning

Indigenous Family Centre (IFC), a ministry of the CRC in Winnipeg, Man., completed a seventh season of Kids Camp this summer. The free program provides six weeks of activities, including swimming, paddling lessons, photography workshops, and lessons in hoop dancing and other cultural practices.

"Kids Camp provides a safe place for kids to be for four hours a day, three days a week. Also, our weekly field trips, especially the ones to Bird's Hill Park [a beach near Winnipeg], provide opportunities for positive family time. There aren't many other opportunities or resources for families to be able to do things like that together on a regular basis," said Nathalie VanderZaag, the camp director.

## Michigan Couple Sharing 50 Years of Hospitality

Imagine hosting 35 to 50 people for dinner once a week on a weeknight. That's what George and Mary Lindquist, members of Ann Arbor (Mich.) CRC, have done every Tuesday night of the academic year for 50 years. They began in 1967 by welcoming George's sister and a few friends from the University of Michigan for dinner. Over the decades they've served many more graduate students and others, continuing to host the dinners through three different homes. The Lindquists' current home was designed especially to accommodate the weekly gatherings, now partially supported by the church and a cast of cooks and helpers.



A group of diners at the home of George and Mary Lindquist.

—Banner Correspondents

For more on these and other stories, please visit [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org).

fabric covered with bark mulch between the garden boxes.

Each spring the church issues a call for applications to use a garden box for the season. It's promoted in the local newspaper, through food coalition networks, and via social media.

"We really have opened it up to the community, so anybody who feels that they perhaps don't have the garden space at their home, or if they live in a townhouse or an apartment where there is no garden accessibility, they're more than welcome to apply to be a gardener [here]," Denoudsten said. From retirees who've returned to the garden for many years, to new Canadians from Brooks' large immigrant population, to community groups, the garden is accessible to a variety of people.

"We frequently see interactions between our garden members who might not otherwise come to know each other. Gardening is one of those neutral things, just like talking about the weather; people feel comfortable coming together and getting to know each other. It's been really interesting to see the diversity and the various service organizations using this as part of their program now," Denoudsten said.

—Krista dela Rosa



# NEWS

## Grant Helps Michigan Churches Expand Water Quality Monitoring

**T**rinity Christian Reformed Church in Grandville, Mich., has worked for nearly a decade to improve the water quality of a creek that runs near its property. A 2017 grant is funding an expanded effort, with Messiah CRC in Hudsonville and Fairway CRC in Jenison partnering in the work. Other congregations are also getting involved, along with public school students from Jenison and Hudsonville.

Trinity CRC members collect samples of insects and other organisms, which are a sign of the health of the creek. Gerry Koning, Trinity's pastor, uses passages from both Genesis and Revelation, as well as from Article 2 of the Belgic Confession, to illustrate the importance of caring for the water that

is part of God's creation. "God gives life to everything, and his means of giving life is a river," Koning said. "Rivers are a metaphor for spiritual life, but also physical life. God has placed his imprint on all that he has created."

Getting more people involved will result in more areas being sampled for water quality, Koning said.

Participants from the three churches attended a training opportunity in June. Biologists instructed them on how to properly collect samples and identify insects, which are then forwarded to state environmental officials.

Melissa Dykema, whose family attends Trinity, says getting involved in the restoration is an important spiritual and biological



Trinity CRC members Melissa Dykema and Kathy Jelsema collect samples from Rush Creek.

PHOTOS BY GREG CHANDLER

lesson for her three daughters, ages 10 to 14.

"If we can be a part of that restoration of God's creation, it's wonderful," Dykema said.

Nate Meldrim, pastor at Messiah CRC, said Rush Creek runs along the southern border of their church's property. The son of a retired environmental scientist who studied water quality, Meldrim says getting involved in the study was a natural fit.

"In participating in the stream study, I hope that as a congregation we will grow in our understanding of the charge to be stewards of creation, and in the process grow in our appreciation for how great God is by looking at the smallest of his creations," Meldrim said.

Fairway CRC pastor Dave Den Haan agreed. His congregation decided to get involved after Den Haan met with Koning last winter to learn more about what Trinity has been doing. "I then shared that information with our people here—our social justice deacons particularly. I used the project as an opening example in a sermon recently," he said.

Trinity CRC partnered with its local township to secure a grant of more than \$13,000 from the state of Michigan for this expanded water quality study on Rush Creek. The creek is a tributary of the Grand River, one of the state's longest rivers.

—Greg Chandler

## Noteworthy

**Neil deKoning**, pastor of Woody Nook CRC, in Lacombe, Alta., has served his city's fire department as **chaplain** for six years. Recently he began serving the **Lacombe police service** as well.

**Eric Boldiszar**, a student of the **Calvin Prison Initiative (CPI)**, created a conference dealing with prison reform that drew 300 attendees and received national recognition. The National Association of Community and Restorative Justice presented him with the **2017 Bert Thompson Pioneer Award for Faith Based Community and Restorative Justice**, based on his efforts. Boldiszar is a member of CPI's inaugural class, entering its third year in the program. (*no online version for this story*)

**Vernon J. Ehlers**, who taught at Calvin College for 17 years and later became a Michigan state legislator and a United States congressman, **died Aug. 15 in Grand Rapids, Mich.** State and U.S. **flags were lowered to half-staff** in his honor, Thursday Aug. 24, the day of his memorial service held at his home church, Eastern Avenue CRC.

For more on these and other stories, please visit [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org).

## More Online

From the online forum *As I Was Saying* and *thebanner.org* news section, you may have missed these stories.

### Faith on Public Trial

Of recent public displays of white-supremacist rhetoric and accompanying violence, Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson writes: "At times, Christian faith is put on public trial. Public events and movements present a direct confrontation to the gospel of Jesus Christ, requiring us to make a clear choice. The confession of our faith is at stake." ([tinyurl.com/thebanner-publictrial](http://tinyurl.com/thebanner-publictrial)).

### Are We Part of the Problem?

*Banner* editor Shiao Chong writes that "the events of Charlottesville should not move us only to make proclamations and denouncements. They should also move us to act: to pray, to examine ourselves, and to work."

([tinyurl.com/thebanner-problem](http://tinyurl.com/thebanner-problem)).

### Piano Teacher's Stand for Justice at Work Goes Viral

On July 31, Marie Strassenburg, a pianist at Hope Community Christian Reformed Church in Riverside, Calif., posted a Facebook video she made just after walking out of a part-time job as a piano instructor at a local music store. Alissa Vernon wrote about Strassenburg's reasons for posting the clip that went viral with more than 9.6 million online views. ([tinyurl.com/thebanner-viralvideo](http://tinyurl.com/thebanner-viralvideo))



# FAQs

## Church/Doctrine

**Q** What is the source of Abraham Kuyper's slogan on Christ's lordship ("every inch . . . mine")? I recently read the Stone Lectures of 1898 and couldn't find it. What part does it play in Kuyper's contribution to Calvinism?

**A** I have asked Calvin Seminary professor John Bolt to respond to your question. He writes:

Kuyper's famous "square inch" slogan accurately reflects his vision of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. It comes from his inaugural address, "Sphere Sovereignty," at the opening of the Free University of Amsterdam in 1880.

When we consider the entire sentence in which this phrase appears, we can see how big Kuyper's vision was. Kuyper is rhetorically responding to potential "scoffers" who will allow for theology as a Christian discipline but reject the idea of a Christian university in which science, medicine, law, economics, and other fields are also considered from a biblical point of view. He then says: "Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: Mine!" (from *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, James D. Bratt, ed.).

Compare this to Kuyper's definition of his beloved Calvinism in *Lectures on Calvinism*, the Stone Lectures delivered at Princeton Seminary in 1898. Unlike the Lutheran vision, which was about salvation and justification by faith, the Calvinist vision, according to Kuyper, had in view "the sovereignty of the Triune God over the whole cosmos in all its spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible" (p. 79). Abraham Kuyper definitely had big eyes!

*Henry De Moor is professor of church polity emeritus at Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich. He's the author of Christian Reformed Church Order Commentary.*

Reporting harassment also creates the opportunity for repentance and change.

## Relationships

**Q** I am a high school student with parents who helped me find a good part-time job. However, someone at work has been coming on to me. It scares me and I don't know what to do.

**A** What you are experiencing is likely a crime being perpetrated against you. The first thing you should do is document specific incidents: date, time, where, and what happened exactly. Keep a careful and honest record. Evaluate for yourself whether this is truly harassment and not just teasing. Your own fear and/or worry are good guides, and your documentation will provide a reality check. Do not confront the person directly, since doing so might not be safe for you.

Once you have good documentation, confide in a trusted adult who will help you file a police report. Every citizen in our democratic countries (both in the U.S. and Canada) has a responsibility to report and a right to receive police protection when a crime is occurring.

It is important to remember that when you do the right thing (document your experience and report to the police), it is not only beneficial for you, but when justice is served it also stops the abusive behavior of the person who harassed you. This also gives him or her the opportunity for repentance and change.

By bringing to light what by nature wants to stay hidden, you are helping to reveal the truth of Christ, which brings new freedom to all involved.

*Judy Cook is a family therapist and a member of Meadowlands Fellowship CRC in Ancaster, Ont.*

## Ethics

**Q** What do I do? When I was fixing the church computer (used by the secretary and deacons), I ran across correspondence between the secretary and our pastor. The messages indicate at least an emotional affair, at worst a physical one.

**A** You are right to be concerned, and I commend you for seeking to do something rather than ignoring it. At the same time, I understand that you want to ensure that people's reputations are not falsely smeared.

The pastor, being in a position of authority, has the professional, ethical, and spiritual responsibility to prevent any crossing of boundaries in relationships. Regardless of whether both parties are consenting adults, the power imbalance creates a scenario for sexual misconduct or harassment. Hence, this case falls under Safe Church ministry practices.

If your church has a Safe Church policy and a Safe Church team, you should follow the policies and procedures that are in place and contact the Safe Church team. I strongly urge you to consult with our denomination's Safe Church Ministry. They have resources to help you and your church ([crcna.org/Safe-Church/resources](http://crcna.org/Safe-Church/resources); click on "Abuse by Clergy or Ministry Leaders").

Your church needs to take this seriously and investigate the matter. Certainly, confession, repentance, forgiveness, and healing are important parts of the process. And if the pastor is found guilty, special discipline, as provided for in our Church Order, may be necessary to rebuild trust and safety for the entire congregation.

*Shiao Chong is editor-in-chief of The Banner. He attends Fellowship CRC in Toronto, Ont. ■*



# THE REFORMATION: WHAT DID WE GAIN? WHAT DID WE LOSE?

**I**N 2017, Christians are marking the Reformation's 500th anniversary. Historians and theologians have been racing to publish biographies of Luther and analyses of his impact. Various museums are hosting major exhibits on Luther and his world. Pastors and church leaders are retelling the story of Martin Luther's posting of 95 theses against the sale of indulgences by the Catholic Church on October 31, 1517. Congregations will join in singing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Meanwhile, tour companies are marketing trips to Reformation sites in Europe, and providers of memorabilia are selling everything from Luther socks to beer steins and bobbleheads.

