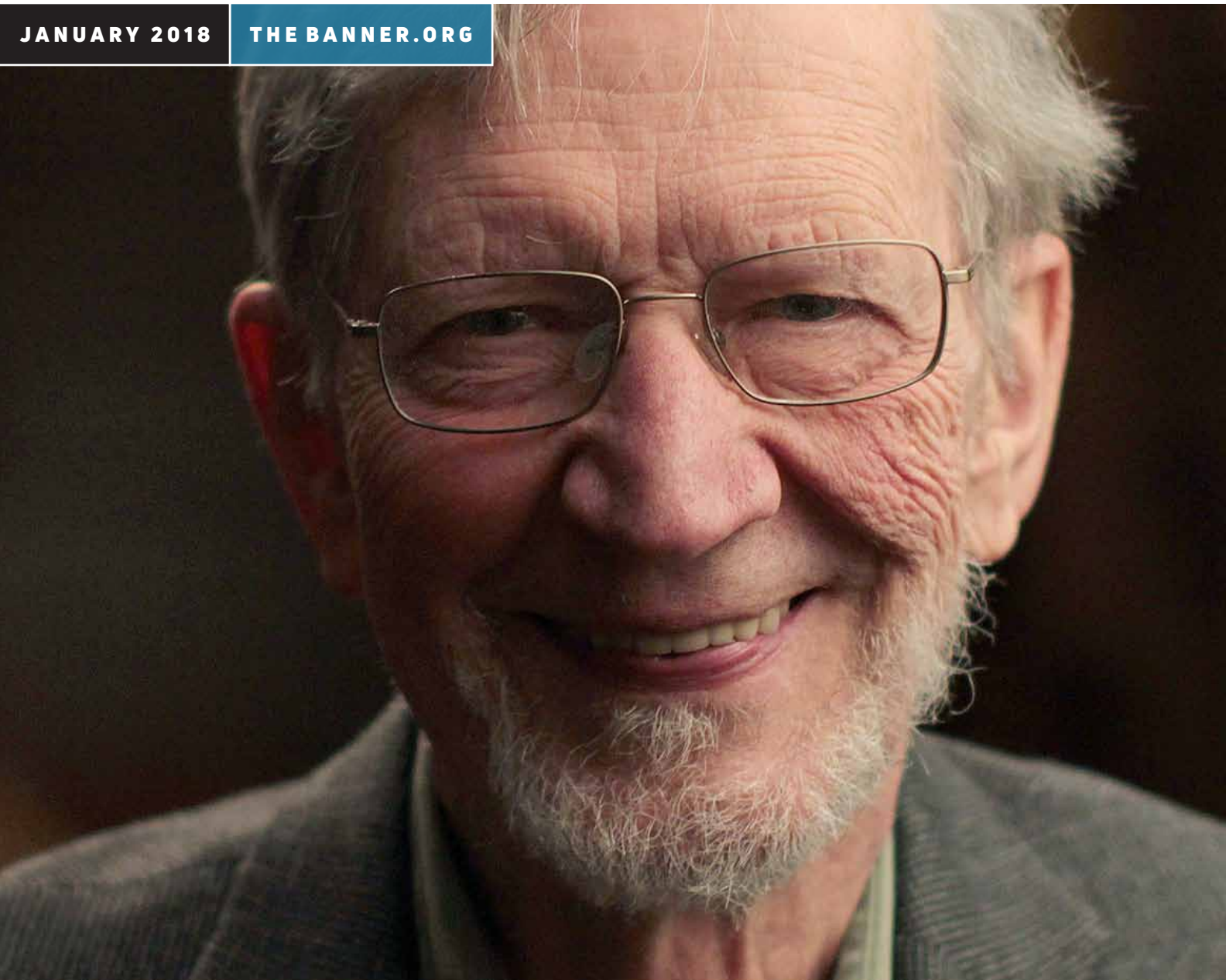


BANNER

JANUARY 2018

THE BANNER.ORG



A Bible for Those Who Can't Read



Durga uses every opportunity to share God's Word with those around her.

Though she can't read, Durga shares the love of Jesus with everyone she meets. During a recent power outage, her solar-powered Talking Bible hanging up on the front of her house rang out in the quiet of her neighborhood. She used the opportunity to tell her neighbors about Jesus. Playing the Talking Bible in her small general store helps her witness for Jesus with all her customers.

Durga is excited about Jesus, laughing and giggling. The joy of knowing God radiates out of her. This beautiful woman of God has no hesitation sharing the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ with everyone she meets.

Help us place Talking Bibles with non-readers like Durga who will use it to share God's love with many around them.



The Solar Talking Bible

- Easy to use
- Powerful speaker
- Solar powered



Enhancing Trust



"Accredited for special offerings"

www.talkingbibles.org

Talking Bibles International • 419 East Grand Avenue, Escondido, CA 92025 • Telephone: 855-55-BIBLE (855-552-4253) or 760-745-8105

Watch Martha's
story and
others online at
[worldrenew.net/
freefamily](http://worldrenew.net/freefamily).



Free A Family from poverty for less than \$1 per day!

This is Martha Marak, a subsistence farmer in India, who walks three miles to her farm and fish pond each day. She is learning to sew to raise extra income to send her children to school; she also runs a savings and loan program with other women in her community where they help each other start and grow small businesses. And she still makes time to sing in the choir at church.

God is at work through World Renew's *Free A Family*® program— sign up today to be part of His ministry to the poor!



**FREE A
FAMILY**

worldrenew.net/freefamily    

1700 28th Street SE • Grand Rapids MI 49508-1407 • 800-552-7972
3475 Mainway • PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1 • Burlington ON L7R 3Y8 • 800-730-3490

BANNER

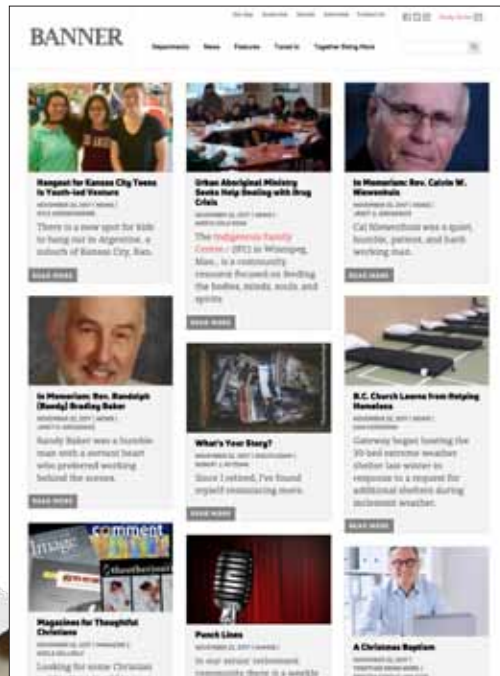
WHAT'S ONLINE

Looking for more? Here are just a few of the stories you'll find online at *TheBanner.org*.

- » Book review: *Daring to Drive* by Manal al-Sharif
- » Movie review: Netflix's *Mudbound*
- » Book review: *Turtles All the Way Down* by John Green
- » AWS: Is Reformed Theology for Black People?
- » Top 10 Most Read *Banner* Online Articles in 2017
- » B.C. Hospital Features CRC Pastor in Lights of Hope Campaign
- » Campus Church Hosts Service of Unity

Notice Anything Different?

Welcome to the new *Banner!* The magazine you're holding in your hands—and what you'll find online and on the app—is the fruit of much brainstorming, planning, and design. With fresh content and an updated look, we'll continue to be your trusted source of relevant information, helpful ideas, and challenging insights from a Christian Reformed perspective. Tell us what you think at info@TheBanner.org.



FEATURES



10

'Help Us Help Houston'

Marc Nelesen // One congregation's miracle of multiplication.



32

Alvin Plantinga

Bruce Buursma // Plantinga is recognized for arguing that belief is not irrational.



34

Faith Matters: The Words We Long to Hear

Leonard J. Vander Zee // In Jesus' baptism we see our own.

COLUMNS

7 Editorial: Prophetic Witness in Turbulent Times

Shiao Chong // Speaking truth to power—and to each other.

8 Reply All

9 Vantage Point: Praying for Wisdom

Diane Brummel Bloem // The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

12 Big Questions

Addressing the causes of poverty and hunger requires a long obedience.

14 News

- » New Mexico Church to Run on Solar Energy
- » Churches Partner with Counseling Services
- » More Congregations Behind Bars Want Prison Church's Beautiful Study Guide

31 Discover: Dashing Through the Snow

Sandy Swartzentruber // Snowflakes are tiny works of art.

36 The Other 6: House-Sitting

Matthew D. Lundberg // An apt metaphor for our responsibility for creation.

38 Mixed Media: Four Christian Podcasts You Should Be Listening to Right Now

Jason Hahn // These podcasts can turn your commute into a time of reflection and renewal.

40 Cross Examination: The Mystery of Faith

Joella Ranaivoson // Our ability to think deeply and critically about faith is a gift.

41 What I Find Funny: Cross Exchange

Rod Hugen // Never get in a swordfight with a sword swallower.

47 Still: My Father's Voice

Arie Staal

OUR SHARED MINISTRY



What Does Church Planting Look Like Today?

Brian Clark // In today's culture, the kind of church plant a neighborhood needs depends on the neighborhood.

36 The View from Here: Grab Hold and Step Forward

Steve Timmermans // I think of God's promises as being something like handrails.

BANNER

The Banner is the magazine of the Christian Reformed Church

Editor Shiao Chong

Associate Editor Judith Claire Hardy

News Editors Alissa Vernon, Gayla R. Postma

Our Shared Ministry Editor Kristen deRoo VanderBerg

Mixed Media Editor Kristy Quist

Art Director Dean R. Heetderks

Designer Pete Euwema

Designer Frank Gutbrod

Contact Us 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids MI 49508-1407 info@TheBanner.org

Address Changes and Subscriptions 800-777-7270 or visit TheBanner.org

Classified Advertising 616-224-0725 classifieds@TheBanner.org

Display Advertising 616-224-5882 ads@TheBanner.org

Editorial 616-224-0824 editorial@TheBanner.org

News news@TheBanner.org

Published monthly (except August). Periodicals postage paid at Grand Rapids, Mich. Postmaster, send address changes to: *The Banner*, 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids MI 49508-1407. Canadian publications mail agreement #40063614. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: *The Banner*, 3475 Mainway, PO Box 5070, STN LCD 1, Burlington ON L7R 3Y8. Copyright 2016, Christian Reformed Church in North America. Printed in U.S.A. The Banner (ISSN0005-5557). Vol. 153, No. 1, 2018.

Member of Associated Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.

ARE YOU ALL IN for DISCIPLESHIP?



If discipleship is your job,
DiscipleOn! is an online
community designed just for you.