But beyond the books, articles, and exhibits, the commemorative worship services around October 31 and the nifty gift ideas for the Reformation fan on your list, it is worth pausing to reflect on what

the Reformation means exactly for Christians around the world in 2017. Five hundred years after the Reformation, what should Christians be commemorating, especially in the increasingly diverse and globalized church? Does the Reformation have any relevance to Christians in South Korea or Nigeria or Argentina, not to mention in North America or in Europe? Does the Reformation still speak in any substantive way to 21st-century Christians?

These questions are hard to answer. First, many churches focus on the present and the future, largely ignoring their own history. If we don't know what the Reformation was really about, how can we commemorate it? Then there's the challenge of figuring out what aspects of the Reformation have enduring significance and what parts are rooted in the early modern world. As the heirs of Reformation divisions over doctrine, liturgy, and church government, how do we discern between bedrock issues and matters of preference that have become the norm over centuries?

One way to move forward is to consider what changed because of the Reformation. What has the Christian church worldwide gained or lost as a result?

For starters, here are three important guideposts:

- The Reformation is a general label used to refer to a wide range of calls for wholesale changes in the theology and practices of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe, primarily in the 1500s. "Reformations" may well be a more accurate descriptor. (The earlier split with the Eastern Orthodox Church is also important, but falls outside the parameters of this article).
- These calls for reform came from insiders, not from folks who were disgruntled outsiders disengaged from their church. The leading reformers Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, and John Calvin were all either priests or priests-in-training in the Roman Catholic Church prior to their advocacy of Reformation. They did not call

# THE REFORMATION WAS ABOUT FINDING THE BALANCE BETWEEN COMMITMENT TO ONE'S FAITH AND RECOGNITION THAT OTHERS . . . WHO HOLD DIFFERENT BELIEFS ARE STILL BROTHERS AND SISTERS MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

for change because they hated their church but because they cared deeply about it and wanted it to follow Christ's teachings faithfully.

- The Roman Catholic Church also engaged in the process of reformation in the 16th century. It worked to clean up abuses in church practice while reaffirming traditional Catholic doctrines. To try to understand the Reformation's impact while leaving aside the story of the Catholic Church's reforms is to have only a partial picture of how the calls for change reshaped all of Western Christendom.

There is no doubt that the Reformation dramatically transformed the religious life of early modern Christians. To make it easier to assess the Reformation's longer-term impact, let's consider different aspects of church life in turn.

## Theology

Although each of those who worked for fundamental religious changes developed their own unique visions for reform, some key theological features surfaced again and again. These included turning to Scripture as the key authority in doctrine and worship, emphasizing God's justifying grace through Christ rather than human efforts, concentrating on preaching, and committing to teaching the next generation the foundations of Christianity. A return to these fundamentals was definitely a gain, both in the short and long term.

Across the board, the Reformers sought to restore what they understood as the key teachings of the faith. These core doctrines can be summarized in various ways—as in the five *solas*: Scripture alone, faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone, and to God's glory alone (for more on each of these, see *Banner* articles from March 2017 onward).

Yet these slogans provide only a partial look at the complex history of Reformation theology. The problem was that people disagreed about what Scripture meant and how to interpret it. For instance, the Ana-

baptists' support for adult or believers' baptism as most faithful to the New Testament record attracted opposition from everyone else who stood firmly for infant baptism. Jesus' words at the Last Supper proved equally divisive. Reformers disagreed, for instance, about the nature of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. Luther and the Swiss Reformed famously fought over this issue at the Colloquy of Marburg in 1529. For their part, the Dutch Reformed split in the early 17th century over conflicting understandings of the doctrine of predestination. These doctrinal divisions led to hostility and mutual attacks on each other's doctrine, which was a loss in terms of inter-church relations (see more below).

Today, doctrinal differences continue to divide Christians, although church leaders have worked hard over the past decades to find points of agreement. So, for instance, the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation have issued a "Joint Declaration on Justification" in 1999. The core section of the text is worth quoting: "on the basis of their dialogue the subscribing Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church are now able to articulate a common understanding of our justification by God's grace through faith in Christ." This declaration is a major step forward, though not all Lutheran churches have signed on to this document.

In 1975, five of Canada's largest denominations, including Anglicans, Presbyterians, the United Church of Canada, and the Roman Catholic Church, agreed to accept each other's baptisms as fully valid. In 2007, five major denominations in Brazil, including Lutherans, Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Catholics, did the same thing. In the United States in 2013, four denominations including the Christian Reformed Church, the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the Presbyterian Church USA formally signed a common agreement with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, mutually rec-

ognizing the validity of each other's baptisms. So although we are still divided doctrinally, many Christians seek some common ground, especially in areas that reflect the heart of faith and worship.

## Worship

The Reformation led to many significant changes in worship. First, Protestant worship largely moved from Latin to the vernacular, the language of the people. Second, most Protestant churches only retained two sacraments—baptism and communion—compared to the Catholics' seven. Third, for all Protestants, communion involved partaking in both the bread and the wine, as compared with lay Catholics' practice of only receiving the bread. Beyond these fundamental changes, there was little unanimity among Protestants as to the most biblically faithful way to worship. Lutherans and Anglicans retained many aspects of traditional Roman Catholic liturgy, whereas the Reformed and the Anabaptists adopted a much plainer worship style. This difference led at least one Catholic observer of early Protestant worship in Geneva to remark that he felt he was in school rather than in church. The Reformed and the Anabaptists also rejected any religious images in their places of worship, leading to the destruction of religious art in several locations.

Today, worship-related differences between denominations are shrinking. Indeed, there are sometimes greater differences in worship styles within a given denomination than between two different confessional groups. In church music in particular, denominations borrow freely from each other. Here, the Reformation's strong encouragement to church members to sing in worship has led to a rich tradition of hymnody that crosses denominational divides. CRC churches sing pieces by Catholic composers (think of Marty Haugen's "Shepherd Me, O God" or David Haas's very popular "You Are Mine," for instance). Meanwhile, contemporary Catholic hymnals include »



famous Protestant hymns including “Be Still, My Soul” and “Amazing Grace.” Hymns and praise songs from the global South and East are growing in popularity regardless of denomination.

### Church Leadership

In many Protestant groups, especially among the Reformed and the Anabaptists, lay church leaders grew in number and in power. Among the Reformed, elders and deacons provided crucial leadership, especially for congregations facing religious persecution. Even without a pastor, these congregations could continue to gather for worship and remain active as a church body at the local level.

Giving lay people a greater role and a greater voice in church leadership has been one of the most important—yet often forgotten—longer-term gains of the Reformation. Churches around the world have benefited from male and female lay leaders from all walks of life who contribute their time and talents to bring forth God’s kingdom and help their local faith community thrive. Lay leaders, particularly in the global South and East, have served as highly effective evangelists, teachers, and pastoral care providers in their home communities, helping to bridge the gap between large numbers of church members and the small number of pastors.

### Inter-church Relations

In 1500, the vast majority of Western Europeans were Roman Catholic Christians. By 1600, rival confessional groups had taken root across Europe: Lutherans, Anabaptists, Anglicans, and Reformed competed with Catholics for people’s allegiance. Each of these Protestant groups split further, either at the time or afterward, often into more hard-line or more moderate factions.

So the Reformation led to profound and continuing splits within Western Christendom. This separation among Christians can definitely be understood as a loss.

Worldwide, Christians still live with this legacy of division. When European and North American missionaries went to other continents in the centuries following the Reformation, they did not

simply bring people to Christ. Instead, they brought the new converts to faith within a particular religious tradition. So there are strong Catholic, Episcopalian, and Reformed communities in sub-Saharan Africa, multiple branches and forms of Presbyterians, along with Methodists, Baptists, and smaller Catholic communities in South Korea, and vibrant Catholic communities alongside smaller communities of Protestants of all kinds in the Philippines. While working diligently to spread the gospel message, missionaries also imported the seeds of denominational division.

In the 16th century, tensions between rival Christian groups led to executions, religious riots, and massacres. Today in much of the world, active violence between Christian groups has largely abated. However, tensions still remain. Some denominations or groups within denominations still will not collaborate with other Christians on joint projects, viewing each other as heterodox rivals rather than potential partners. At times, we still let our preconceived notions about other Christian groups’ beliefs or practices dictate our attitude toward them. The continuing fragmentation of the church (Christ’s body) calls for deep reflection and genuine dialogue. As a Reformed colleague of mine, Dr. Epiemembong from Cameroon, remarked, “We Reformed Christians in Cameroon only know those in our own group—we do not know what other Christians in our country are doing to address the same problems we face.”

Yet the experience of confessional diversity within Christianity from the Reformation onward can also be seen as a gain, even though this gain (religious co-existence) was slow in coming. Here’s why: by the late 1500s, individual Christians had to confront the reality that people living across the street or in the next town or over the border held to different beliefs and practices of the faith. While governments and church leaders at the time tended to preach separation and exclusivism, ordinary Christians on the ground had to figure out how to manage family and work life in spite of these divisions.

Here are some real-life examples from the 16th century to consider. Would a French Huguenot family still attend their cousin’s Catholic wedding? Would a Protestant baker sell his wares at a Catholic festival? Would a Protestant printer publish a Catholic prayer-book? Would a Catholic father send his son to the academically excellent (but Protestant) school? Would Lutheran parents accept a Reformed baptism for their child if no Lutheran baptism was available? Would young people from different confessional groups marry and successfully navigate the pitfalls of an inter-confessional marriage? Although inter-communal religious violence persisted, already by the mid-1500s, many individuals and communities were quietly coming to terms with religious difference. They found ways to emphasize workplace, neighbor, and kinship bonds that endured beyond confessional divisions.

Many of these situations from the Reformation era still resonate among present-day Christians. For instance, cross-confessional marriages have continued to pose challenges, especially if both sides of the prospective family are active in their respective churches. Yet the experience of ordinary Christians in the Reformation era offers ways forward toward coexistence, even in situations where people are divided by different faith commitments.

Does the Reformation still speak to 21st-century Christians worldwide? Yes, because it provides examples of men and women putting their faith commitments at the center of their lives, willing to go into exile for religious reasons, and coming to terms with increased religious diversity. Ultimately, the longer-term outworking of the Reformation was about finding the balance between profound commitment to one’s faith and recognition that others within the Christian family who hold different beliefs are still brothers and sisters made in the image of God. ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE



**Karin Maag** is director of the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies at Calvin College and a member of Woodlawn CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.

# Thanksgiving Ice Cream

**I**N THE SPRING OF 2013, Dad was diagnosed with terminal cancer. This diagnosis was layered on top of a host of other challenging ailments and conditions. Probably the most debilitating was my dad's loss of hearing. When hearing aids were no longer effective, he underwent cochlear implant surgery, which proved to be unsuccessful. After that we resorted to using dry erase markers and portable whiteboards to communicate with him.

One sunny day in late August, I was at my parents' condo with a niece and her family. Dad had indicated that he wanted to treat the children to ice cream cones. His wallet had been filled with money, and when it was time to go, we wrote on his board and performed with great drama, "I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!" Off we trooped to the ice cream store, great-grandchildren pushing Opa's wheelchair and then enjoying our cones together.

Fast forward a month and a half. Having received the phone call that dad's health was failing, I flew from Ontario to Alberta. A hospital bed had been prepared in the living room in front of the picture window in my parent's home. Dad was brought home from the hospital to die.

After school, my niece and her children came to visit. To their delight, I offered to get ice cream for everyone, Dairy Queen being conveniently nearby. We wrote on Dad's whiteboard, asking if he wanted some as well. He reached for the board—the tumor by now having taken away his ability to speak. In a shaky hand, he laboriously wrote, "I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!" A little later we gathered around his bed, licking our ice cream cones, as mom fed dad his.

**At the table  
we anticipate  
the best  
banquet—ice  
cream and  
all—we will  
ever have.**



PHOTO BY ANNIE SHELMERDINE/UNSPLASH

Those turned out to be the last words Dad ever wrote.

His death, on the Thursday of the Thanksgiving weekend, was an event marked by grace. It was peaceful and quiet. Dad was surrounded by loved ones, and we knew he was secure in the conviction that he was being released from a life that had become increasingly difficult, and he would be welcomed into the arms of a loving God.

On Monday, Thanksgiving Day, despite our grief and weariness, my large and far-flung family gathered for an impromptu potluck Thanksgiving meal. After dinner we planned Dad's eulogy and the final touches of his funeral service. That evening, we greeted friends at the visitation. The next day he was buried; our goodbyes marked by a service full of song and the hope of the resurrection.

After the message we celebrated the feast of communion. As a church family, we met at the table, celebrating the gifts of God for the people of God. And at the table, it all came together. At the table I was reminded that we are called to delight in the small pleasures and good gifts of God. We are given grace and strength for our journey on earth because God covenants to never leave us or forsake us. And we anticipate the best banquet—ice cream and all—we will ever have, welcomed by God and a great heavenly host already celebrating at the party.

Happy Thanksgiving! ■



**Diana Boot** has served as a partner missionary with the former Christian Reformed World Missions in Nigeria, Kenya, and China. She is a member and elder at Zion CRC, Oshawa, Ont.



## Breaking Barriers to End Hunger

**A**ida Karwani almost lost all hope when the crops in her small garden began to fail. Aida, who lives in a small community in rural Uganda, had cultivated the same plot of land for nearly three decades to grow food for her family. As the years went by, farming on her land became difficult, and the amount of food she was able to harvest drastically decreased.

“My land was exhausted, and I could hardly harvest anything on it,” said Aida. Despite the crop failure, Aida continued to cultivate her land. One harvest after another, she continued to get smaller and smaller results.

Aida’s story of struggle is not uncommon in many of the communities where World Renew has a presence. Families living in poverty face barriers including difficulty finding resources to generate income, challenges in growing food, or lack of access to water. All of these barriers contribute to a vicious cycle of hunger that prevents people from living healthy, joyful lives.

Hunger pushes families into stories underlined by hardship, pain, and suffering. But with God, hard work, and support, barriers can be broken, and these stories can be rewritten into testimonies of hope.

Aida’s life began to change for the better after she heard that World Renew and their local partner, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church (PAD-KIDO), were teaching conservation agriculture techniques in her community. Desperate for a good harvest, Aida bravely decided to take the time to learn. She gave the new techniques a try even though there was a risk to changing practices that she knew would result in harvest.

This time around she tried using mulch and planted three kilograms of maize. She could hardly believe it when she saw the results: the harvest more than



Aida is happy to show others how tall her maize has grown.

doubled—a success she had never achieved before.

Other farmers in Aida’s community have also been trained in new techniques and then gone on to practice in their fields what they learned. They too have seen amazing results—bigger harvests and more resilient crops.

One farmer, Alice, was able to grow healthy cabbage. Many of her neighbors lost their crops because of low rainfall. But with her new techniques, Alice was able to grow enough cabbage to sell and make a profit.

Alice has offered to help other farmers in her community who want to try the techniques she has learned from World Renew. Her field is open for others to come and witness the work she is doing.

By breaking barriers to end hunger, Aida and Alice were able to grow food and move their families on track to a future without hunger.

### Barriers to Income Lead to Desperation

Mishal is a young girl who lives in a small community in Malawi. Like many other girls her age, she sold items at the market to earn money for her family.

Without the money Mishal worked hard to earn, her mother wouldn’t be able to buy food and their family’s basic needs would go unmet.

One day Mishal prepared a few large donuts to sell at the market. But after selling all of her donuts, she realized that she hadn’t brought in enough money to make a profit.

Worried and unsure of what to do, Mishal turned to one of her friends for help. Mishal’s friend made arrangements for Mishal to sleep with a man to make up the money she had lost. This friend encouraged Mishal to sleep with men whenever she needed money.

World Renew has been working with its partner Word Alive to implement an innovative HIV-prevention project in



Hamida works as a peer mentor in her community to encourage girls to stop engaging in transactional sex.



*You add.  
God multiplies.*

🔑 Hunger pushes families into stories underlined by hardship, pain, and suffering. But with God, hard work, and support, barriers can be broken. 🔑

Mishal's community. Through this program, Mishal and her peers have access to resources, education, and support. Many of the girls are 14 to 21 years old and are the primary breadwinners for their family. With family members depending on them for survival, many have started engaging in transactional sex to earn money.

While the decision to sell sexual favors is never an easy one, many girls in Mishal's community are unaware of the associated risks. Through discussions with small groups and guidance from mentors and peer educators, these girls are learning about the dangers to their health and emotional well-being.

To help educate the girls, a group of older women and female pastors volunteered to assist World Renew. They shared their baking and cooking techniques with 25 girls, and the girls learned how to make new foods to sell at the market. With new skills, the girls can sell more baked goods and earn a living without feeling the need to engage in transactional sex.

For Hamida, another one of the girls in the group, getting involved in the program wasn't easy. She was suspicious of the program and the group that was forming in her village.

She had started engaging in transactional sex to help her grandmother, »

» who had taken in Hamida and her seven siblings after their parents passed away.

Hamida's grandmother made an income by collecting branches from a nearby forest and selling them as firewood. To help her grandmother, Hamida decided to drop out of school and assist with firewood collection and sales.

Although Hamida worked hard, sometimes she wasn't able to earn enough money to buy food for her family. Her siblings had to drop out of school because Hamida did not earn enough to pay for school fees. As men started to approach Hamida for sex, she resisted. Then one

day the desperation for money pushed her to try it. For over four years Hamida gave herself to men to feed her family.

When Hamida met World Renew and Word Alive staff, she was cautious. Through the group that was forming in her community, Hamida was able to meet other girls who had similar experiences. She learned that the group was a safe place to ask questions and get information.

The group encouraged Hamida to get HIV tested and supported her decision to stop engaging in transactional sex.

Hamida later attended a week-long Stepping Stones training organized by World Renew, where she learned how to



Women from the community volunteered to teach baking skills to young girls.

lead small groups. She gained more information about sexual reproductive health and cultural practices that are harmful to girls.

Now Hamida is a peer mentor and leads a group of 17 girls. Her group discusses many of the challenges they face as girls and the pressure to financially support their families. Through their discussions, Hamida is helping more girls to stop engaging in transactional sex.

In addition to breaking down barriers to end hunger in her own life, she has taken an active role in breaking down barriers for others. As a result, more people in the community are finding ways to embrace their God-given potential and become equipped to change their own stories for the long term. ■

### Waging War against the Armyworm

The fall armyworm is contributing to widespread crop failure in areas across Eastern and Southern Africa and pushing impoverished families into a deeper cycle of hunger.

The fall armyworm gets its name from its practice of inhabiting areas in massive numbers in its larval stage in autumn. The caterpillars feed on crops such as maize, soybean, sorghum, and cowpeas. The caterpillars turn into moths that spread to new areas, laying up to 1,000 eggs in their 10-day lifetime.

The insect has already inhabited areas in the Americas, but it's causing concern in its new home in Africa. For areas already struggling through drought and food insecurity, the armyworm is making a bad situation a lot worse. Many families who had very little to eat now have nothing.

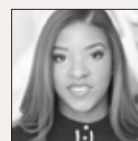
In response to extreme drought, World Renew supplied farmers in Uganda with cowpeas and sorghum. By August many of their harvests had been destroyed, and farmers were beginning to report an infestation of the fall armyworm taking over their fields.

Some farmers reported losing over half of their crops to the insect. Maize was among the most affected crop. The cost of pesticides discouraged many farmers from buying what they needed to control the spread of the bug.

To help prepare for the next planting season, World Renew is distributing sweet potato tubers to farmers in need. The sweet potato is a nutritious root vegetable high in vitamin A that can be used to make bread or be preserved for months. Sweet potatoes are also resistant to drought and the fall armyworm. With a successful sweet potato harvest, farmers can provide healthy food for their families in the short term and also plan for a stronger future.



With crops ruined by the fall armyworm, families are facing hunger.



Taylor Smith is a writer for World Renew.



## Set Free at Strong Tower

**E**rnest Umoh knows firsthand many of the struggles that come with moving to North America. When he saw a growing refugee population in West Michigan, he quickly took the opportunity to respond to a need that often goes unnoticed.

“Here in West Michigan, we have so many Muslim communities,” said Umoh. “People from Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, and Tanzania . . . and no one was really working with them actively, inviting them to Christ, or preaching the Good News.”

Umoh has sensed God’s call to be an evangelist since his time growing up in Nigeria. His fearless attitude of “going where the Spirit leads him” has gotten him into dangerous situations on more than one occasion. His sincere care and giving heart have helped him connect with many Muslim refugees who are not only excited to hear the gospel but also in desperate need of assistance.

“People are coming here from war-torn countries, escaping persecution, trying to learn in a free society,” Umoh said. “In many of the places they come from, they’ve never experienced church.”

Today Umoh pastors Strong Tower Ministries in Wyoming, Mich. This ministry provides services to newcomers in the community, such as driving people to their doctor appointments and organizing Bible studies.

“Our main goal is to show newcomers the love of Christ,” Umoh explained.

Umoh soon realized that his passion for ministry couldn’t keep up with the needs he encountered. When he found himself turning down his own thermostat to free up extra money, he knew he needed more partnerships.

Umoh connected with what is now Strong Tower’s parent church—Trinity CRC in Grandville, Mich.—as well as



**Ernest Umoh, a church planter from Nigeria, reaches out to East African refugees in West Michigan.**

Resonate Global Mission (then Christian Reformed Home Missions). Their financial assistance and coaching from fellow pastors and church planters allowed Strong Tower to continue growing.

“Umoh came knocking at our door, asking for help with the heating bill. Right away we knew that God was calling us to join him in this ministry,” said Gerry Koning, pastor at Trinity CRC.

Since that time, Strong Tower has been able to increase the number of people they greet at airports, teach English to, and worship with on Sundays.

Members of Trinity volunteer at the weekly English classes and help Umoh with benevolence costs. In turn, they have gained a new perspective on what it means to follow the Spirit’s leading as well as a greater understanding of the broader cultural makeup in their own part of the world.

“This has given us the opportunity to interact with the refugee population,

to see the reality of their situation and the difficulties they face,” said Koning. “I think the best way to help is to have churches come alongside them.”

Umoh is excited to see how Strong Tower’s partnerships will help expand and amplify its local ministry to global ministry back in East Africa.

“We can use those who have been led to Christ through Strong Tower as partners in planting churches back in their home country,” explained Umoh. “We want to make sure that Strong Tower is international, not just local.” ■



**Brian Clark** is a writer for Resonate Global Mission.



## Nothing Like This Has Happened Before!

**O**n a recent Sunday morning, during the reading of Scripture, the words from 1 Samuel 4:7 jumped out at me: “Nothing like this has happened before.”