DISCIPLEON!
JAN-JUNE 2018



For more info & to register
before the Jan. 21 deadline
www.ascendingleaders.org/discipleon



DORDT COLLEGE

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

Faculty Positions

Agriculture
Chemistry
Engineering (Chemical)
Engineering (Electrical)
Farm Operations & Management
Graphic Design
Physics

~~~~~  
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](http://www.dordt.edu) — About Dordt — Job Openings

Dordt College endeavors to diversify its staff within the framework of its mission. The commitment of the college to nondiscrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national or ethnic origin, or race is consistent with federal and state requirements for nondiscrimination in employment.

Are you a pastor, missionary  
or Christian leader and desire  
to seek solace in the midst  
of the swirling storms of  
ministry? **QuietWaters** is  
here to meet your needs!



  
QuietWaters  
MINISTRIES

303-639-9066  
[www.QWaters.org](http://www.QWaters.org)

CRCNA approved charity since 1939

Los Angeles, California • Wyoming, Michigan  
Bellingham, Washington • Toronto, Ontario  
New York City, New York • Surrey, British Columbia  
Edmonton, Alberta • Jacksonville, Florida  
Winnipeg, Manitoba • Houston, Texas

# Ask. Connect. Share.

The CRC is big. Since we can't always meet for coffee,  
let's meet at The Network to compare ministry notes.

Covering over 60 different ministry topics, you'll find blogs, discussion  
topics, ministry questions, and much more. Get involved by asking a  
ministry question, posting a blog, or sharing a resource today.

Visit [crcna.org/network](http://crcna.org/network)

The church also  
needs to shine  
God's light onto its  
own members'  
hearts and minds.

## Prophetic Witness in Turbulent Times

**BRUCE L. FIELDS, AN EXPERT** on the Black church, expands the prophetic “speaking truth to power” approach into four dimensions: *comforting* the oppressed, *confronting* evil, *correcting* God's people, and *confirming* God's work of justice to his people (*Five Views on the Church and Politics*, pp. 97-98). This balanced view of the Old Testament prophets' ministry is a helpful framework for how we can be prophetic in our world today. For starters, it avoids reducing prophetic witness to simply confronting evil “out there.” Second, being prophetic also involves compassion for the oppressed. I believe bringing our Reformed worldview and theology into this framework will be fruitful.

Since Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is in January, let's consider how this framework might help our prophetic witness to protect life. Christians are quite good at confronting the evil of abortion. From dedicated Sundays to pro-life marches to lobbying for legislation, we have unambiguously confronted this evil in various ways.

There is, however, one form of confrontation we may not have done equally as well: to unmask the idolatries and ideologies behind the evil. A Reformed biblical worldview is especially well positioned to name the idols at work behind the logic of policies and programs. What are the idols at work in our culture's sexuality and socio-economics that create tragic (non-medical) scenarios where some women even need to consider abortion? Has individual freedom become absolutized? What about patriarchy and sexism? To me, this is the institutional church's most urgent and important prophetic task—not the protest marches or the political

lobbying. The church needs to bring the light of God's Word to expose the hidden idols at work in our culture that create the fertile soil for evil to thrive. Only the church can do that; no other institution is equipped to do so.

Such unmasking of idols leads us to correction. Christians are not immune to the idols of our time. History has taught us that the church has been infected by idols and ideologies from slavery to sexism. The church also needs to shine God's light onto its own members' hearts and minds. This is easier said than done, as pastors and church leaders risk offending their parishioners. But we need to ask the hard questions. Have the idols of our culture infected our minds? Or are there different idols infecting even our prophetic work that we are not aware of? Has our righteous indignation crossed over into self-righteous judgmentalism? Are we confronting abortion with a truly biblical worldview or with an infected worldview that distorts our well-meaning work?

As we correct our own members, we need to confirm the hope we have in God's redeeming grace and his justice. We need to be reminded that our hope lies not in politicians or programs or any human efforts but in Christ Jesus, who has already triumphed on the cross and will fully triumph when he returns. We seek to be faithful and hopeful witnesses in this “already but not yet” period.

Out of that hope in Christ, we can offer comfort to those whose lives have been affected by abortion. Most women who have undergone abortion are victims too. Women should never be put in situations where they feel they need to make that choice to begin with. Hence, we must establish and support Christian organizations that provide counseling and support to women facing unexpected pregnancies. We cannot stop at merely protesting.

Can this prophetic witness framework help us in other areas of public justice as well? **B**



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

Spanish and Korean translations of this editorial available at [TheBanner.org](http://TheBanner.org).





rapt amazement," that may be a very profound act of worship.

Keep up the good work!  
» Bruce Nikkel // Pella, Iowa

I have a very different opinion ("Unintended Consequences"). Nine times the Bible commands or describes God's people singing a new song. Variety is a gift. Even if our song diet has changed in the past generation or two, most churches I know sing a group of roughly 50 songs maybe 75 percent of the time. The CCLI Top 100 (which includes settings of some familiar hymns) doesn't turn over very quickly. I'm confident that in 50-60 years my generation will still know the chorus to "Blessed Be Your Name," "How Great Is Our God," and "10,000 Reasons."  
» Brian Hofman // Kanawha, Iowa

#### Follow the Body

Ultimately families are the ones who make decisions as to their preferences ("Follow the Body, Nov. 2017). Increasingly, families are choosing to have a private burial service followed by a memorial service. This allows for the memorial service to be much more of a worship service where those in attendance can celebrate the fact that "death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).

The question remains: How can funeral customs and burial practices be planned to better reflect a Christian's witness to the world? While death is an occasion for mourning, it is also and especially an opportunity to rejoice in the hope of the resurrection.

» Ivan Mulder // Pella, Iowa

**READ MORE ONLINE**

#### **Correction**

Esteban Lugo was released from ministry in the CRC and declared in the status of one deposed, but the asterisk explanation printed in the December 2017 *Banner* regarding Lugo's release was inaccurate, since Lugo did not resign under discipline or to avoid discipline. *The Banner* regrets the error.

## Praying for Wisdom

**SEVERAL YEARS AGO I WAS ASKED** to pray for the United States at our church's annual Prayer Day service. I led us in praising God and thanked him for our blessings, especially the freedom to worship. We asked the Lord for wisdom for our leaders and courage and integrity for all Christians who are called to serve in government.

After the service a man stopped me and said, "That was a fine prayer, but you forgot the most important thing. You gave thanks and asked for blessings, but you didn't confess the sins of our nation and ask for forgiveness."

I keep thinking about that as I consider our troubled nation. Shouldn't we be confessing that we give more time and money to idols such as entertainment, sports, and technology than to the Lord? Does the motto "In God we trust" still have meaning? Or do we have a revival only when tragedy strikes?

When terrorists successfully destroyed the twin towers in New York City and thousands of people were killed, we were stunned and gripped by fear. People flocked to churches to pray, and we experienced a mini-revival. But as time passed, many people no longer felt the need to examine their hearts and rely on God.

Unrest and confusion took over again in the 2016 U.S. election season as candidates hurled harsh accusations at one another. However, in the discord of the election and the protests that ensued, one good thing resulted. Many people were aroused from their apathy. But did this lead us to acknowledge our need to repent and ask God to forgive us for our



preoccupation with our individual happiness?

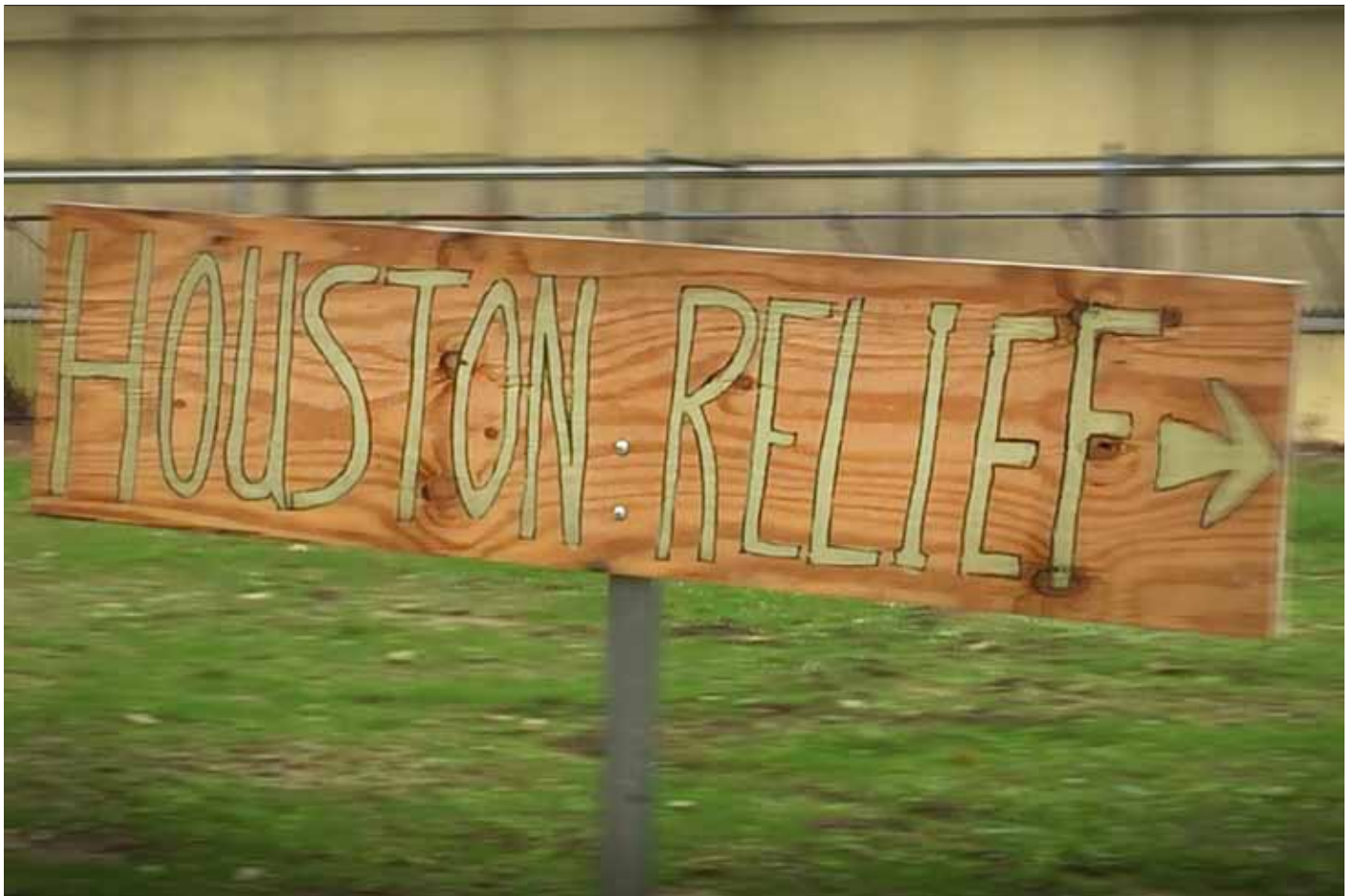
I encourage all of us to think about our national need for confession and repentance as we faithfully pray for our leaders and the whole nation. Hundreds of people are forming prayer circles to pray for spiritual revival. I encourage all who read this to start or join one of these prayer circles.

We can expect results because Jesus Christ, "the ruler of the kings of the earth" is in control (Rev. 1:5). "All this comes from the Lord Almighty, whose plan is wonderful, whose wisdom is magnificent" (Isa. 28:29).

God has promised, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14). And, as James reminds us, "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (5:6). **B**



Diane Brummel Bloem is a writer of Bible study books and has led Bible study groups for more than 50 years. She is a member of Caledonia (Mich.) CRC.



## ‘Help Us Help Houston’

by Marc Nelesen

**I**n late August 2017, when many families were buying last-minute school supplies, Hurricane Harvey hit Houston. It stayed in place for four days and spun a year’s worth of rain. Many of us saw the devastation from a distance through our television screens. We prayed for those people in dire circumstances but felt helpless to do anything about it.

In the midst of that helplessness on a Sunday morning, I said in passing, “I think it would be wonderful if this church could be known as a drop-off place for relief supplies.” We had no plan, only wishes and prayers.

The next day, a man from the congregation called the church office. “Pastor, as a truck driver, I can’t get involved with the church as much as I would

like. My wife and I have been praying about this, and I’d be willing to donate my time to drive a truck to Houston. My boss said he’d be willing to donate the semi and the fuel. So if you can figure out what to put on the truck, I’ll haul it down there. I can’t do much, but I can drive a truck; that’s what I know how to do.”

Our staff contacted pastor Andy Sytsma of New Life Christian Reformed Church just north of Houston. We asked a simple question: “Suppose you could have a 53-foot trailer with whatever relief supplies you needed. What would you put on that truck?” (Long pause.) “Andy, are you there?” “Yeah, I am trying to wrap my head around what you just said!”

Andy and area pastors began doing needs assessments within their

churches and communities. Weeks later, they presented us with a list of names and needs. The need was bottomless.

The list included supplies like hundreds of mattresses, appliances, tools, insulation for 50 houses, construction materials, drywall compound, and clothes. That list gave us our first real sense of the great need.

At this point, our staff made two decisions. First, we would ask donors for new items. Families had already had their lives turned upside down; dignity meant no hand-me-downs. Second, our effort needed to be about more than relief; it also needed to be about relationships. We would ask our congregation to call on their own community and work relationships. The message to others around

us—churched and unchurched—would be “Help us help Houston.” It would convey both “We need your help” and “Join us.”

We believed the Spirit was at work in ways we could not control. We posted the needs on our website and set up a special email for donations. We established an Amazon gift registry for items that could be shipped directly to Houston. Then we told the church and the community that we would take 12 days to try to fill a trailer.

What happened was beyond what we imagined. Church people contacted neighbors, work associates, and friends. People went to area businesses and told the story of a truck driver who said, “I can’t do much, but here’s what I can do.” They told the story of a semi owner inspired by that generosity who said, “I can’t do much, but I can donate a semi.” In turn, people said, “I can’t fill a semi, but I can buy a dishwasher.” A 9-year-old boy from the community dropped by one day and handed us \$157 in cash. He’d heard about the project and went through his neighborhood collecting cans for deposit. His mantra was the same: “I can’t do much, but here’s what I can do.” Some families said, “Let’s make this our family Christmas.” They pooled what they were going to spend on gifts for each other and gifted Houston instead.

Local furniture, mattress, and appliance stores caught the vision as well. Not only did they sell thousands of dollars’ worth of merchandise at cost, but many made significant donations. While we did not ask for money, more than \$26,000 was given. A third of this came from outside our congregation. A local TV station spread the word through a news story.

On the 12th day we loaded the trailer. When it was packed tight, our loading dock still had 28 feet of appliances, furniture, and mattresses for Houston. The next day we announced to the congregation that the trailer was

filled. There was an audible gasp because we knew we had not done this on our own. We told the story of how God had multiplied the spirit of “I can’t do much, but here’s what I can do.” During the offering, a member waved me over. He said, “Pastor, God

“I can’t do much,  
but I can drive a  
truck; that’s what  
I know how to do.”

was talking to me while you were telling that story. I will donate a truck and driver as well; just make sure it gets filled.”

Two people from our church flew down to Houston to help unpack the first trailer. They saw with their own eyes the impact of the flooding on houses and the disruption in people’s lives. A few weeks later, the second truck was delivered. More than \$100,000 in merchandise was on those two trucks. At Thanksgiving, our congregation received video messages of thanks from people in Houston. Their stories moved us deeply and reminded us that we are all connected in ways we often forget.

What have we learned along the way?


To follow the prompts of the Spirit in new ways. We could never have orchestrated something this big on our own. Instead, we joined in what God was already doing in people’s hearts.

We approached the project with vulnerability rather than having a strong plan. We couldn’t anticipate all the ways God was working around us, nor could we manage the Spirit’s work. Every time we were tempted to do so, our best plans went flat. This too was

a place of learning for us: Engagement with curiosity is so much better than control. At most we were a conduit for what God wanted to do through us.

Instead of communicating to our neighbors “We have something you need,” we invited them to join us and help others. This got amazing traction in our relationships with the wider community. People wanted to help the church be the church, even without joining us as members. Over and over we heard, “This is exactly what the church should be doing.” Who knows what God will do through this experience with a local group of Christians!

When a little boy showed up at the door of our church with money from collecting soda cans in the neighborhood, I was reminded of another little boy in John’s gospel who showed up with five loaves and two fish.

In this project, we witnessed a multiplication miracle with our own eyes. Like the gospel story, this involved followers of Jesus being presented with a crisis. Disciples tend to say things like “But we have so little, and the need is so great!” or “That trailer is huge and there is so little time!” But the invitation is to let God do the work and for us to say, “I can’t do much, but here’s what I can do.” 



Marc Nelesen is pastor of congregational life at Georgetown Christian Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Mich., and a regional pastor for Classis Georgetown.



## BIG QUESTIONS

### Faith Formation

**Our teenage daughter says she is embarrassed to be a Christian because of how some Christians treat people of other faiths, ethnicities, and sexual orientations.**

**Many of her friends are non-Christians. I'm concerned that she will stop being part of the church altogether. How can I talk with her about this?**

Social justice is an important part of what many young people are looking for in the church.

The church does not always have a good reputation with regard to how we have treated people. Christians have not always put our best foot forward, and the most extreme examples get the biggest headlines.

Here are some things to talk about with your daughter. All people, including Christians, sin; when Christians treat others poorly, that is evidence of sin. The church also does many things that are good and noteworthy: providing aid to hurricane and earthquake victims, feeding the hungry, and helping people who are homeless, to name a few. You probably have examples in your local congregation as well as the work of our denominational agencies. Talk positively about the work of the church at home.

Give your daughter language to use in talking to her friends: "You make a good point. That bothers me too," or



"That makes me feel bad too," or "I see things in my church and in my family that encourage me."

Finally, suggest that she share these questions and conversations with others in your church and with God. Encourage her to seek real-life examples of the kind of Christian she wants to be. Welcome her to invite her friends to your home so they can see faith in action.

Laura Keeley is a regional catalyzer for Faith Formation Ministries and director of children's ministries at 14th St. CRC in Holland, Mich.

Robert J. Keeley is professor of education at Calvin College and director of distance education at Calvin Seminary.

### Missional Living

**I have been working against poverty and hunger over the years. It does not appear I am making any progress. What more can I do?**

I appreciate your long obedience to eliminating poverty and hunger wherever you find it. I believe you have volunteered for World Renew projects when natural disasters have hit places like Houston, Puerto Rico, and Florida after devastating hurricanes. I assume you have given money

to your church's diaconate to help those in need of food. Your offerings might have helped people with basic needs of food and shelter.

It sounds like you are ready to go to the level of addressing the causes of poverty and hunger. Synod 2017 affirmed your desire for justice and equity in this area: "We believe it is a good time for the CRCNA to remember and reinvigorate its historical and passionate commitment to understanding and working to end hunger, endemic poverty, and oppression in God's world" (*Acts of Synod*, p. 537).

What could you do? Here are a few suggestions for moving from individual service to advocacy.

- » Educate yourself on biblical advocacy best practices dealing with the roots and systemic causes of hunger, poverty, and injustice through websites of such organizations as the Christian Community Development Association ([ccda.org](http://ccda.org)), World Renew ([worldrenew.net](http://worldrenew.net)), the Office of Social Justice ([justice.crcna.org](http://justice.crcna.org)), and groups in your area addressing poverty and hunger.
- » Gather some like-minded folks to do a small-group study of biblical justice such as Micah Challenge's *Live Justly* ([www.livejust.ly](http://www.livejust.ly)).

- » Become a social media ambassador on hunger and poverty with the Office of Social Justice.
- » Begin a prayer group at your church and enlist others in discerning God's direction.
- » Seek the advice and help of your church's deacons.
- » Advocate against poverty and hunger by speaking with public officials in your area.

Do not give up fighting for the people who need our help and advocacy. I'm praying for you.

Reginald Smith is director of race relations and social justice. He attends Madison Square Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.

### Relationships

**Is counseling always the best option for personal or relationship troubles? I don't have much money, and professional help is expensive.**

There are a number of ways psychological and relational problems can be addressed without the need for professional help. Many "self-help" groups are available, sponsored by associations such as Alcoholics (Narcotics, Overeaters, Gamblers or Sex-addiction) Anonymous, in which people struggling with similar tendencies toward addictive behaviors of all kinds find community and help with their struggles.

Other community groups provide a safe place to share experiences related to violence such as war trauma, family incest or other abuse, bullying, or victimization through crime. In these groups, personal healing can happen when post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms are validated and strategies for coping and healing are shared. There are cancer survivors' groups and mental health support groups—in fact, if the experience of a difficulty has been named, there will be a support group to help sufferers deal with it. Increasingly such support can also be found online.

In our church I joined a small group designed to help those who are familiar with the experience of depression and anxiety disorders. Our "expert" consisted of a book called *Mind Over Mood*, which outlines cognitive-behavior therapy (CBT), a therapeutic approach for the healing of these mental health disorders which has met with considerable success. In this approach, painful emotions and fears are influenced by reframing the meaning behind the feelings one suffers.

The book was very thorough in teaching new strategies that were helpful for self-understanding and for promoting change, but what I found to be most profound was the freedom within our group to share about our mental health "weaknesses"—the experience of depression and/or anxiety disorders—in a safe and supportive context.

I believe Christ calls us all to "share our burdens" with each other and to experience the freedom together to be who we really are.

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

### Ethics/Politics

**What is the government's role (if any) in regulating wealth so that people who have few economic opportunities (for a variety of reasons outside of their control, including class, race, disability, or broken families) have more access to opportunities?**

I believe a biblical perspective on this issue avoids both totalitarianism and individualism. In a totalitarian state the government exercises its power to regulate almost anything necessary to achieve economic equality. On the other extreme, individualism prefers as little government intervention as possible. It is up to individuals to

freely succeed or fail in the economic race.

Reformed Christian thinkers tend to occupy the middle ground between these two extremes. We believe there are limits to the government's scope and authority. But we also recognize that in a sinful world, the strong and powerful will almost certainly disadvantage the weak and poor by controlling the inside track of the economic race. Governments need to help ensure a fair race. This has strong biblical warrant: "The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern" (Prov. 29:7).

The Bible does not see poverty as simply caused by individual lifestyle choices but also by oppression from the ungodly powerful (Job 20:19; Ps. 14:6, 17:14; Ezek. 18:12; Amos 4:1). The Old Testament laws for Israel do not only regulate criminal justice for theft and murder but also regulate "proper working conditions and wages of laborers, the rights of the poor to the leavings of the grain and vintage harvest, provisions against the exploitation of the poor . . . and other important regulations" (H. Henry Meeter, *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism*, pp. 102-103). The Bible strongly rebukes any society that fails to help the poor. In fact, one of the sins of Sodom was not helping the poor and needy (Ezek. 16:49).

Therefore, in the words of our contemporary testimony, "we urge governments and pledge ourselves . . . to bring justice to the poor and oppressed" (*Our World Belongs to God*, Art. 53).

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



## New Mexico Church to Run on Solar Energy

### NEWS

For more news about the churches and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church, visit *TheBanner.org*. Or get the free app by searching for “CRCNA Banner” in your app store.

#### Follow *The Banner* on social media:

» Facebook.com/crcbanner  
» Twitter @crcbanner, #crcbanner

#### Got a news tip?

Visit *TheBanner.org/News* and use the “Got a Tip” button. Or contact the news editor at [news@TheBanner.org](mailto:news@TheBanner.org).



Rick Kruis (orange shirt) with the crew that installed Bethany CRC’s solar carport.

This fall, the people of Bethany Christian Reformed Church in Gallup, N.M., watched as a local company constructed an 1,800-foot carport fixed with 100 solar panels in their church parking lot. The solar energy collected from the panels will provide all the electrical needs for the church building.

The carport project was initiated by the church’s “green team” coordinated by Rick Kruis, a member of Bethany CRC and leader in the Christian Reformed Office of Social Justice Climate Witness Project.

The new construction was funded by investors within the church.

The investor team will sell the solar energy back to the church in the first several years at a fixed cost of 12 cents per kilowatt hour until the system has paid for itself. With those costs less than the current utility rate, the church will save approximately \$10,390 over eight years. After that, for the 25-year lifespan of the system, the church will have its energy supplied at no cost, saving about \$172,000 over time. The church’s carbon output will also be reduced, eliminating approximately 944 tons of carbon dioxide over the life of the system.