In the Scripture text, this phrase was uttered when the conquering Philistines learned that the Israelites had brought the Ark of the Covenant into their camp. But my mind wandered beyond that text to the times when I’ve heard that phrase in everyday conversation.

Sometimes the focus has been on world affairs: the huge number of people around the world who have been displaced by famine, conflict, and war. Other times, the focus is closer to home: *I can’t believe this is happening!* or *I’ve never seen this happen before!*

It reminded me of a phrase from a T.S. Eliot poem I quoted in this column more than a year ago: “But it seems that something has happened that has never happened before.”

My mind went back 500 years to the Protestant Reformation. Although it wasn’t the first schism in the church (the break between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox church in 1054 predated the Reformation), Martin Luther’s actions still must have had folks saying *Nothing like this has happened before!* Their church was being pulled apart.

Each of these instances—and most other situations where this phrase is uttered—reflects a human tendency to look at what’s happening in the present with justifiable concern.

However, as did the Philistines, we tend to gaze horizontally. We look over to the camp of our enemies or competitors. We watch through the lenses of the media what’s happening in politics. We see the rapidly changing norms of our society, as

evidenced in the actions of the people around us. We look at what’s happening to the church, whether it’s the decline in the attendance by young adults, the divisiveness surrounding same-sex marriage, or the lessening of loyalty to denominations. And we exclaim, *Nothing like this has happened before!*

There’s a word for those who look side to side but fail to look up. You can find it in the Old Testament (Jer. 5:21: “Hear this, you foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see . . .”) and the New Testament (Gal. 3:1: “You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?”). Contrast that with the call found in Hebrews 12 to fix our eyes on Jesus, “the pioneer and perfecter of faith.”

Keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus doesn’t mean that we fail to see the messes in our world or even in the church. But it does mean that we don’t simply wring our hands in despair. When we are fully attentive to our Lord and Savior, we see both the challenges before us and also the hope that Christ’s transforming power brings.

Nor is it only believers who sometimes forget to look heavenward when we say *Nothing like this has happened before!* Our unbelieving neighbors,

nearby and far away, suffer from the same human tendency, whether in times of conflict, as was the case with the Philistines, or while watching along with us events unfolding in government or society.

We are called as Christians to go beyond our human tendency and to show our neighbors, through our words and actions, that we trust in a greater power. Even if we don’t immediately see God’s hand at work, or evidence of his renewal in progress, we are called, in all the messiness of life, to be witnesses to Christ’s redeeming love.

May we be found faithful as we are held in his embrace, welcoming newcomers to his love, and awaiting that great day of Christ’s return when we may truly proclaim, *Nothing like this has ever happened before!* ■



“ Keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus doesn’t mean that we fail to see the messes in our world or even in the church. ”



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

You add.  
God multiplies.

## From One Broadcast to a 14,600-Member Denomination

One seed planted through a radio broadcast nearly 40 years ago has grown into a 14,600-member denomination in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Rev. Kalala Kabongo, president of the United Reformed Church in the Congo, represented his denomination as a fraternal delegate to Synod 2017.

As he drove into Palos Heights, Ill., to address the synod held at Trinity Christian College, he said his eyes lit up as he saw the name on the Chicago offices of Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI). He said, "In Africa we always think of our parents, where we are from. Our church started from a Back to God radio program produced in this place."



While in Chicago as a fraternal delegate to Synod 2017, Rev. Kabongo visited the Back to God Ministries International offices in Palos Heights, Ill.

Kabongo contacted Rev. Kayayan and received additional study materials. That led to a 1980 visit by Kayayan to the fledgling group in the DRC.

When Kayayan made a second visit in 1984, "he encouraged us to start a church," noted Kabongo.

Kabongo enrolled in seminary and, after receiving his Th.M., returned to the DRC to serve in the newly established Reformed Church.

"This church in Congo is a miracle for us," he added. "Did you ever think that from one radio program you would get 14,000 people together who call themselves Christ's church?"

"There were no missionaries in Congo to plant churches, but through radio messages and the Holy Spirit's work in their hearts, we are now part of the big family of Christian Reformed churches."

The denomination now includes 181 local churches across the DRC. "But we only have 34 trained pastors," noted Kabongo. "We need prayer. We need pastors." ■

Kabongo said that in 1979, while searching for the news on shortwave radio, he happened upon *Perspectives Réformées*, a radio program with biblical messages by Rev. Aaron Kayayan, BTGMI French broadcaster at that time.

"I grew up in a Roman Catholic home. What caught my attention was his teaching of salvation by grace through faith and the centrality of God's Word alone. I realized that beyond ritual there is a Savior with whom I can be in relationship."

Kabongo invited friends to listen and started a group Bible study based on the teachings in the broadcast. "As we continued to listen, we wanted to learn more about the Reformed faith," said Kabongo.

—Nancy VanderMeer,  
Back to God Ministries International

## SHORT TAKES

### CRC Member Named Acting General Secretary of Canadian Council of Churches



Peter Noteboom, a member of First Christian Reformed Church in Toronto, Ont., and an employee with the Christian Reformed Church in North America, has recently taken on the role of acting general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), an ecumenical council representing 25 denominations in Canada. ■

—Anita Brinkman,  
CRC Communications

### Plantinga Wins \$1 Million Templeton Prize



Relying on his bedrock belief that God is the creator and guiding force of the universe, philosopher Alvin Plantinga made a career of asking hard questions and stating

the case for the existence of God. In doing so, he has won many awards, most recently the 2017 Templeton Prize. ■

—Chris Meehan,  
CRC Communications



### More Churches Join Climate Witness Project

The Christian Reformed Church's Climate Witness Project has been gathering momentum in recent months. More than 70 participating congregations have signed on to the project. ■

—Chris Meehan,  
CRC Communications

### Creating a Community of Servant Leaders

**R**osalba Ramirez, coordinator of precollege programs at Calvin College, said she loves being able to develop young people to serve as leaders.

“Developing young generations not only to be leaders but to be servant leaders is one of my passions,” said Ramirez.

For one month this summer, a select group of high school graduates from around the country experienced college living and learning on Calvin’s campus.

As part of the John M. Perkins Leadership Fellows Program, the high school graduates had a chance to live in the residence halls while completing a three-



Perkins Fellows come to Calvin College to learn about servant leadership.

or four-credit course in a diverse array of subjects.

Through the John M. Perkins Leadership Fellows Program, first-generation college students and students passionate

about helping their communities have a place to develop their servant leadership skills, she said.

The fellows program was created in Fall 2012 and implemented in Fall 2013

### Ann Kapteyn: The Missionary Next Door

**T**he view from Ann Kapteyn’s office at Calvin Theological Seminary is nothing short of peaceful. Filtered sunlight. Mature pines. Busy squirrels.

Just the kind of environment Kapteyn needed after nearly two decades as a Bible translation consultant with Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL International in Brazil and Cameroon.

“Life in Cameroon was challenging,” Kapteyn said, “with illness and civil unrest and life-threatening circumstances.”

Two years ago, she and her husband, Ray, a missionary pilot, decided to leave the field and put down roots in Grand Rapids, Mich., with their three teenage children.

Soon after arriving in Grand Rapids, Ann Kapteyn



Ann Kapteyn with friends in Cameroon.

was appointed to a two-year stint as missionary-in-residence at Calvin Seminary.

“I had lived a communal life in Africa, but my life soon became pretty solitary when I came back to the States,” she said. “As a missionary-in-residence, I’ve gained a sense of community that I lost when I left Cameroon.”

Sharing in daily coffee breaks and visiting seminary classes are simple ways she

said the program has become enriching for her.

The missionary-in-residence program benefits Calvin Seminary too. Kapteyn brings a vibrant cross-cultural perspective to the classes she visits and courses she teaches.

“Basic questions are different in different cultures. The questions we commonly ask in our Western culture don’t get asked in many

other cultures, and vice versa.”

For example, a basic question for some students from African countries is, Are we allowed to eat blood (in meat)?

“I don’t think that’s a question that gets asked very often here at the seminary.”

In addition to teaching, Kapteyn leads English conversation groups and mentors students in weekly Formation for Ministry groups.

“The seminary wants me to be a part of the seminary community to interact with other professors and with the students on a daily basis.”

For both Ann Kapteyn and Calvin Seminary, it’s a good fit. ■

—Don McCrory,  
Calvin Seminary



You add.  
God multiplies.

with the goal of identifying, developing, and retaining students who demonstrate the potential to be transformational leaders for Christ's kingdom, academia, and society, said Ramirez.

The students, who are selected to participate in a series of leadership development opportunities during their first two years of college, take specially designed leadership courses, have dinners with prominent Calvin leaders, and take an all-expenses-paid spring break service trip.

They also participate in an immersive summer experience before they begin at Calvin.

As John M. Perkins, the program's namesake and inspiration, puts it, the leadership opportunity is not about seeking self-recognition and glory, but seeking to serve our neighbors in humility for the glory of God, explained Ramirez.

"This program is not about being a leader by getting up and telling people what to do; it's really about serving," said Alexis Murawski, a student in the program. "I realized leadership is not about you; it's about others."

"It is the goal that at the end of this summer bridge program, the Perkins Leadership Fellows have developed a strong sense of community, have learned academic skills to succeed in their college journey, have identified resources available to them on campus, have grown spiritually, and have developed a strong sense of what it is to be a servant leader," said Ramirez.

"This development will continue throughout the two years of the program." ■

—Hannah Ebeling,  
Calvin College

## Is It Worth It?

**M**irah (name changed) was born into a Christian family. But as she grew up and looked at the world around her, she began to ask herself, "Is this faith really worth it?"

As a Palestinian Christian, Mirah regularly witnessed the pain religion can cause. What's more, many of the questions she had about her faith were going unanswered. All of this led her to renounce her faith in Christ.

Mirah's struggles are common among students at Jerusalem School Bethlehem, a Christian school located in a part of the world that is undergoing a long-standing conflict between Palestine and Israel. Only about 2 percent of the population are Christians.

Today, many of the young people in that 2 percent are asking the same tough question Mirah is asking: Is it worth it?

Kevin and Anna Kornelis—who serve at the K-12 school as missionaries with Resonate Global Mission (formerly Christian Reformed World Missions)—help their Christian students wrestle with this question.

Together with other staff, they offer more than 500 students a safe place to ask questions about the faith they grew up in but don't always understand.

"Our students are counting the costs of what it means to be a Christian," said Kevin Kornelis. "They believe in Jesus, but now they're asking, Is it worth it?"

"A lot of the kids grew up learning that they don't question their faith, they just believe," said Anna. "We have to fight against that idea and help them see the difference that it makes to believe in Jesus."

At the same time, Kevin and Anna's role also includes sharing the gospel with the school's roughly 30 percent Muslim population—and, in turn, with the families of those students. Kevin recalls one class period where he spent much of the time engaged in conversation with one of the Muslim students, helping her understand the idea of grace.

"You could see the anguish in her eyes," Kevin said, "an anguish that said, 'I want to

believe that, but it sounds too good to be true.'"

Mirah, a student in Kevin's class this past school year, was finally able to ask many of the questions that had been on her mind.