—Amy Toornstra

## Churches Partner with Counseling Services

Several Christian Reformed congregations in Ontario, Michigan, and Iowa have been making access to free and confidential mental health care available to their members by enrollment in a Congregation Assistance Plan or Church Assistance Program (CAP) provided through Shalem Mental Health Network or Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services.

The congregation-wide plans differ slightly, but the basics of CAP in both cases is the same: churches enroll for a set annual fee based on membership size; members of enrolled churches can then access a limited number of

professional counseling sessions for a variety of different needs for free.

“We feel that CAP is a vital ministry that a church can provide to its members, adherents, and community,” said Mark Vander Vennen, Shalem’s executive director and a member of Grace CRC in Cobourg, Ont. “These needs are important for a church community to acknowledge and address as part of its mission to serve others in the name of the gospel.”

Shalem has been offering CAP for more than 10 years, since Rehoboth CRC in Bowmanville and Grace CRC in Toronto, Ont., participated in the first pilot projects in 2006. Now 54 Christian Reformed churches in that province participate, as well as churches from five other denominations. Pine Rest, with clinics throughout Michigan and in two Iowa cities, has been offering its similar

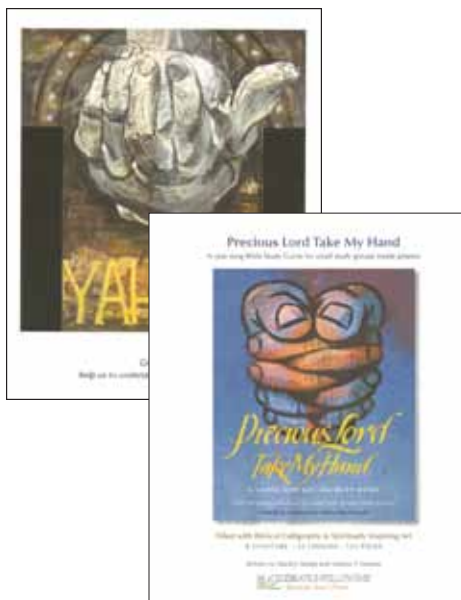
enrollment programs for churches since the 1980s. About half of its 50 CAP partners are Christian Reformed congregations.

With CAP, congregants can contact the providing network directly without the need of a referral, so barriers to help are low. Churches pay for the enrollment fee in different ways: some budgeting the full amount, some taking designated second offerings for the program throughout the year, or having the deacons subsidize the budgeted amount through a benevolence fund.

Rev. Ronald Kool, a pastor at Hillside Community Church, a Christian Reformed congregation enrolled in CAP for 10 years, said “The program ‘normalizes’ getting help for mental and behavioral issues people are facing.”

—Alissa Vernon





Including religious art throughout the guide is meant to inspire prisoners and connect them to the wider church body.

## More Congregations Behind Bars Want Prison Church's Beautiful Study Guide

*Precious Lord Take My Hand*, an art-filled, 52-week study guide produced by Celebration Fellowship Church (CFC) for congregants of the multi-site prison church in Ionia, Mich., has caught the eye of other prison fellowships throughout the United States. Originally developed for Celebration Fellowship's own congregations—as a resource for their weekly worship and conversation—the initial 500-copy print run in July 2016 was covered by private donations.

“The only thing that mattered to us was that we wanted it to be beautiful. We wanted a wow factor. We wanted each of these guys to have their own personal copy,” said Dave Koetje, one of the book’s authors and a commissioned member of Celebration Fellowship. Commissioned members are volunteers belonging to another CRC who are committed to participating and worshipping in one of the CFC’s three prison congregations.

When there was an interest from other prison churches, Koetje said they began to work on a model to get the costs down—the first run worked out to about \$70 per book—and make another print run possible, something they hope to roll out in early January.

Following the church calendar, *Precious Lord Take My Hand* guides participants through eight modules, including Advent and Lent, and also chapters called “Freedom from Addiction,” “Beyond Prison,” and “Caring for God’s People”—lessons on what it means to be part of Christ’s church.

—Alissa Vernon

## IN MEMORIAM



*Rev. Calvin W.  
Niewenhuis*

1928–2017

Cal Niewenhuis was a quiet, humble, patient, and hard-working man. A good listener and a great storyteller, he held his children, grandchildren, and others spellbound with tales of growing up on a farm near Corsica, S.D. Niewenhuis died on October 8 in Grand Rapids, Mich. He was 89.

Niewenhuis was ordained in 1956. He went on to serve seven Christian Reformed congregations in Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, New Jersey, South Dakota, and North Carolina. He retired in 1993.

Niewenhuis loved to fix things around the house and work on cars.

Niewenhuis was preceded in death by his wife, Ethel, for whom he was a loving caregiver for the last years of her life as she became increasingly disabled. He is survived by four children and their spouses, 18 grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

## IN MEMORIAM



*Rev. Randolph  
(Randy)  
Bradley Baker*

1943–2017

Randy Baker was a humble man with a servant heart who preferred working behind the scenes. Involvement with the civil rights movement during the 1960s instilled in him a passion to work toward justice in inner-city marginalized communities.

Baker began ministry in Chicago among African American and Hispanic youth, founding the city’s Christian Youth Center. With Manny and Blanca Ortiz, Baker and his wife, Sue, planted Spirit and Truth Fellowship in Chicago. They planted a second Spirit and Truth Fellowship in Philadelphia, Pa.

Bivocational for most of his life, Baker also worked as program developer at the Center for Urban Theological Studies and then as director of education at Whosoever Gospel Mission.

Baker will be lovingly remembered by Sue, his wife of 51 years; their four children and their spouses; and six grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

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

**READ MORE ONLINE**

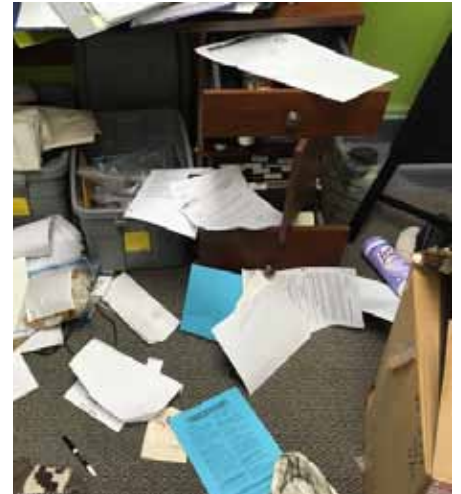
## Urban Aboriginal Ministry Seeks Help Dealing with Drug Crisis

The Indigenous Family Centre (IFC) in Winnipeg, Man., is a community resource focused on feeding the bodies, minds, souls, and spirits of marginalized and vulnerable people. One of three urban aboriginal ministries operated by the Christian Reformed Church, IFC is not a drug rehabilitation or treatment center, and in the midst of Winnipeg's current drug addiction crisis, the staff needs help—some of which could come from investing in youth.

"As a small resource center located in the north end, we have seen a huge rise in the number of young addicts. And they're not just dabbling. They are injecting dangerous street drugs that induce a craving many of us cannot imagine," wrote Michele Visser, the center's director, in a Facebook message she posted as a call for support. "We are not truly equipped to deal with a drug epidemic of this magnitude."

Melody (who asked that her last name not be used), is a regular participant in programs at IFC. She knows what it is like to be addicted to crystal meth, a crystallized form of d-methamphetamine, made and sold illegally throughout the U.S. and Canada. "You don't feel sad or lonely when you're high, but you start to feel that when you're coming down. And when you're coming down from drugs, you start to believe that everyone is turning against you. . . . I would go look for the high again so I wouldn't have to feel that," she said.

Visser believes the key to addressing the problem is investing intentionally in children and youth. "They say that if one adult is involved in a child's life, the chances of them going down that road are so much lower. It doesn't have to be our program, it doesn't have to be a specifically Christian program, it's just you—people, Christians—being a caring, safe, mentoring adult in young people's lives," Visser said.



A trashed office at IFC, after a visitor sleeping off a drug high had been inadvertently left alone.

Melody's suggestions are similar. "Many kids become addicted because they have overwhelming feelings of not knowing who they are or where they belong. We need more prevention and more awareness. Show the youth you care about them. We need more people working with their hearts to feel what is actually going on."

—Krista dela Rosa

## Friendship Clubs Gather at Festival

Clearview Christian Reformed Church in Oakville, Ont., hosted Friendship Festival in late October. The annual gathering welcomed friends to sing, create crafts, laugh, and give God "Every Praise."

Jacqui, a friend who attends the Friendship group at First CRC Guelph (Ont.)—one of hundreds of church groups bringing together adults with and without disabilities in friendship—really enjoys the event and has attended seven times. "I love all the singing and just being with the friends all day," she said.

The 2017 festival's theme "Every Praise Is to Our God" saw friends from various clubs sharing their musical gifts. "I had a good time at the festival. I enjoyed handing out festival wristbands to people at the start of the day. I enjoyed Karina's song," said Joel Dickinson, a friend from Oakville who also participated



in worship. "I played guitar and sang with Kevin and Herb at the beginning of the festival."

"There is a freedom at an event like this: come as you are, worship how you want," said Marlene Nirula, a Friendship leader at Clearview CRC. "There is no judgment, no awkward stares . . . sing, dance, and join in. All to the glory of God."

—Krista Dam-VandeKuyt

## 'It Is Here and We Need to Help Stop It': Human Trafficking



In November, Trinity Christian Reformed Church in Grandville, Mich., hosted community educator Jenn Amo's presentation of her "Warning Lights" curriculum, a prevention-based approach to the risks of human trafficking.

Amo quotes the U.S. State Department's definition of trafficking as the "recruiting, harboring, transportation, providing, or obtaining of a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through force, fraud, or coercion." The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 300,000 American children are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. In Canada, the most recent statistics from 2014 show a doubling of police-reported human trafficking violations from the previous year.

A youth ambassador for Women At Risk International, Amo serves as a donor-funded missionary combatting the problem of human trafficking through prevention and education.

"[Youth and young adults] are so targeted, and there was absolutely nothing in regards to communication, education, or protection that was available to arm them with awareness," Amo said. She presents the high school and college age-focused curriculum across the U.S. wherever she is invited to speak.

Chris Dykema, a deacon at Trinity CRC who serves on the church's safety team, was instrumental in organizing the event. He said just over 100 people attended, and about 80 of the participants were young people.

"One of Trinity's items on our Vision Statement is to do justice," Dykema said. "This fits right in. It is happening in our backyard. I feel we are in a Christian bubble and don't always want to talk about the bad. But it is here and we need to help stop it."

The Canadian Council of Churches has produced a resource called "Human Trafficking in Canada: A Leadership and Learning Kit for Churches." The Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue also tracks human trafficking as one of its key justice issues.

—Alissa Vernon

### NOTEWORTHY



**Neal DeRoo**, associate professor of philosophy at The King's University in Edmonton, Alta., has been named a **Canada Research Chair in Phenomenology and Philosophy of Religion**. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding scholarship and research; it comes with a grant of \$500,000 CDN over five years.



**Rev. John Postuma**, retired CRC pastor in Haldimand-Norfolk, Ont., was honored with a **Canada 150 medal** recognizing his work in healing and reconciliation between Haldimand County, Six Nations Reserve, and the Mississaugas of the New Credit.

### IN MEMORIAM



*Rev. Paul Chul Soo Hahn*  
1933–2017

A visionary pastor, church planter, teacher, and mentor, Rev. Paul Hahn passed away in Korea on June 20 from cancer at the age of 84.

After teaching at KoRyo Seminary, Hahn moved to the United States in 1980 to plant a church in Los Angeles, Calif. For the next 35 years, he served the Christian Reformed Church as a pastor and on the boards of its ministry agencies, retiring in 1992. He was a pioneer in mentoring Korean-American CRC pastors.

Hahn will be well remembered as a loving father, husband, and, most of all, faithful servant. His pastoral care and daily life were filled with humor and genuine concern for people. His daughter, Grace Paek, said, "My beloved father pioneered the immigration churches and positively influenced many CRC pastors. He always made time to listen to his children with high interest."

His youngest son, Rev. Hong (John), said his father liked to play piano, sing, and read.

Hahn will be missed by his wife, Sarah; by their three children and their spouses; and by nine grandchildren.

—Jonathan Kim



## News Feature

## Clergy Couples: A Small but Growing Part of the CRC

The ordination of women and an increasing number of women attending seminary set the stage for the phenomenon of clergy couples—married pastors serving in ministry. Some couples share one full-time position in a church, others pastor different congregations. In other cases, one serves in an area such as chaplaincy or a denominational ministry. Ten of the approximately 30 clergy couples in the Christian Reformed Church offered to talk about the distinctive rewards and challenges of such marriages and ministries. [Five are featured here; the full article can be found at [tinyurl.com/banner-pastor-couples](http://tinyurl.com/banner-pastor-couples).] Churches pondering a call to a clergy couple may find some guidance here. Couples in seminary and newly ordained clergy couples may also find the reflections and collective advice helpful. As one pastor commented, “Because it’s a lifestyle that there isn’t much precedence for, it’s been harder to figure out just how to go about this whole thing. There’s a plethora of books and resources to guide the traditional solo pastor just starting out. . . . We’re sort of just making it up as we go.”

—Janet Greidanus



**Pastors Trevor and Julia Vanderveen** began dating in seminary. They were ordained in 2007 and called to co-pastor First CRC in Vancouver, B.C., where they worked side by side for nearly 10 years. Julia now serves in high school chaplaincy while Trevor remains at the church. “We now serve in different ministry contexts,” said Julia, “and are grateful for this season of being able to continue in ministry together, though not as co-pastors.”

“Over the years, our collaboration brought so much joy. Of course, there were times when the overlapping of life and ministry required resilience and creativity on

our part, and encouragement and patience from others. When we welcomed our three boys into our family, we learned that childcare was needed, even on Sunday mornings, in order to help us be fully present at church. We also needed to clarify expectations with each other and with our congregation about how to communicate and who should be responsible for what. There were messy moments, and things we would do differently now, but we still see how God was joining us together in love as we carried out the tasks we felt called to do. We allowed each other to play to our strengths and we covered each other’s weaknesses—like teammates do.”



When **Nate and Samantha DeJong McCarran** graduated from seminary in 2009, they thought they’d serve somewhere together. They tried it, but things didn’t work out as they expected. Currently, Nate is the lead pastor at Fuller Ave. CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich., where he’s been for four years. They are now a family of five. After years as a stay-at-home mom, Samantha has found joy and fulfillment working part time for the denomination in the office of Pastor Church Resources. The flexibility and limited evening and weekend work fits well with their family’s needs. They feel very blessed in their situation.

Nate is skeptical that co-pastoring can work. “Loyalty will always be first and foremost for the other person, so it can work if things are going well, but it’s difficult if conflict arises. If a clergy couple serves a church and Chair of Council needs to approach one with a complaint or problem, how does the other react? There’s a lot of beauty in both [spouses] being called to ministry, but I would caution clergy couples from seeking to serve in the same church body and encourage them to explore the diversity and richness that God’s call can be in their lives.”



**Pastors Tim and Heidi De Jonge** married while in seminary. She currently pastors Westside Fellowship CRC in Kingston, Ont.; he is chaplain at Trillium Care Community, a long-term care center. Previously, they have each served in three different settings. The De Jonges discerned and made three commitments early on: they would not serve in the same setting; they would worship in the same congregation; and they would not both work full-time while parenting a young family. They both enjoy understanding the other's vocation while each having their own place to grow and learn, and they appreciate being able to help each other out. Tim has preached for Heidi, and she has led

services at his workplace. Perhaps someday God will lead them to work in the same place, but presently they find their togetherness in marriage and parenting enhanced by their separate ministry settings.



**Pastors Tony and Jennifer Holmes Curran** have been co-pastoring for six years, sharing one full-time position at New Hope Community Church, a small rural congregation in Shelby, Mich. "We have a 3-year-old son and 2-year-old twin daughters, so co-pastoring allows us a lot of flexibility we wouldn't have in more traditional roles," said Tony. He thinks the best part of sharing a call with his wife is having a constant partner in a role that can otherwise feel

lonely and isolating. "It helps when the person who makes God's love and grace most real to me is sitting right beside me—whether it be at the helm of the weighty council meeting, in the living room of the couple who just lost a baby, or in bed in the middle of the night when I can't sleep because I'm plagued with self-doubt. When Jen is with me, I remember that 'the Lord is with me.'"



**Pastors Amanda Bakale and Brian Bork** discerned when they finished seminary that they did not want to pastor together. Brian has been campus pastor at the University of Waterloo for almost 10 years. Amanda worked for several years in an ordained position with World Renew, and is now one of three full-time pastors at Community CRC in Kitchener, Ont., where she's been for the past three years.

During the school year Brian worships at Waterloo CRC while Amanda and their 2-year-old daughter are members of Community CRC. "I think there's a lot more positives that outweigh the challenges" of being a two-congregation household, Amanda said. "We are

partners in each other's ministry. We have a built-in support system." Brian agreed: "It's a big plus to have a partner dedicated to the same denomination and with an understanding of your ministry." The couple sets aside Friday evening to Saturday evening as uninterrupted family time.

### *Advice for Clergy Couples Starting Out Their Ministry*

- » Establish and maintain proper work and life boundaries from the get-go. Having good boundaries can keep you healthy over the long haul.
- » Do things to prioritize and enrich your marriage. Have a regular date night protected from any ministry obligations—except for emergencies.
- » Don't talk about church matters before going to bed.
- » Develop friendships and hobbies outside of your marriage and church life.
- » Rejoice with each other's accomplishments and be supportive when there are failures; only give ministry advice when the other asks for it.
- » Find professional supports—like a mentor, spiritual director, counselor, peer support group—outside of your marriage and ministry.
- » Have an honest conversation about gifts and abilities, and consider dividing the work on that basis. Celebrate each other's differences.

## News Digest

by *Banner* Correspondents

### Ontario Churches Meet to Strengthen Youth Ministry

Drayton (Ont.) Christian Reformed Church hosted EQUIP in mid-November, a day of fellowship and learning for people working in youth and children's ministry in their region. Approximately 70 people attended the event organized by the Classis Huron Youth Ministry Team. With two guest speakers and a worship band, the day focused on leadership, teamwork, and youth culture.

### New York Congregations Celebrate Emerging Church



Chin Christian Church (CCCS) in Syracuse, N.Y., joined the CRC in emerging church status this fall, as Classis Atlantic Northeast, the regional group of churches, accepted the congregation as a daughter church of East Palmyra (N.Y.) CRC. The group of refugees from Myanmar has been worshipping together for almost 10 years; they celebrated the affiliation at a service held at East Palmyra CRC in November.

### Teens Open Storefront Hangout

A group of teens working with CRC-supported community worker Kurt Rietema in Kansas City, Kan., opened Snack Shack KC last fall. The reclaimed empty storefront now serves as a place to "chill with friends," said Rhiannon, 18. Zaira, 18, another founder of the venture, said: "We hope that maybe this also inspires other people to fix up other places in our downtown too."

### B.C. Church Serves as Shelter



Gateway Community CRC in Abbotsford, B.C., is hosting a 30-bed extreme weather shelter for the second season. Members of the congregation volunteer to bring warm meals for the evenings and take shifts supervising during the 12-hour period the church is open for guests. The measures are in response to a city request for additional shelters during inclement weather.

### Las Vegas Church Unites in Prayer



The congregation of Areumdawoon Korean CRC in Las Vegas, Nev., is renewing its commitment to evangelism in the city. "I pray that the people of our church and even our neighbors will know Jesus well, live a joyful faith life, and walk in the grace of the Lord," said Rev. Dae Woo Park, pastor of the church, during last fall's Prayer Connect—21 days of early morning prayer and times of devotion dedicated to seeing the vision of God's kingdom for the city.

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

[READ MORE](#) [ONLINE](#)

### IN MEMORIAM



*Rev.*

*Howard B. Spaan*

1920 - 2017

Pastor, church planter, traveler, and family historian, Howard Spaan holds the record for longest-serving stated clerk of classis after serving 46 years in Classis Columbia, a regional group of churches in Oregon and southern Washington. He retired at age 91. He continued gardening and walked daily until he was 95. Spaan died on October 19 at age 97.

After ordination in 1947, Spaan served Christian Reformed congregations in Michigan, Ohio, and Oregon. He retired in 1985. In his retirement, he accepted temporary pastoral assignments in several western states.

Throughout the years, Spaan had a great interest in church government and wrote a book on the subject. He loved to travel, sharing his love of history and geography with his sons. He also liked to hike.

He wrote and published his memoirs at the age of 90.

Spaan is survived by Margaret, his wife of 70 years; by their four sons and their spouses; and by two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus



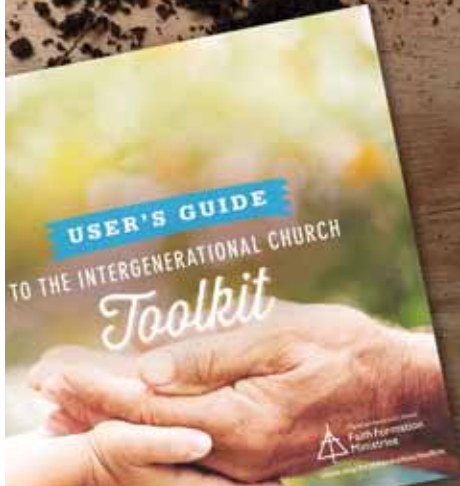
# FREE RESOURCES TO HELP FAITH GROW

WONDERING HOW TO SHARE FAITH STORIES IN WORSHIP?  
OR HOW TO BE A TRULY INTERGENERATIONAL CHURCH?

Our **online toolkits** contain dozens of **creative, practical ideas** any congregation can use.

**Toolkits cover a wide variety of faith formation topics:**

- Intergenerational Church Toolkit
- Faith Storytelling Toolkit
- Professing Our Faith Toolkit
- Building Blocks of Faith Toolkit
- Children's Ministry Toolkit
- Welcoming Children to the Lord's Supper Toolkit
- Pastor's Spiritual Vitality Toolkit



[crcna.org/FaithFormation](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation)



Christian Reformed Church  
**Faith Formation Ministries**

Think you can change the world with a policy?

# We do.

**CHANGE** can be big, like Parliament Hill big.

Or it can be small, like making an agenda small.

It's about what you choose to do on the one hand, and who you are on the other. We are more than our jobs, and God has a calling for each of us, wherever we go.

That changes everything.

Starting with you.

[redeemer.ca](http://redeemer.ca)



**REDEEMER**  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

*A degree you can believe in.*



# What Does Church Planting Look Like Today?

by Brian Clark

DWELLCHURCH

Connecting the  
Mission of God  
to the Bowery

Sunday Worship 5 PM  
59 Cooper Square  
dwellnyc.org

**An Increase in  
Satellite Campuses  
and Unconventional  
Meeting Spaces**

It's opening weekend for the latest superhero movie in Vancouver, B.C. Bucket of popcorn and 3-D glasses in hand, three enthusiastic fans slip into the theater early, hoping to get a good seat. To their surprise, there aren't any previews on the screen in

front of them. What they see is a group of people standing in line to take bread and wine.

Welcome to the world of church planting.

Members of The Tapestry (Christian Reformed) Church planted its Marpole campus for encounters like this to meet people at one of contemporary culture's focal points. After all, people probably wouldn't accidentally walk into The Tapestry's main campus, which meets in a traditional church building the way they would into a movie theater.

"We are in a nexus when it comes to contemporary life in the city of Vancouver," said Jesse Pals, Tapestry Marpole's lead pastor, referring to the way his church serves as a bridge to the community. "We meet in a hub of an entertainment complex. People are coming throughout the day to eat popcorn and participate in pop culture in the same place where we're worshipping Jesus."

Many church plants across North America are taking similar approaches. Wherever they are meeting—be it a movie theater, an art gallery, or a hotel—they are ministering where people already are, instead of expecting new believers to walk into a traditional church building.