"She always pushed back on the discussions in class, but in a respectful way," said Kevin. Despite renouncing the Christian faith for now, Mirah was one of the first students to volunteer to pray in class.

"I don't know if I believe yet, but praying in the name of Jesus gives me comfort in this world," she told Kevin.



Palestinian students gaze at a tall fence separating people.

While Mirah still has many questions about whether faith in Christ is really "worth it," both Kevin and Anna said that is an important part of her faith journey.

"Sometimes it takes pulling away for a while . . . ultimately it brings us a deeper faith when we begin to understand," said Anna. ■

—Brian Clark,  
Resonate Global Mission

Longer versions of these and other stories are online at [thebanner.org/together](http://thebanner.org/together).

# Miracles, Mold, and Medicine

Our bodies are amazing. Just think for a minute about how your muscles, bones, brain, blood vessels, and organs work together every day. Your body is one of God's most wonderful creations.

But sometimes things go wrong and we get sick or hurt.

Jesus did many miracles to heal people. But God also works through doctors, dentists, nurses, scientists,

and other people to heal us. So let's take a look at some fun facts about the human body and the medicine that helps our bodies get better!

## The Nose Virus

You've probably had lots of colds in your life. You get a stuffy nose and sometimes a sore throat, and it's no fun at all. But do you know *why* you catch a cold?

A cold is caused by a tiny germ called a "virus." There are about 200 viruses that can give you a cold. But about half of all colds are caused by the virus called "rhinovirus." That word means "nose virus" (*rhin* is the ancient Greek word for "nose.")

The rhinovirus floats through the air on teeny drops of water. When you breathe the virus in, you may catch a cold.

There's no medicine you can take to cure a cold, but drinking lots of water will help your "rhin" get back to normal soon!

Whatever.  
Drink your water.

Danks por da birus.



## Weird Medicine

If you look back in history, you'll learn that people took some pretty weird medicines until scientists discovered that those treatments didn't work.

- Hundreds of years ago, doctors used pills filled with spider webs to treat malaria.
- Doctors used liquid mercury to treat skin diseases until people discovered that mercury is poisonous.
- Some people used to think that smoking cigarettes could cure cancer. Now we know that smoking actually causes cancer.
- People used to rub live snails on their skin when they got burns because they thought the slime would make the burn feel better.

Next time you get sick, be thankful that you don't have to swallow spider webs or wear snail slime!



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY PHOTOS BY WIKIMEDIA



## The Skin You're In

One reason doctors wear rubber gloves when they examine patients is so that bacteria on a sick person's body won't infect the doctor. Think of your skin as a big stretchy rubber glove that covers your whole body and keeps harmful bacteria out.

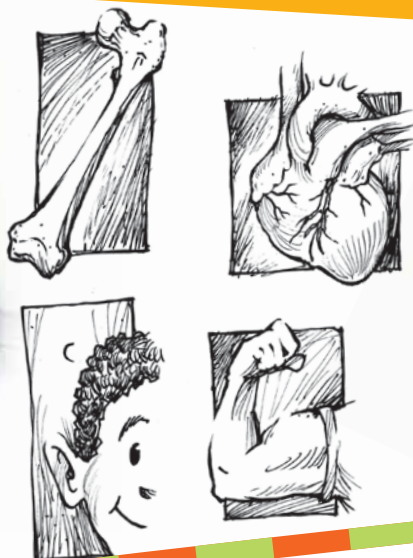
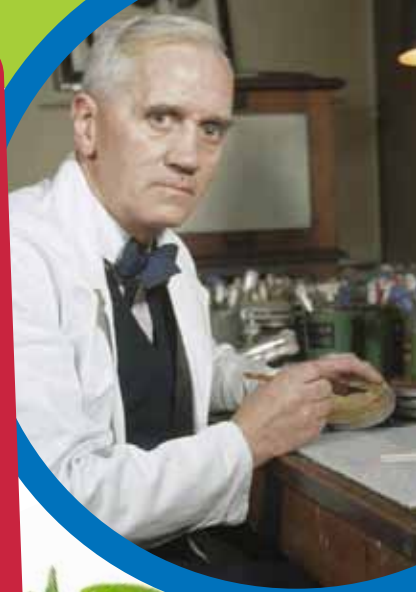
When there's a break in your skin, like a cut or a scraped knee, bacteria can get in and cause infection. If that happens, your doctor can use medicine called an *antibiotic* to help you get well again.

Your skin can also repair itself when you get a cut! To learn how this works, visit this website: [tinuyrl.com/BannerSkin](http://tinuyrl.com/BannerSkin).

## Medicinal Mold

The antibiotic penicillin was discovered on September 28, 1928, by a Scottish scientist named Alexander Fleming. One day he found a certain type of mold—yes, the gross stuff you might find growing in a jar of food that's been around too long—growing in a dish of bacteria he was studying. He looked closer at the dish and saw that all the bacteria around the mold had died. Dr. Fleming knew that meant that he had found a way to help patients who had infections. His accidental discovery saved millions and millions of lives.

Every day, scientists discover new medicines that can heal people. About half of those medicines are made from plants or other parts of God's creation.



## The Blind Man Sees

Jesus paid special attention to people who were hurt or sick because he cares about our bodies as much as he cares about our minds and our souls.

Jesus healed people in many different ways. Sometimes he just said, "Be healed!" and the person was healed. Sometimes he touched the person. Once he even put spit on a blind man's eyes, and then the man could see again!

Imagine that you were that man. Read his story in Mark 8:22-25. How do you think you would feel if you were seeing the world for the very first time? Confused? Happy? Scared? Thankful?

## Fun Physical Facts

Can you guess the answers to these questions about the human body? (If you get stuck, the answers are at the bottom of the page.)

1. How many bones are in your body?  
a. 54    b. 85    c. 206
2. How many muscles do you have on your skeleton?  
a. 640    b. 214    c. 44
3. How many times does your heart beat in one year?  
a. 8 million    b. 42 million    c. 110,000
4. How many hairs are on the average person's head?  
a. 150,000    b. 450,000    c. 1 million
5. True or false? Kids have more taste buds than adults.



Sandy Swartzentruber works for Faith Formation Ministries and is a member of Sherman Street CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She knows that a broken toe really hurts.





# HOPE IN THE FACE OF DEATH

“THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING, AND A SEASON FOR EVERY ACTIVITY  
UNDER THE HEAVENS: A TIME TO BE BORN AND A TIME TO DIE . . . ”

ECCLESIASTES 3:1-2

**YOU ARE GOING TO DIE.** We all are going to die. Somewhere along the line, we in contemporary Western culture tend to forget that death is the expected, natural end to life—perhaps because the development of technological advances throughout the 20th century has encouraged the idea that we can, in fact, “beat” death.

That attitude sometimes motivates doctors, patients, and their families to make heroic attempts to extend a person’s life by days or weeks—without regard for the physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial costs, without considering the wishes or values of those being treated.

The prospect of loss and the profound grief that we will have to endure in the midst of death can be overwhelming. So we tend to overlook Paul’s note to the Philippians “. . . to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). Our prayers focus instead on the desire for healing, for the inexplicable miracle. Even when death is certain, we earnestly pray for God to counteract the laws of nature and allow for more time on earth. Christ himself, faced with the knowledge of his certain death, prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me” (Matt. 26:39). Of course, he followed that with, “Yet not

as I will, but as you will.” It is often beyond our human understanding to pray—and believe—that a premature death is indeed part of God’s will.

## Healing vs. Cure

We all want to experience healing in our life and in the lives of those we love. But *healing* is not synonymous with *cure*, nor is it simply the absence of disease. It is rather the sense of peace that comes when relationships have been reconciled, emotional wounds soothed, and spiritual struggles resolved. If we accept the reality that we (or our loved ones) are dying, we can experience the richness and fulfillment that come from honest, intimate sharing of life at its most vulnerable moments. It is for this purpose that the disciplines of palliative care and hospice exist. Engaging these resources can transform life for patients and families, yielding blessings that far outweigh burdens and joy that eclipses sorrow.

Over the past three decades, palliative medicine has evolved as a distinctive medical specialty with a unique set of knowledge, skills, and practice. The primary objective of palliative care is the relief of suffering and improvement of the quality of life for patients and families living with life-defining illness.

# THE FOCUS OF PALLIATIVE MEDICINE IS NOT ON DEATH AND DYING **BUT RATHER ON LIVING ABUNDANTLY.**

Palliative medicine addresses the certainty that the majority of us will be faced with a diagnosis for which cure is not possible. Whether a chronic progressive disease, certain cancers, or an acute event that cannot be reversed, most people and their families will have to address the reality that life is shorter than hoped. But they will have the time to anticipate and plan for a limited life expectancy.

The focus of palliative medicine is not on death and dying but rather on living completely and abundantly when afflicted with a serious medical challenge. Palliative care includes improving quality of life through aggressive management of symptoms; coordinating appropriate patient care; assisting with decision making; accessing community and health care resources to obtain optimal care; and working with the patient and family to negotiate the psychological, spiritual, and physical impacts of the disease.

Palliative practitioners strive to understand the values, wishes, and hopes of the patient and family. They communicate these with family and other practitioners in the medical care system and implement plans of care that are consistent with these aspirations.

A palliative plan of care can improve a person's symptoms, ability to function, and his or her quality of life. Life-sustaining treatments may be pursued as long as they are consistent with patient preferences. But always with a clear understanding of the natural course of disease—aware of God's capacity to perform miracles, we must also be mindful of the laws of nature God created.

For all of us a time will come when God's hand will gently reach down to bring us home. Our natural tendency is to push God's hand away rather than grasp it, hold on tight, and prepare for the ultimate healing.

## Hospice and Palliative Care

The historical link between hospice and palliative care has given rise to some confusion about their distinction.

*Hospice* refers to the spectrum of medical care offered specifically at the end of life, generally defined as a prognosis of six months or less. Hospice agencies provide care through an integrated, interdisciplinary team. Workers include the home care nurse, social worker, chaplain, medical director, and volunteers. These all provide distinct services to patients—typically in their homes—and meet on a regular basis to discuss, refine, and implement a plan of care for each patient and family.

The hospice philosophy of care seeks to determine the unique interests and values of each patient and family and bring together the resources to enhance comfort and quality of life. The focus is on bringing a sense of meaning, beauty,

and hope to the patient and family amid the reality of imminent death. Hospice workers are specialists in the art of compassionate caring and experts in symptom management. Their goal is to provide relief from suffering, manage symptoms, help reconcile relationships, and assist in the transition between this life and the next.

Many serious, chronic, or life-defining illnesses have the potential of imposing a burden of suffering on patients and their families. Patients in these circumstances deserve to have palliative services included as part of their plan of care. Hospice care enters the life of a patient and family when doctors foresee a prognosis of months or less. The integration of palliative services, on the other hand, can begin from the time of diagnosis.