This response is necessary in a world that is filled with people who are increasingly post-Christian, explained Kevin Schutte, who serves as the mission-shaped congregations leader for Resonate Global Mission.

Schutte works to address the fact that being a Christian is no longer the default for people in North America. In some places, this isn't a new problem—there's an entire generation that has never had any experience with the church. In other places, post-Christianity is just beginning as people drift out the back door of churches in early adulthood. Schutte said that all of our Christian Reformed congregations need to be prepared to live with this new reality.

"I don't think church planting is changing because we want to do something different, but because of broad cultural shifts," said Schutte. "In today's culture, the kind of church plant a neighborhood needs depends on the neighborhood.

So Resonate works with church planters to discover what God is up to in each place, which allows the church to fit its community."

These "variety of forms" might include taking communion before the *Avengers* movie, roasting coffee for the neighborhood to enjoy, or another expression of Christ's love. What these churches all share is an attempt to answer a common question: what does it mean to live out the gospel as a church in this context?

**God Has  
Long-Term  
Plans for  
Short-Term  
Plants**

The majority of CRC church plants Resonate has worked with over the past decade are still serving their communities. In fact, 144 churches planted in the last 10 years are thriving. However, sometimes the call to plant a church turns out to be temporary, and the church folds after a few years. In these situations, church planters have found that even when a church stops meeting, their efforts have not been in vain.

One planter who recently discovered this was Pete Armstrong of Dwell, a church planted in the bustling world of New York City. Dwell sought to help people take a deep breath and find community in the body of Christ. After many challenges that come with being located in the center of a city, leaders at Dwell made the difficult decision to close their doors after six years of ministry. They held their final service in December 2016.

"Obviously this isn't what I was hoping God would do," said Armstrong. "But now, [several] months later, I can laugh about presuming God's will and say I have more joy in ministry than ever before, and I see clearly how God used the church plant."

Some of the ways that God used the church plant were evident at the church's final service.

People who had moved away traveled back for the day. Members from all of Dwell's six years shared testimonies of how Jesus worked in their life through their time at Dwell. Fittingly, Armstrong preached using the popular Broadway musical *Hamilton* to illustrate hope in death.

"Our identity is in Christ and our hope is in the gospel," said Armstrong. "I think we need that message the most when it seems like our dream has died. The gospel became more real to me through this experience."

Many of the people involved at Dwell have continued to serve the community where it was located. Others have moved away and shared with Armstrong how they are serving Christ in places like Singapore, the Netherlands, and China.

The lessons Armstrong learned at Dwell aren't going to waste. Today he serves at Parklane CRC (Portland, Ore.) and also as a local mission leader with Resonate Global Mission.



"I felt like I messed up and failed, but that's not how Jesus treats us," added Armstrong. "Now I get to serve other people and help the CRC be even stronger in mission, and that feels great."

### Church Plants

### Should Respond

### to the

### Neighborhood's

### Needs

Another church planter who has had experience planting multiple churches is Jeff Heerspink. Heerspink and his wife, Beth, are currently serving at F Street Neighborhood Church in Lincoln, Neb.

True to its name, members of this three-year-old church plant make it their goal to serve the neighborhood around them—a neighborhood where 88 percent of students at the nearest elementary school qualify for free or reduced lunch and 72 percent are people of color. These figures include Alexis and Taylor (names changed), sisters who have been coming to the church for about two years.

Beth Heerspink has gotten to know Alexis and Taylor, as well as their mother, Marsa. For these two sisters, getting a meal can be one of their biggest challenges, especially in the summer when school does not provide lunch and their mother is away at work.

"If they want something to eat, they usually have to find some peanut butter and put it on a piece of bread or cook up some ramen," said Beth, explaining that the children lack skills to cook other meals on their own. "Or they buy chips and donuts with the food stamp card their mom gives them."

It's not that Alexis and Taylor are abandoned, but poverty and an unfair justice system have caused their family to slip through the cracks. Marsa is a refugee from Egypt who has had a hard time keeping a regular job because of unreliable childcare and transportation. She cannot afford a stable place to live for her family, much less the legal fees she needs to combat false child support claims. Even though these things are beyond her control, she is not eligible for childcare subsidies until she can pay the legal fees. This leaves the children on their own in the summer, including at mealtimes.

After meeting children like Alexis and Taylor, members of the church decided to try a new ministry. With a community engagement grant from Resonate Global Mission, the church began a cooking class that taught children like Alexis and Taylor how to saute vegetables, shred chicken, and prepare other foods safely. They also discussed what it means to gather as a family around a table and pray before meals. After each class, the children get to eat the healthy meal they have prepared.

"Alexis and Taylor loved trying new foods they had never had before, from fettuccini Alfredo to Tater Tot casserole to homemade spaghetti sauce and pizzas," added Beth.



A cooking class for children helped F Street Neighborhood Church meet the needs of some of their neighbors and opened the door for future relationships.

Alexis and Taylor continue to learn new cooking skills, as well as stories from the Bible. The Heerspinks see this as one way the church can be the hands and feet of Christ and introduce others to the gospel.

"Meeting with the kids really gives you a glimpse of the neighborhood," said Jeff. "As you work with them, you get to know the parents. As you work with the parents through other programs, you get to know the kids."

Every community includes people with needs like those of Alexis, Taylor, and Marsa. If your church wants help in reaching out, consult the list of resources in the next page.

### The CRC Is

### Planting and

### Renewing in

### Exciting Ways

Kevin Schutte refers to the cooking class at F Street and similar programs as "gospel entry points" for members of the community.

"Successful church plants are engaging the neighborhood where they're at," said Schutte. "This tends to be more initially focused on community service. So Sunday morning worship becomes an expression but not an entry point for new members of the church."

At Synod 2017, representatives discussed declining CRC membership with the resolve to "reverse the trend through church renewal and planting" (Overture 11). This is also something that leaders at Resonate are passionate about addressing, and they are excited to work with congregations and classes to reverse the trend.

If your church is considering a new plant or wants to renew itself, thinking about your church's gospel entry points is a great place to start. Schutte added that these entry points all have one important ingredient: an emphasis on people, not programs.

"The non-churchgoer in our culture isn't going to be attracted to a 'nicer' facility or 'better' worship band," said Schutte. "Instead, they are going to become engaged at an individual, communal level."

*Resources for Church Planting and Renewal***Calvin Seminary's  
Renewal Lab**[calvinseminary.edu/the-renewal-lab](http://calvinseminary.edu/the-renewal-lab)

A two-year renewal journey for the purpose of developing intentional missional congregations that make more and better disciples who transform lives and communities for Christ.

**Worship Ministries Webinars**[crcna.org/worship](http://crcna.org/worship)

Many of the webinars offered by the CRC's Worship Ministries serve to renew churches in their worship planning. Specifically, "How the Heart of God Shapes Our Worship" discusses how the identity of the people who gather for worship should shape our planning.

**Faith Formation Ministries**[crcna.org/faithformation](http://crcna.org/faithformation)

FFM provides CRC churches with practical resources and free coaching designed to strengthen faith formation efforts with children, youth, and adults.

**Healthy Church**[crcna.org/healthychurch](http://crcna.org/healthychurch)

The Healthy Church process, carried out over a 6- to 9-month period, provides an accurate picture and broad ownership for strengths that can be celebrated and continued, along with challenges that need to be addressed.

**Church Juice**[churchjuice.com](http://churchjuice.com)

Church Juice is a website produced by ReFrame Media (Back to God Ministries International) where church leaders can learn how to intentionally engage their congregations and communities in meaningful ways. Here

you'll find free resources to help you refine your church's communication tools.

**Ignite Grants**[crcna.org/ignite](http://crcna.org/ignite)

These grants encourage and enable new ministry innovation and initiatives by providing seed money and other resources to support new ministries for a short time until they can sustain themselves through their own support or through an agency, ministry, church, or classis.

**Resonate Global Mission**[ResonateGlobalMission.org](http://ResonateGlobalMission.org)

Resonate Global Mission Staff: From recruitment and assessment to mentoring and training, Resonate can walk alongside and provide support as churches are planted throughout the United States and Canada.

Resonate Global Mission Grants: Through Resonate, church planters can get connected to coaching and training to help them grow as pastors and leaders. Additionally, church plants who partner with Resonate have access to grant funding for everything from equipment to community engagement. These grants are a vital way Resonate continues to plant more new Christian Reformed churches every year.

## Pastor Learns Lessons in Church Renewal

"I was three months into the Renewal Lab journey when this exciting and daunting realization struck me: *Nothing's gonna happen unless I start doing something around here!* And the number one thing I had to start doing was to have the right attitude about renewal," recalled Rev. Zach Olson.

Olson is the pastor at East Leonard Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich. In June 2015, he joined others as part of the third cohort of churches to participate in a pilot project of Calvin Theological Seminary called Church Renewal Lab.

Under the leadership of project director Rev. Keith Doornbos and a five-member teaching team, the Renewal Lab creates a learning environment where pastors and church leaders come together to talk about their current ministry and gain tools to foster renewal in their congregations.

"True renewal begins when a church joins Christ on his mission of making more and better disciples," explained Doornbos. That mission, he said, is supported by four essentials: abiding, vision, leadership, and health.

To train people in these renewal essentials, the Renewal Lab coaches pastors and their 10-member renewal teams on a two-year journey toward making more and better disciples. At any given time, 20 to 30 churches are involved in this process and participate in learning labs, team development, congregational engagement, reading assignments, and accountability.

During this same two-year journey, Doornbos explained, congregations invest in a three-step process of listening, imagining, and doing, with an ultimate goal of creating a strategic missional plan.

East Leonard CRC has seen several results come out of this Renewal lab process. The church has placed a greater emphasis on discipleship and gospel preaching. As a result, they now have a greater openness to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. They've seen leaders develop, and the congregation has a clear direction for the church's future.

"That's one of the reasons East Leonard joined the Renewal Lab in the first place," Olson explained. "We were a healthy church experiencing slow and steady growth, but we wanted a God-honoring trajectory for our future. Renewal Lab helped us ask the right questions, have the right discussions, and set the right priorities. I think the Renewal Lab would benefit any church that wants to make meaningful kingdom impact in their spheres of influence."

—Kristen deRoo VanderBerg, CRC Communications

## The View from Here

## Grab Hold and Step Forward

**AS WE MOVE FORWARD** into another new year, I think of God's promises as being something like handrails: they provide a sense of security, giving us something to hold on to when we stumble, as well as marking the way forward along the path God has laid out for us.

These promises are eternal and unfailing. God's "handrails" have been with us in the past, are with us now, and will be with us as we follow him into the future. Whether holding on tightly in times of challenge or hardly at all as we run forward in step with the Spirit, they guide our journey along the pathway.

God's will for our lives is that we should not fall off his path into the capricious, chaotic void that surrounds us. As our Contemporary Testimony, *Our World Belongs to God*, reminds us, we live in a world where "Satan and his evil forces seek whom they may scatter and isolate, but God, by his gracious choosing in Christ, gathers a new community—those who by God's gift put their trust in Christ."

It is through this new community that God works out his promises. So as I look to the new year, with the assurance of God's promises, I also look to the new community. By seeing what it's been up to and is presently focused on, I can catch a glimpse into the future.

Sometimes I worry about the trends I see—trends like decreasing participation in the church in North America. Synod 2017 drew our attention to the issue, asking that we become better versed in church planting.

When I look around the new community, what I see gives me hope. I am encouraged by such people as Rev. Jose Rayas at Valley Ridge Community Church in Socorro, Tex., as he and others pursue church planting and community development along the southern border of the U.S. I am heartened by Rev. John Bouwers at Crosstowne Church in Milton, Ont., where he is spreading the vision for church planting in Eastern Canada via an emerging Church Planting Institute.

Our path forward includes many such examples, and I believe one part of Christ's new community, the Christian Reformed Church, is faithfully moving into the future God has in store for us.

Looking further afield, I wonder how we can express more completely our unity in Christ with ecumenical partners. A number of delegates from East Africa attended Synod 2017, and they stayed afterward to consult with CRC and CRC-affiliated church leaders. For many of these ecumenical partners, their growing number of congregations is far outstripping the number of pastoral leaders they can produce.

I am encouraged that the Timothy Leadership Training Institute, an organization closely affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church that took root in Africa in the 1990s and has developed rapidly throughout the world, is being used mightily by God in many such places. I believe this part of Christ's new community, the CRC, will faithfully respond with this

and other ways to assist in pastoral development that is contextualized to each situation.

These are just a few examples from me. I challenge you to name your own fears and anxieties and then look around to find the handrails God's promises provide in his new community. Grab hold and step forward with the Spirit. And remember this prayer attributed to St. Patrick:

*Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ beneath me,  
Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit,  
Christ where I arise,  
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of every one who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.  
Salvation is of the Lord.  
Salvation is of the Christ.  
May your salvation, Lord, be ever with us.*



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

Spanish and Korean translations of this available at [TheBanner.org](http://TheBanner.org).



# Keeping Hope Alive

**“EVEN THOUGH WE MUST DEAL** with the storms in life, and we can’t ignore our problems, we must remain hopeful in all that we do and stay full of zeal, even when it’s hard,” said Deb Stouten, who underwent stroke rehabilitation at Calvin College Rehabilitation Services (CCRS).

In fall 2015, Stouten developed a large aortic aneurism close to her heart that needed immediate repair. During her surgery, Stouten suffered a severe brain bleed that was not discovered until several months later.

**The stroke affected her ability to perform everyday tasks.** “I had no balance and I couldn’t walk. I was using a walker all the time and had double vision,” she said. After several months of therapy, Stouten was referred to CCRS to continue her recovery.

Through her struggle, Stouten said she had to keep her hope alive. “That was the time I really had to look at my faith and rely on God. I tried to focus on my seven beautiful children and 11 grandchildren.”

Before her stroke, Stouten was a motivational speaker. “I had always shared stories of hope, but so many of my stories were about other people,” she said. “Now it’s my story.”

Stouten spent over a year working with CCRS occupational and physical therapists. She has regained much of her balance and walks with only a cane.

“I am a strong believer,” said Stouten. She said her faith, coupled with the expertise of CCRS, helped her focus on healing; it was like they put all the pieces of the puzzle together.



Deb Stouten maintained hope during rehabilitation.

“Here you feel like you’re a person, not a patient. That’s what makes this place so great; everyone feels really loved and cared for,” said Stouten. “It doesn’t feel clinical here. It’s warm.”

“They cared about not just getting my balance back, but getting me emotionally stable as well,” she said. “It was bittersweet leaving here. I was excited to be graduating, but these people have become friends.”

—Hannah Ebeling, Calvin College

## The Church in My Town

Elichi and Kazuto are coming to know Christ through BTGMI media outreach.



### ELICHI AND KAZUTO\* SHARE MORE THAN FRIENDSHIP.

They are on a journey together to learn about Jesus.

The boys live in Kumamoto, Japan, the city that was nearly destroyed in the April 2016 earthquake. Nearly every citizen was affected in some way.

During this time, Elichi and Kazuto discovered a new radio program called *Words of Hope*, produced by the Japanese outreach of Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI).

“We first launched the *Words of Hope* program following the devastating 2011 earthquake and tsunami in northern Japan,” explained BTGMI ministry leader Rev. Masao Yamashita. “Our goal was to address the spiritual needs of hurting people in this area.”

The program drew many people to faith in Christ and connected them to a local church after the 2011 earthquake. So BTGMI began to broadcast *Words of Hope* in the Kumamoto area after they experienced this similar tragedy.

Elichi and Kazuto listened faithfully to the program and started attending the Kumamoto Reformed Church, a BTGMI partner church.

The boys wanted to learn more about the Bible, so they signed up for the annual BTGMI summer Bible camp. They

met with other Christians and seekers for Bible study, worship, and fellowship.

“The summer camp and partnerships with local churches are crucial for discipling those who respond to our programs,” Yamashita noted.

In fact, local Japanese churches and BTGMI are partnering on a new initiative to produce a series of videos called “The Church in My Town” to help connect listeners and seekers to the local church.

The videos, distributed largely through social media, help remove barriers for those hesitant to attend church. The welcoming content helps viewers see how the local church offers community as it serves the neighborhood.

Whether it is radio or video that invites people like Elichi and Kazuto into relationship with Christ and his church, pray that these media outreach efforts continue to welcome people into his kingdom.

—Nancy Vander Meer, Back to God Ministries International

\*Names of minors changed to protect their privacy

# Fulani Christians Develop New Naming Ceremony

**PEOPLE WHO FOLLOW CHRIST** make up less than 1 percent of the Fulani population. So what it means to follow Christ, what it means to worship together, what it means to plant a church—these are mostly uncharted in Fulani culture.

Still, asking what the gospel looks like in a Muslim-majority West African culture has been on the forefront of the minds of Resonate Global Mission missionaries who have been working alongside them for more than 30 years.

**“We missionaries have always wanted an indigenous church as opposed to starting one ourselves or pastoring one,”** said one missionary. “All these years we’ve tried to walk alongside—not tell—and now we are seeing the fruit of that.”

Fulani Christians are embracing their new faith in Jesus Christ in surprising ways. Christianity is beginning to affect the very foundations of their culture. One piece of “fruit” came in the form of a Christian baby-naming ceremony that many of the missionaries witnessed a few years ago.

Binta came to the biannual gathering for believers feeling distraught. The young woman had recently celebrated the birth of a new child. But when it came time for her father-in-law to practice the Fulani tradition of naming the child, he refused because of Binta’s faith in Christ.

“Refusing to give the name is a big shame,” explained a Resonate missionary. “Imagine all the feelings that come along with not acknowledging your grandchild.” News that the grandparent refused to preside over the ceremony came as a shock to the community, and Binta was crushed.



Although the naming ceremony typically takes place separately for men and women, the group decided to gather together.

Hearing of this shameful treatment that Binta received, fellow believers at the conference wanted to help. Ultimately they decided that, as Binta’s family in Christ, they could host the baby naming ceremony themselves. What’s more, they decided to reshape the cultural ceremony in a way that would honor their faith in Christ.

Although this ceremony typically takes place separately for men and women, the group decided to gather together. They shared Bible verses, presented the baby, and prayed for him.

“It was beautiful, sitting there watching history being made at the first Fulani-Christian baby naming ceremony,” said the missionary. “We [missionaries] didn’t come up with this, it all came from their own.”

As the ceremony ended, Binta’s mother was moved by what she experienced. “We do have fathers, we are all together, you are our brothers, our family,” she said.

Ceremonies and other changes like this could make a difference for generations to come. The Fulani Christians said they could see themselves inviting their family to this type of ceremony in the future. It was still culturally acceptable, still “Fulani enough,” yet a good way to share their faith, said the missionary.

—Brian Clark, Resonate Global Mission



# 2017 RESOURCES

*for you and your church!*

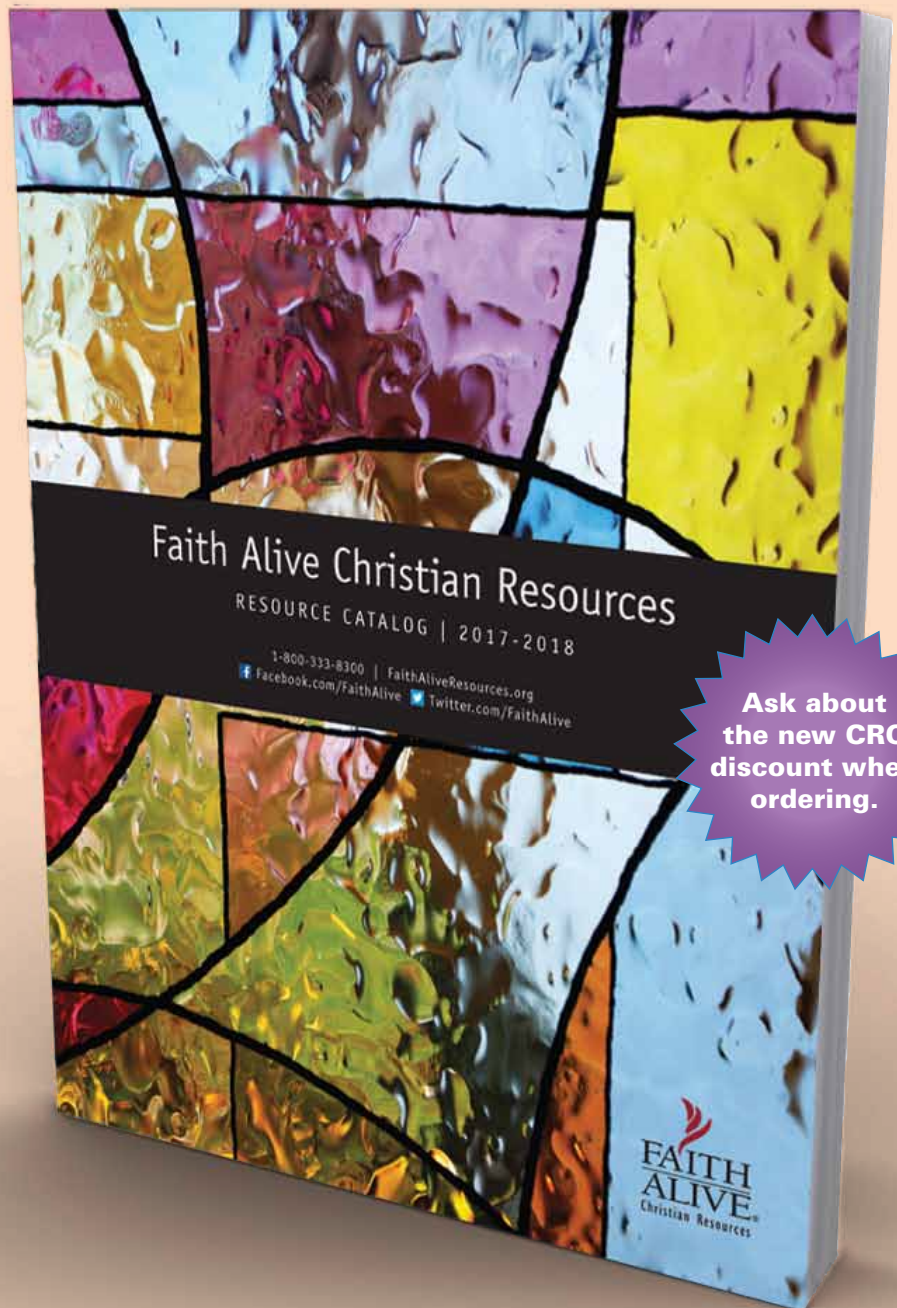
Faith Alive offers a variety of resources that support faith formation for people of all ages, from preschoolers to adults, including

- Sunday school curriculum
- youth group resources
- small group studies
- resources for worship planning
- products to support church leaders
- and much more!

Shop online today and view a PDF of the

**new 2017-2018  
Resource Catalog!**

  
**FAITH  
ALIVE**<sup>®</sup>  
Christian Resources



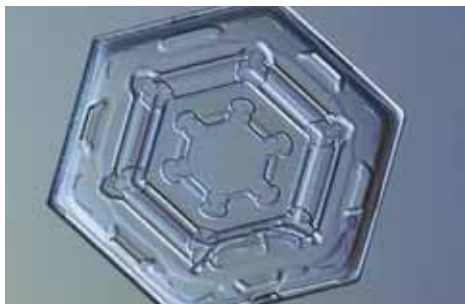
**Ask about  
the new CRC  
discount when  
ordering.**

36740

**FaithAliveResources.org/Catalog | 800-333-8300**

Reformed materials in Spanish are available from Libros Desafío.

# Dashing Through the Snow



**SNOWFLAKES ARE TINY** works of art. Each one is created by God, who loves to make beautiful things! But what makes them look the way they do?

## How Do Snowflakes Form?

A tiny piece of dust floats through the winter sky, minding its own business. Then a tiny drop of water bumps into it and they freeze together. That makes a crystal of ice.

As the ice crystal falls toward the earth, more drops of water freeze onto it. New crystals form. The more crystals get added, the fancier the snowflake. The temperature and humidity of the air also affect the shape of the snowflake.

## Snowflake Shapes

Even though no two snowflakes are exactly the same, there are four basic snowflake shapes:

» **Plates** (shown upper left) are the simplest and most common snowflake shape.

» **Columns** (shown lower left) look like the columns that hold up fancy buildings.

» **Needles** (shown upper right) make great snowballs.

» **Dendrites** (shown lower right) are the prettiest snowflake.

If it's snowing where you live, put on a dark-colored coat or sweatshirt and catch some snowflakes on your sleeve. Can you tell which shape they are?


## The Snowflake Police

When the people at Disney made the movie *Frozen*, they hired a scientist named Dr. Kenneth Libbrecht to make sure all their animated snowflakes looked real. That sounds like a great job, doesn't it? Watch him explain how he grows snowflakes in his laboratory at [tinyurl.com/Libbrecht](http://tinyurl.com/Libbrecht).