We all must die. But we live with the hope of being embraced in the arms of our Lord and Savior when we take our final breath. At that moment, in the words of the psalmist, God's people "will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord" (Ps. 112:7). Our transformation to heaven is cloaked in sadness and grief because of loss and separation. But God's grace assures our ultimate healing and reuniting with God and God's people. As we face that crossroad where joy and sorrow meet, we can be assured that in the end, joy wins. ■

## What You Can Do

- Have honest conversations with family and close friends about your or a loved one's expectations, hopes, and fears.
  - Where do you want to be when you die?
  - Who do you want caring for you when you can't care for yourself?
  - Who do you want making decisions for you if you no longer can?
  - What scares you about dying?
  - What gives you comfort and joy?
- Appoint a power of attorney to make decisions for you when you no longer can. Complete an advanced directive to guide health care providers and family when faced with challenging decisions at the end of life.
- Don't accept the statement "There's nothing more we can do." There is *always* something that can be done to enhance the quality of life and relieve suffering.
- Enjoy each day for the blessings that it offers.



Dr. John Mulder is Chief Medical Consultant for Hospice and Palliative Care for Holland Home and Medical Director for the Trillium Institute in Grand Rapids, Mich.

## Biblical Authority after Babel: Retrieving the *Solas* in the Spirit of Mere Protestant Christianity

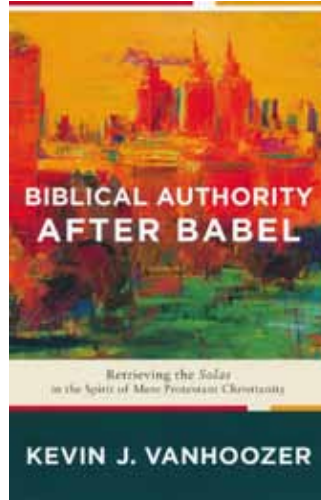
**PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGIAN KEVIN VANHOOZER'S** latest book has been gathering attention; it's an ambitious academic work that retrieves the five *solas* of the Reformation (grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone, Christ alone, for the glory of God alone) as a contemporary challenge to the ecumenical church to be thoroughly converted by the gospel, unified around the gospel, and authorized by the gospel for witness.

A short review can't do justice to the significant argument in *Biblical Authority after Babel* for how the *solas* help keep the church sharply focused on the saving action of the triune God witnessed in Scripture and lived out in the church. Vanhoozer's overall aim is constructive, though he doesn't flinch from current criticisms of the Reformation.

His goal is to see the *solas* and the classic Protestant teaching on the priesthood of all believers provide a pattern for reading Scripture that can enable unity among Protestant churches on gospel essentials and loving fellowship where disagreement over secondary matters exists. "The fruit of the Protestant Reformation is ultimately no anarchy . . . but abundance . . . a rich diversity that makes for lively conversation around the table . . . without breaking table fellowship."

*Biblical Authority after Babel* is not an easy book by any means, with dense argumentation, florid use of metaphor, and the author's highly idiosyncratic style.

**A compelling vision of a renewed Protestantism emerges.**



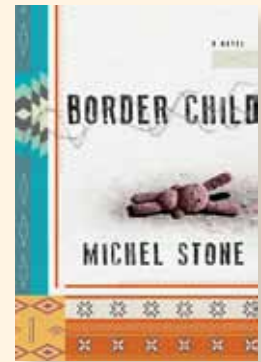
Reformed readers familiar with the five *solas* of the Reformation might be frustrated by Vanhoozer's often counterintuitive use of them. By his own admission he is "creatively" retrieving them for translation into today's context.

But if one can bear with him, a compelling vision of a renewed Protestantism emerges, where the antidote to our current Babel is "pentecostal pluralism": a global diversity of local churches gathered in Christ by the Spirit around the one Word of life. Here is a book that will surely outlive the Reformation's quincenary in 2017. (Brazos) ■



Todd Statham is a Christian Reformed chaplain at the University of British Columbia-Okanagan.

### READER-SUBMITTED REVIEW



## Border Child

by **Michel Stone**  
reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**

Hector and Lilia illegally crossed from Mexico into the United States. Hector went first. Lilia followed a while later with their infant daughter, Alejandra. Tragically, mother and child were separated. Now, back in their native village, Alejandra's disappearance continues to haunt Hector and Lilia. When an unexpected clue to Alejandra's possible whereabouts surfaces, Hector goes in search of her. In this gripping story, author Michel Stone reveals the trials and tragedies of a couple living in poverty and longing for a better life for their children. She shows that compassion, community, beauty, love, and faith are not dependent on wealth and prosperity but can thrive in what seems to be the harshest of circumstances. (Nan A. Talese)





## To Have You Around

by Zach Winters  
reviewed by Brian Kelder

Not found on many Christian contemporary music radio stations, Zach Winters provides a contemplative music experience. He uses interesting instrumentation that includes acoustic guitar, ukulele, trumpets, piano, and mandolin interspersed with lyrics that accurately express the Christian life. For fans of Josh Garrels' acoustic fare. Listen for the beautiful folk music, then learn about one man's journey with Christ.

## Still a Family: A Story about Homelessness

by Brenda Reeves Sturgis  
reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema



A young girl and her mother live in a homeless shelter for women and children while her dad lives in a nearby shelter for men. The girl describes her difficult experiences at the shelter, but she's happy because her family is reunited in a park. They share meals together at a soup kitchen. Ultimately, the girl finds her true home with her parents. Christian parents will find this a compassionate resource to introduce their children to the plight of millions of children who experience homelessness. The book can also be a springboard for talking about how God cares for people in need and calls us to serve them, each in our own way. (Albert Whitman & Co)

## A Ghost Story

reviewed by Kristy Quist

Instead of a story about people being haunted by ghosts, director David Lowery has crafted a film about a ghost being haunted by people. Casey Affleck and Rooney Mara, whose characters are given the names C and M in the credits, play a loving young couple. C dies suddenly and becomes a ghost. He stays, witnessing the grief of his widow, portrayed by Mara with mute intensity. C inhabits the house long after M moves on, watching people and time pass. The camera lingers as scenes with little dialogue or action go on for long minutes. Lowery creates an atmosphere heavy with grief and loneliness, but also with a sense of wonder at life, home, and the strong connections we build with each other. At one point a philosophizing hipster carries on in a poor man's version of the Teacher in Ecclesiastes about how

everything we strive for will come to an end; nothing will last, everyone will die. Yet C lingers on. If you enjoy interesting experiments with story and visuals, you might find that this film haunts you too. Rated R for language and disturbing images; on disc this month. (A24)



## THE LOWDOWN: Reformation Celebration

The 500th anniversary has ushered in an influx of new books on the Reformation. Here is a sampling of what's available:



*Does the Reformation Still Matter?* by Karin Maag (Calvin College)



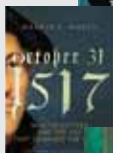
*Katharina and Martin Luther: The Radical Marriage of a Runaway Nun and a Renegade Monk*, by Michelle DeRusha (Baker)



*Katie Luther, First Lady of the Reformation: The Unconventional Life of Katharina von Bora*, by Ruth A. Tucker (Zondervan)



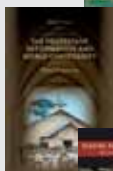
*Martin Luther: The Man Who Rediscovered God and Changed the World*, by Eric Metaxas (Viking)



*October 31, 1517: Martin Luther and the Day That Changed the World*, by Martin E. Marty (Paraclete)



*Prayers of the Reformers*, by Thomas McPherson (Paraclete)



*The Protestant Reformation and World Christianity: Global Perspectives*, by Dale T. Irvin (Eerdmans)



*Reading Paul with the Reformers: Reconciling Old and New Perspectives*, by Stephen J. Chester (Eerdmans)



*Reformation Women: Sixteenth Century Figures Who Shaped Christianity's Rebirth*, by Rebecca VanDoodewaard (Reformation Heritage Books)



*Rescuing the Gospel: The Story and Significance of the Reformation*, by Erwin W. Lutzer (Baker)



*Saving Calvinism: Expanding the Reformed Tradition*, by Oliver Crisp (IVP)



*The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther's Wittenberg*, by Robin A. Leaver (Eerdmans)

MORE REVIEWS  
ONLINE

## Reading the New Testament with Jewish Eyes



### **I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN MALAYSIA.**

The official language there is Malay. Did you know that there are three different Malay words to describe rice? *Padi* is the rice growing in the fields. *Beras* refers to grains of uncooked rice. Cooked rice is called *nasi*. In contrast, there is only one word for pig, pork, and bacon: *babi*. Imagine, therefore, your conundrum if you had to translate this sentence into Malay: “The little girl threw some rice onto the bacon.” Or imagine that this was an actual sentence translated from Malay into English. Would you have wished the translator had specified what type of rice—grains of rice or cooked rice? Are you confident that bacon is actually the right translation in this case? Or was the translator simply assuming the sentence was about food, not realizing that Malays do not eat pork?

This is just one example of how things can get lost in translation—and doubly so when multiple languages and cultures are involved. When reading the New Testament, we are not only dealing with an ancient Greek language that has been translated into modern English. That Greek New Testament was also originally translating ancient Jewish concepts for a Greek-speaking world. Sometimes we Christians have forgotten or ignored that second layer of translation. Too often we read the New Testament simply as a Greek text with a Greek worldview rather than reading it as a Greek text with a Jewish worldview.

As a result, we might unintentionally misread it, assuming it is more Greek than it is. To fully understand the New Testament, I suggest that we need to read it with Jewish eyes. For that, Old Testament Hebrew is indispensable and foundational.

Here are three examples of concepts that we may have misread when we read them with Greek eyes rather than Jewish eyes: *righteousness*, *eternal life*, and *knowledge*.



## Righteousness

Speaking of words with multiple meanings, the New Testament word for “righteousness” can also mean “justice.” The Greek word *dikaio-syne* means “righteousness” but also has “justice” in its roots. But this Greek term was consistently used to translate the Hebrew concept of *tsedaqah*, which has multiple shades of meaning, including righteousness, justice, charity, integrity, fairness, and innocence. There is no one equivalent Greek or English word for *tsedaqah*.

If we only read righteousness as personal morality and uprightness, as in self-righteous, then we have forgotten the underlying Old Testament concept in the New Testament word. In the ancient Jewish worldview of which Jesus and the apostles were a part, personal morality and public justice were deeply connected. Righteousness and justice are not two separate things that we must somehow try to connect. Rather, as we see in the following Bible passages, they are synonymous: “The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed” (Ps. 103:6). “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (Amos 5:24). Righteousness and justice, in Scripture, are two sides of the same coin.

Hence, Matthew 6:33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness . . .” can also be read as “seek first his kingdom and his justice. . . .” We cannot simply spiritualize away God’s kingdom and his righteousness. Neither, of course, should we turn it into a political kingdom. But losing that nuance of justice in reading the New Testament word “righteousness” often misleads us to think that the New Testament is silent on, or thinks less of, justice matters.

## Eternal Life

The tendency to spiritualize the New Testament message also applies to our misreading of eternal life. We tend to view life in very

materialistic ways, as in a beating heart. So the popular understanding of the phrase is “living forever in heaven.”

Sometimes words combined can have a greater or different meaning than each word’s individual meaning. For example, the phrase “chill out” does not mean “to get cold outside.” Similarly, “eternal life” meant more to the original Jewish audience than simply “my heart will go on and on.”

Rather, the ancient Jews would have understood eternal life as “life in the world to come.” What is the world to come? That’s the new heaven and earth where God will rule without any disobedience or sin to get in his way. The world to come is God’s new world order. That would have been the first thing that came to mind for first-century Jews when they heard the phrase “eternal life.”

The emphasis, therefore, is not on the length of life—how long you will live—but on the kind of life, that is, *how* you live, based not on the order of this world but on God’s world order. Of course, this includes living forever since God’s new heaven and earth will also triumph over physical death. But to reduce eternal life to only a physical reality in the sweet hereafter is to lose its original breadth in translation.

Furthermore, the central focus of “life in the world to come” is our unhindered-by-sin fellowship with God. This is why Jesus defined eternal life as knowing God: “Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3). Notice that Jesus did not say that knowing God and Jesus is *the way* to gaining eternal life. Rather, he said that to know God and Jesus *is* eternal life. This relationship with God is not only reserved for life after death, so to speak, but can be a reality here and now. Eternal life begins already in the present day when we love God and follow his ways, seeking his kingdom and

To reduce eternal life to only a physical reality in the sweet hereafter is to lose its original breadth in translation.

his righteousness, so that the “life in the world to come” becomes a reality in us. All of that rich meaning would not make sense if we read “eternal life” only as “living forever in heaven.”

## Knowledge

This leads to my third example, knowledge. True to our Greek heritage, our modern Western minds tend to think of knowledge as simply intellectual comprehension and information. However, the concept of knowledge among the ancient Jews was more holistic—it was a whole-person thing, not just a head thing; a deep, intimate knowledge that comes from relationship and experience.

That’s the kind of knowledge that is being spoken of in John 17:3. To know God and Jesus does not mean to intellectually grasp God’s existence or to hold to a theology of God’s nature. Rather, it means to fellowship with God and Jesus, to have devotion and reverence for God. It means to obey God’s ways so that they become part of your nature and life—eternal life—living life based not on this world’s ways but on the ways that God will establish fully in the new heaven and earth. And such a holistic life of fellowship and obedience to God is righteousness—not simply walking humbly with God, but also acting justly and loving mercy (Micah 6:8). ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE



**Shiao Chong** is editor-in-chief of *The Banner*. He attends Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Toronto, Ont.



## The Potter's Hand

In your 20s or 30s? We want to hear what's on your mind as it relates to living out your faith in today's world. Please send manuscripts (600 words) to [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org). (And, no, you don't have to be ordained!)

**DARLENE ZSCHECH WROTE** a beautiful hymn some 20 years ago called "The Potter's Hand" that is still sung in congregations today. And we mean it; we still earnestly sing the lyrics "take me, mold me, use me, fill me."

I was reading through some of the prophets—that chunk of books in the middle of our Bible that forms a pause between the Old and New Testaments—and the anger the Lord had against his adulterous children Israel was abundantly clear. If you know the story, God was so frustrated with his people that he allowed them to be sieged and exiled by the Babylonians; out of that catastrophe we get the books of many of the minor prophets. What a change in narrative this was for the mighty nation of Israel, promised greatness generations before!

One of the books written around this time of exile was Jeremiah. Many Christians know much of Jeremiah's writing by heart, including chapter 29 verse 11, where God declares through the prophet: "I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you . . ." This verse, and many others in Jeremiah, are a comfort—rightfully so—to believers. What joy we can have that the Lord carries us gently in his hands, and that our futures are planned out in his perfect will. For people today, especially those like me still growing up in a culture demanding independence, it is a foreign idea that we can be monitored so closely, especially with such care. I want to be known by this God who has my well-being in mind.

Unfortunately for our 21st-century brains, which crave gratification instantly and are attracted to this idea of being prospered, God's timeline and ours do not always line up. God does not act solely as a supervisor, as some architect who knows his plans and removes himself from the process.

In the 18th chapter of Jeremiah, the prophet is sent to a potter's shop to receive a message from God. He watches as the craftsman begins forming a pot. But as the skilled artist gently turns his creation, he realizes it is defective; it just won't do. Being the master of his craft he is, the potter begins again, using the marred clay to form a new vessel as he sees fit.

As if he needed to explain the situation to his prophet, God reaffirms his illustration.

"Can I not do with you as this potter does?" God asks.

The mighty Lord of Israel declares at this moment, like many before, the affirmation of his sovereign creatorship. I am reminded of God's conversation with Job, where God asks Job rhetorically where he was when the foundations of the universe were laid.

Are we ready for that kind of commitment? Can we as young people really believe that the same God who had all our days written out for us before we took our first breath is willing and able to shift and change our lives so dramatically? We may feel uncomfortable at the idea of our Creator God remaking us, but when Jesus came down to our earth, that is exactly what he promised.

I'm sure Israel sang songs like "Potter's Hand" just as we do. And like Israel, maybe we sometimes forget the authority an artist has. It is scary to be willing to be reformed, but we can take comfort that our Father declares, "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand" (Jer 18:6). ■

At 25 years old, **Justin Verwoerd** is a synod veteran. He studied Christian counseling, and is currently a deacon at Trinity CRC in Abbotsford, B.C.

I want to be known by *this* God who has my well-being in mind.

# ADS

**Deadlines:** 10/3/17 for Nov.; 11/7/17 for Dec. Subject to availability. Details online.

**Prices:** Most ads are \$0.39<sup>US</sup> per character (min. 150 characters including punctuation and spaces). A discounted rate of \$0.32<sup>US</sup> per character and \$50 per photo applies to Anniversaries, Birthdays, Obituaries, Denominational and Classical Announcements, and Congregational Announcements.

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## Denominational and Classical

### Announcement of Candidacy

We are pleased to announce that **JANTJE FEMKE VISSER-ELENBAAS** 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

We are pleased to announce that **JUNGSEONG (SAM) KIM** 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

We are pleased to announce that **DARRELL DELANEY** 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

**PASTOR KEN BAKER** has served 3rd CRC, Kalamazoo for the last 25 years. A service of celebration will be held on November 5, 2017, at 9:30 am to mark his retirement with a reception immediately following.

He graduated from Calvin Seminary ('78), MA from McMasters University ('93), DMin from Gordon Conwell Seminary ('05) and Certification as Gallup Strengths Coach ('16). Rev. Baker has served the following congregations prior to 3rd: Ebenezer CRC, Leduc Alberta, Immanuel CRC, Hamilton, Ontario, Conquitlam CRC, Conquitlam, BC. His service to the denomination includes: delegated to Synod 7 times, Calvin College and Seminary Board, Faith Alive Board, the Board of Trustees and Regional Pastor for Classis Kalamazoo. We give praise to God for Pastor Baker's many years of faithful service. If you wish to share pictures, stories or well wishes, please direct them to 3rd CRC, 2400 Winchell Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008 or email [revbaker@3rdcrc.org](mailto:revbaker@3rdcrc.org).



**PASTOR TIM BROWN RETIRES** The First Christian Reformed Church of Edgerton, MN, wishes to congratulate Pastor Tim Brown, together with his wife Jean, on their retirement in June. Our congregation gives thanks to God for their 22 years of humble and faithful ministry to our church and classis, along with 39 years to our denomination.

## Miscellaneous

**REFORMATION DAY LECTURE** Please join us for a lecture at Crete PRC, 1777 E. Richton Rd in Crete, IL on October, 31 2017 at 7:30 PM. Rev. Nathan Langerak will speak on the topic Martin Luther, A Christian's Quest for Assurance. This can also be live streamed from our website at [prccrete.org](http://prccrete.org).

**CELEBRATING THE REFORMATION** Classis Grand Rapids South has a combined service at Cutlerville East CRC on October 29 at 5 PM. Rev. Stan Mast is scheduled to preach at that service. Join Us. To learn more: [onefaithmanyfaces.org/always-reforming](http://onefaithmanyfaces.org/always-reforming)

## Birthdays

### 90th Birthday

**BROCK, MARGARET (ROZEBOOM)** will celebrate her 90th birthday on November 1. Her children, Sheryl and Don Van Eck, Ken and Kathy Brock and Roger and Kathy Brock; 7 grandchildren and 2 soon-to-be-born great grandsons thank God for her love and Christ-like example. Family and friends are invited to join us for an OPEN HOUSE celebration on Saturday, November 4 from 2-5 pm in the Town Square at Sunset Village, 725 Baldwin Street, Jenison, Michigan. No gifts please.



Dordt College is seeking applications for the following areas beginning August 2018:

### Faculty Positions

- Agriculture
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- Graphic Arts

Application reviews will begin immediately. Qualified persons committed to a Reformed, Biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to follow the faculty application procedure at the link below.

Dr. Eric Forseth, Provost  
Dordt College

498 4<sup>th</sup> Ave NE

Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

[provost@dordt.edu](mailto:provost@dordt.edu)

[www.dordt.edu/prospective\\_employees/faculty/](http://www.dordt.edu/prospective_employees/faculty/)

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**LAMAIRE, ANNETTE (BUURSTRA) VILARO** of 3229 19th St W, #305, Bradenton, FL 34205 will celebrate her 90th birthday on October 17 with family and friends. We praise God for filling her life with many blessings.

#### 100th Birthday



**WITH THANKS TO GOD** for a century of blessings, the family of **Rulie Nanninga nee Schoonekamp**, celebrated her 100th birthday on August 26th, 2017. Born and raised in Neerlandia, Alberta, she still attends Sunday services at Neerlandia CRC and is their first member to reach this milestone.

At the worship service on Sunday, August 27th Pastor Bill Tuininga, nephew to Rulie and whose roots are also in Neerlandia, encouraged our congregation to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart..." Proverbs 3:5 a Scripture passage chosen by Rulie. Two of her favorite hymns were sung: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and "I Know Not Why God's Wondrous Grace". Rulie resides at Jubilee Manor where she cherishes visits from family & friends and blesses them in return with her gracious engagement with life.

#### Anniversaries

##### 60th Anniversary

**MASSELINK, WM. J AND GLENDA** (Oberschmidt), of Lake Worth, FL will celebrate 60 blessed years of marriage on Oct. 3. Their children, W. Ted and Heike, and Marsha and Kevin Lange, along with their 5 grandchildren give thanks for God's faithfulness and the love of their parents.

**MOEKE - BURTON & SHARON** of Mancelona, MI celebrated 60 years of marriage August 31. It was celebrated with an open house. The couples children are Burton Moeke II(Sharon) and Jill Moeke. They have 5 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

#### Church Position Announcements

**WORSHIP COORDINATOR** First CRC in St. Thomas, Ontario is seeking to fill a 16-20 hour per week position for a Worship Coordinator. This position requires music proficiency and an ability to plan a variety of worship styles in a multi-generational setting within the Christian Reformed perspective of Blended Worship. Visit our website at [www.firstcrtstthomas.com](http://www.firstcrtstthomas.com) for more details. Email a cover letter and resume to [firstcrtstthomas@gmail.com](mailto:firstcrtstthomas@gmail.com) or by mail to 320 Elm Street, St. Thomas, ON N5R 1J7

**SEEKING LEAD PASTOR:** Do you hear God's call to serve Bethel Christian Reformed Church, an authentic grassroots community situated in the picturesque riverfront town of Dunnville, Ontario (pop. 12,000)? Bethel CRC needs a dynamic preacher and caring shepherd who models a close relationship with God, to minister to all ages. We are seeking spiritual growth and discipleship opportunities within and outside the church building, and welcome a servant leader who inspires and encourages the same. We are actively visioning how our facilities and programs can take us confidently into the future. To find out more, please contact the calling committee in confidence at: [bethelcrrcalling@gmail.com](mailto:bethelcrrcalling@gmail.com) or contact the correspondence clerk directly at 289-880-2225 or mail to Calling Committee, Bethel CRC, 17 Robinson Road, Dunnville, Ontario N1A 2W1. We look forward to meeting you!

**PASTOR IN CENTRAL ALBERTA** Bethel CRC in Lacombe, Alberta, is seeking a pastor to serve and lead our loving community of believers. Established in 1953, Bethel is an active church with a passion for serving our community through a wide variety of programs. Lacombe is a small city that has a strong Christian community with excellent access to Christian Education. With an active Renewal Lab team in place we are being re-invigorated and are excited about the

#### 70th Anniversary

**BOSSCHER, JIM & ANGE** 2111 Raybrook, #4010, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 will celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary on October 2, 2017. Their children, Jack and Joan Bosscher, Bob and Beth Terborg, David and Mary Bosscher, Marcia Bosscher, and Steve and Barb Timmermans, 17 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren celebrate with them God's faithfulness, love and continued blessings. To God be the glory!



**GROEN, BEN & ADELINE** Congratulations to Ben & Adeline Groen as they celebrate their 70th anniversary on October 2. They along with their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, are thankful how God has blessed their life together and pray for his continued faithfulness.

#### Obituaries

**PASMA, ARNOLD JOHN**, 89, of Ripon, CA entered into eternal rest on July 27, 2017. He is survived by his beloved wife, Marjorie (Bouwman) Pasma of 64 years; children: Michael (Barbara) Pasma, Melinda (LeRoy) Costa, Tami (Roger) Auwers; 9 grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren and his sister, Clarice Van Dyken.

**VAN BAAK, FRANCES RUTH RIBBENS** passed away on Sunday, August 13, 2017 in Grand Rapids, MI. She was predeceased by her husband, Rev. Edward A. Van Baak; and is survived by her children Andy (Arlene) Van Baak of Steamboat Springs CO, Shirley (Bill) Van Baak Martinus of West Olive MI, David (Nancy) Van Baak of Buffalo NY, Tom (Lesley) Van Baak of Seattle WA and Ruth (Keith) van Baak Griffioen of Williamsburg VA; 13 grandchildren; and 2 great-grandchildren.

**VAN DYK, BRENT**, age 54, of Elmhurst went home to be with his LORD on August 11th. 15W745 Harvard St, Elmhurst, IL, 60126. Beloved husband of Linda Van Dyk, nee Van Kampen; loving father of Brandon, Corey, and Bonnie (fiancé Logan VanProyen) Van Dyk; dear son of LaVerne, nee Swets, and the late Arthur Van Dyk; fond brother of Beverly (Kurt) Nelson, Donald (Gerry) Van Dyk, and Deb (Scott) Mels;

future of Bethel and anticipate the arrival of a new leader to guide our church. For more information email [corahoek@netscape.net](mailto:corahoek@netscape.net) or peruse our website at [lacombebethelcrrc.org](http://lacombebethelcrrc.org).

**SENIOR PASTOR POSITION** Rochester CRC, a mid-sized western New York state congregation, seeks a senior pastor for preaching, spiritual leadership and pastoral care. We value exegetical, insightful and inspired preaching of the Word, and seek someone who will challenge us to live out our faith in the culture around us. We have a strong desire for church growth and seek leadership to realize that vision in our community. Can you lead us as we face these challenges? To learn more about this opportunity, or if you know of someone who may be a good fit, visit our website at [www.rochestercrrc.org](http://www.rochestercrrc.org) or contact our Pastor Search Team via [office@rochestercrrc.org](mailto:office@rochestercrrc.org)

**PASTOR** Fresno CRC, located in California's central valley, is seeking a pastor who is passionate about preaching and relationships. We are a family of believers desiring to grow in our walk with Jesus and attract others to follow Him. Please view our website and profile at [www.fresnocrrc.org](http://www.fresnocrrc.org).

**PASTOR** Sherman Street CRC, seeking to be a living testimony of God's grace and justice in the city, is looking for a lead Pastor to join us in our mission. See our website at [shermanstreetchurch.org/pastorsearch](http://shermanstreetchurch.org/pastorsearch) for more information. Women and men of all ethnicities are encouraged to apply.

**ASSOCIATE PASTOR** Ladner Christian Reformed Church (Delta, BC, Canada) is seeking an Associate Pastor to fill a part-time position with a focus on seniors. Contact Bev Bandstra, Clerk, at [office@ladnecrrc.com](mailto:office@ladnecrrc.com).



uncle of many nieces and nephews. Memorials to Timothy Christian Schools, 1070 S. Prospect Ave, Elmhurst, IL, 60126, are appreciated.

**VOLKERS, SARAH MARION**, age 90 of Grand Rapids, MI, passed away Thursday, August 24, 2017. Sarah is survived by her husband, Jay Volkens; her children, Marianne Triezenberg, Herman and Elizabeth Triezenberg, Marcia and Jack DeBaar, Ryer Triezenberg, and Jane and David Tiesenga, 11 grandchildren, and 9 great grandchildren.

### Employment

**CHRISTIAN ADULT FOSTER CARE** Home in Zeeland, MI is searching for live-in houseparents to care for 12 developmentally disabled adults. For information, contact Jennifer Letcher at: [admin@parkviewafchome.org](mailto:admin@parkviewafchome.org)

**PRINCIPAL OPENING** Trinity Christian School in Burlington, Ontario invites applications for the full-time position of principal. Trinity Christian School is a junior kindergarten to grade eight, multi-denominational Christian school, with over 250 students in a new facility. A detailed job description is available on the school's website at [tconline.ca](http://tconline.ca). Interested candidates should send a cover letter, resume, statement of faith and their philosophy of Christian education to [jessica.nicholson@tconline.ca](mailto:jessica.nicholson@tconline.ca). Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

**SEEKING CAREER MISSION NURSE** Seeking a nurse to be a RCA career missionary at a 100 year old Christian hospital in Aswan, Egypt. This is a good story. This is a love story. The primary purpose is to be a role model for nursing, and to encourage indigenous Christian Egyptian men and women to go to nursing school in Egypt. For more information contact William Ruggles Church, MD, [wrkchurch@gmail.com](mailto:wrkchurch@gmail.com), mp 231 409-1818.

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# Punch Lines

What tickles your funnybone? We're looking for original humor, including either true or fictional anecdotes (300 words max), original cartoons, or visual humor. Please send yours to [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org).

**I**n vacation Bible school this summer, I told the story of Joshua's spies hiding under flax on the flat roof of the wall of Jericho, Rahab, the red rope, trumpets, and stone walls that came tumbling down. When I finished, a little boy raised his hand and asked me, "Were you there when that happened?"

I don't know if it was my enthusiastic telling of the story or my gray hair that prompted the question.

*Ruth Vander Zee*

**S**usan, age 4, was drinking orange juice when she got the hiccups. "Please don't give me this juice again," she said to her mother. "It makes my teeth cough."

*Marie Albers*

**T**he other day I went out to lunch with two of my granddaughters. I invited the 4-year-old to pray before the food came. She started her prayer thanking Jesus for her mommy, daddy, sister, and grandparents. Then she went on to pray for our sandwiches, ending with a very loud "THE END."

—*Diana Leyendekker*

**M**y Cranium Conga Word Worm card read: "I think my hair looks especially \_\_\_\_\_ today."

My 6-year-old grandson immediately commented, "Grandpa's hair is blank!"

*Virgil Michael*

**G**oing over our church finances I found a receipt from a local paint store signed by someone named "Christian." I wasn't aware of anyone from our church buying paint, so I called the store to point out the mistake. "I'm sorry," I told the manager, "But there are no Christians here at First Church!"

*Cyndi Boss*

**T**om and his son, Bill, went to a restaurant for dinner. As soon as the waiter brought out the two steaks, Bill quickly chose the bigger steak for himself.

Tom wasn't happy about that. "When are you going to learn to be polite?" he said.

Bill replied, "Which one would you have picked?"

Tom said, "The smaller piece, of course."

Bill said, "Then what are you complaining about? The smaller piece is what you got, right?"

*Jan Veltkamp*

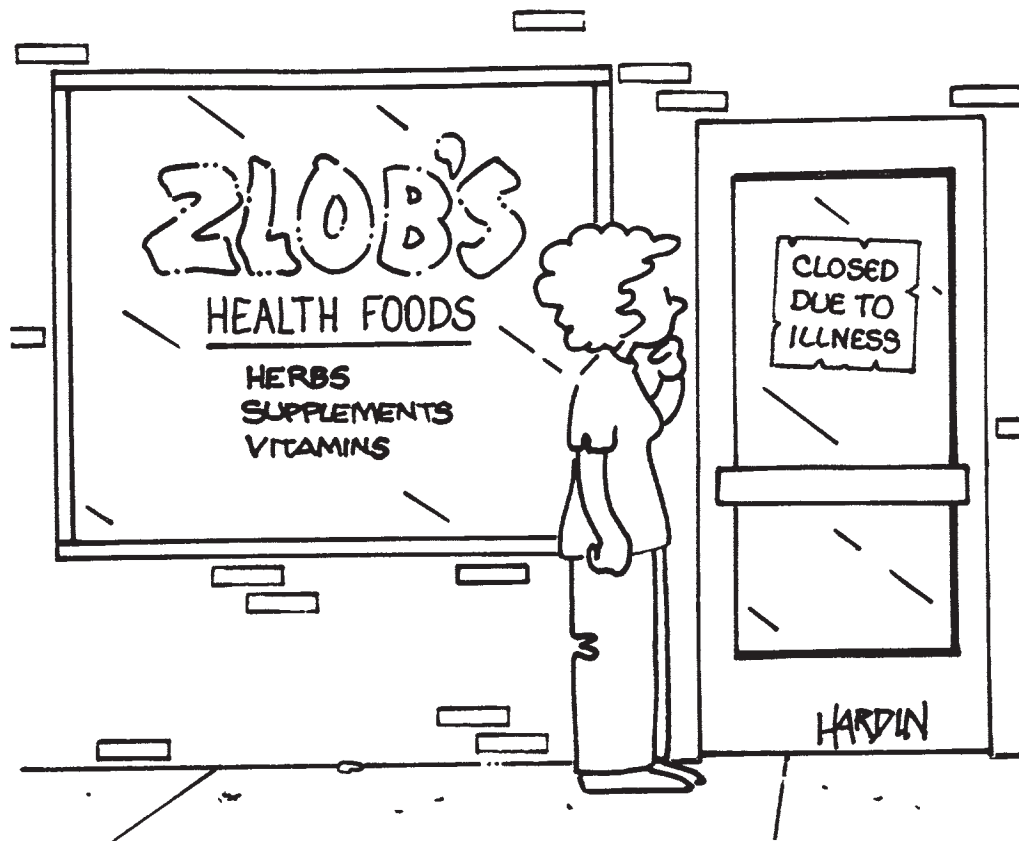
**L**ittle Dewey was at football practice. The coach said, "Who here thinks they can jump higher than the goal posts?"

Immediately Dewey answered, "Oh, oh, me sir. Me!"

The coach replied, "But Dewey, you're the worst player on the team."

"I know," said Dewey. "But goalposts can't jump."

*Marie Albers*



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