## Snow Facts

» If you had a plastic cube 12 inches (30 cm) wide and 12 inches high, you could fit about a billion snowflakes inside it.

» In 1963, one spot in southern Alaska got 78 inches (almost 2 meters) of snow in 24 hours!

» The record for the world's tallest snowman was set by people in the town of Bethel, Maine, in 2008. When it was finished, it was 122 feet (37.21 meters) tall. Its buttons were made of car tires! Read all about it at [tinyurl.com/TallSnowman](http://tinyurl.com/TallSnowman). 



Sandy Swartzentruber works for Faith Formation Ministries and attends Sherman Street CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich. She likes to watch it snow from indoors.



## Profile

# Alvin Plantinga

by Bruce Buursma

**W**hen Alvin Plantinga arose to accept the 2017 Templeton Prize for “progress in religion,” he couldn’t resist a wry observation.

“I don’t know if I’ve made much progress in religion,” the 85-year-old philosopher said in his best deadpan baritone. “I started out as a member of the Christian Reformed Church, and I’m still Christian Reformed.”

Plantinga, who spent his career as a Christian philosopher in long and productive teaching stints at his alma mater, Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., and at the University of Notre

Dame in South Bend, Ind., joins the roster of such distinguished and diverse Templeton Prize laureates as Mother Teresa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, Jean Vanier, and the Dalai Lama.

“Sometimes ideas come along that revolutionize the way we think,” said Heather Templeton Dill, president of the John Templeton Foundation. “Alvin Plantinga recognized that not only did religious belief not conflict with serious philosophical work, but that it could make crucial contributions to addressing perennial problems in philosophy.”

Plantinga’s lifework has been to argue that theism, and specifically Christian

belief, is not irrational—a boldly contrarian perspective in his field that prompted *TIME* magazine to describe him as “America’s leading orthodox Protestant philosopher of God.”

Born in Ann Arbor, Mich., while his Frisian immigrant father Cornelius Plantinga Sr. was in graduate school at the University of Michigan, Alvin grew up in a heady home environment steeped in the writings of Plato and the tenets of Kuyperian Calvinism.

“We read Plato together when I was 13 or 14 years old, and my father and I talked philosophy quite a bit,” he recalled during an interview at his Grand Rapids home. “I found all the questions that philosophers ask and answer to be captivating and deeply interesting. They seemed to be the right things to think about as I was growing up.”

Young Alvin was deemed ready for college by the age of 16, spending his first semester at Jamestown (N.D.) College, where his father was on faculty, before heading to Calvin for a semester. He spent his sophomore year on scholarship at Harvard but made a fateful visit to see his parents at spring break in Grand Rapids, where he sat in on three of Professor William Harry Jellema’s classes at Calvin.

“My father had joined the Calvin faculty by then, and I was so impressed with Jellema’s classes that I wanted to come back to Calvin,” he said. “Jellema was the finest professor of philosophy I ever encountered. He was very charismatic in the classroom and had such a complete control of the subject he was discussing.”

It was during his second tour at Calvin that Plantinga decided on a career in philosophy, but not before briefly flirting with the notion of serving the church in pastoral ministry.

“For a while I toyed with pre-sem, but after I tried that out for a bit I quickly decided that was not going to work,” Plantinga said. “The church is very



fortunate I decided against it, although I have always been seriously interested in church—first the Presbyterian church we attended in North Dakota and then the Christian Reformed Church once I got to Calvin and ever since. It's been very important in my life."

"He's one of the smartest people so many of us have ever met, but also one of the humblest and kindest."

A longtime member of Church of the Servant, Plantinga also was an active member of the Church of the Savior Christian Reformed congregation in South Bend during his time at the University of Notre Dame. "I really appreciate the CRC," he said. "On the whole, the CRC has hewed to its course much better than a lot of churches."

Plantinga's pioneering work in philosophy was honed during his days on the Calvin faculty, serving in a department that also included Nicholas Wolterstorff and Richard Mouw, among others.

"It was wonderful—a true community of Christian philosophers actively engaged in advancing the cause of Christian philosophy," Wolterstorff said of those days on the Calvin campus in the 1960s and 70s.

Added Mouw: "There are many of us who see (Plantinga) as having had a formative influence in our lives—he has been a kind and encouraging mentor to us, modeling a blend of intellectual brilliance, genuine humility, and a marvelous sense of humor."

Plantinga's reputation was extended farther in 1982 when he left Calvin for an appointment at the University of Notre Dame. He mentored more than a generation of students and scholars there before returning once again to Grand Rapids almost eight years ago to lecture both at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary.

His younger brother, Cornelius Plantinga Jr., was Calvin Seminary's president at the time.

"Al is my oldest brother," he began, "and was also my professor in three philosophy courses at Calvin College. He has been an inspiration to so many of us. His work possesses the utmost rigor, clarity, wit, and authority, shattering secular assumptions and boldly defending the rationality of belief in God. He's one of the smartest people so many of us have ever met, but also one of the humblest and kindest. For personal traits, that's quite a combo."

Alvin met his wife, Kathleen, during their days at Calvin; together they have raised four children. Their two sons, Carl Plantinga and William Harry Plantinga, are professors at Calvin College, and their two daughters are in Christian ministry—Jane Plantinga Pauw is pastor of Ranier Beach Presbyterian Church in Seattle, Wash., and Ann Plantinga Kapteyn has worked in international settings for Wycliffe Bible Translators.

"My father has always been the classic example of the absent-minded professor," said son Carl, "but he's always tackled the problems that were thought to be the most intractable. He likes accomplishing a goal, and the task had to be difficult for him to be interested. For my father to achieve what he did, he had to work very hard. For us kids, that meant we didn't always get the attention we might have wanted, but he was always so upbeat and kind and affectionate that it more than made up for what we perceived as lack of time with him."


Carl also noted his father's longtime avocation of rock climbing and mountaineering, a summer passion that burned for many years until recently.

"My father was always impressed with the grandeur and sublimity of the mountains, which relates to his faith—his awe at God's nature and enormity."

His days of scaling grand peaks may be over, but the Templeton Prize represents a new and unexpected mountaintop experience for Plantinga.

"It's a great honor for him," said Carl. "Retirement has been a difficult transition, but this award has brought a spring back to his step."

For his part, Plantinga confessed genuine surprise that the Templeton Prize jurors "would chose any philosopher" for the award.

"Still, even if I don't deserve it, I'm not going to give it back," he added. "Naturally, I'm pleased. It's very flattering, and I hope it would encourage young philosophers to be forthright Christian philosophers—to be encouraged and strengthened in their interest in Christian philosophy." 



Bruce Buursma is a writer, video producer, and communications consultant from Grand Haven, Michigan, where he is a member of Covenant Life Church.

Tributes to Plantinga's win can be found online...

[READ MORE ONLINE](#)

# The Words We Long to Hear

God speaks to each of us his word of love and delight: “You are my chosen, my son, my daughter. I’m so delighted with you.”



Leonard J. Vander Zee is a retired CRC pastor now serving as interim minister of preaching at Church of the Servant CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.

**IT’S STRANGE** that the traditional forms for baptism used in the Christian Reformed Church never mention the baptism of Jesus. Typically, we think of Jesus’ baptism as a testimony that he is God’s beloved Son in unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit—the Holy Trinity. We may miss the importance of Jesus’ baptism for the meaning of our own.

The early church saw the connection clearly. Many of the early church leaders linked Christian baptism with Jesus’ baptism. Excavations of early church buildings often reveal mosaics and frescoes picturing the baptism of Jesus. John Calvin made the same link. He wrote, “Christ dedicated and sanctified [our] baptism in his own body in order that he might have it in common with us as the firmest bond of the union and fellowship which he has deigned to form with us.” In Jesus’ baptism we see our own.

The gospel of Matthew especially makes that connection clear. Matthew bookends Jesus’ ministry with baptism. In chapter 3, Jesus begins his ministry with the baptism by John (vv. 13-17). On the other end, in chapter 28, just as he is about to ascend to heaven, Jesus sends his disciples on a baptizing mission: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . .” (v. 19).

Matthew wants us to see the link between Jesus’ baptism by John and our own baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

So what happened at Jesus’ baptism? Matthew tells us that John was out in the wilderness offering a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Then one day Jesus walked up and asked John to baptize him.

John was astonished, of course. “You want me to baptize *you*? I need to be baptized *by you*.” Jesus’ response is amazing: “No, this is the way it needs to be done, for it is right for us to fulfill all righteousness.”

What does Jesus mean by “fulfill all righteousness” (v. 15)? Righteousness is a right relationship with God, which is exactly what we do not have. We are sinners; we really need a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” But Jesus came to fulfill all righteousness, that is, he came to make sinful humanity righteous before God. To do that, Jesus stood in with sinners and for sinners. So, with all the other sinners, Jesus waited in line at the muddy Jordan to be baptized by John.

When Jesus was baptized, three things happened. First, the heavens were opened. On this one human being, Jesus of Nazareth, the heavens opened. In this man, the God of heaven has come down to join us in the muddy Jordan of human life. And that means there’s hope for us all! Heaven is no longer closed to us.

Second, the Spirit descended on Jesus as a dove. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, but because he stands in for us as our human brother, we too receive the promise of the Holy Spirit in baptism. If you read on into Acts and the epistles of the New Testament, you will find that nearly every time baptism is mentioned, it’s immediately followed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Right at the start, Peter said at Pentecost, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

In our baptism, Jesus promises us the gift of the Holy Spirit. He promises that whenever we grab hold of our baptism in faith by trusting in Jesus, the Holy Spirit affirms our true identity in Christ. Then the Spirit sets out to transform us, making us holy by

ripening the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit, like a dove, hovers around us, ready to reaffirm the Father's love and redirect our steps into the path of love. Baptism brings us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, the climax of Jesus' baptism comes with the voice from heaven: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." This mysterious voice affirms that this man, Jesus of Nazareth, is the Son of God in the eternal fellowship of the Holy Trinity.

But Jesus has now also identified himself with us as our human brother. In our baptism we are united with Jesus Christ, identified with him. His Father is our Father, the Holy Spirit now also lives in us. That's why Jesus told the church to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

Our baptism means that we are now adopted into the family of God through Jesus Christ. Paul says, "In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1:5). And now the Father says to you and to me, "You are my beloved son or daughter, in you I am well pleased." Baptism seals our adoption as children of God, for we are now officially "registered" in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

"You are my beloved." Those are truly the words we all long to hear. We long to hear it from our parents, from our spouses—but most of all, we long to hear those words from our Creator and heavenly Father, as Jesus did that day at the Jordan River. Baptism brings us the gift of adoption. When we are baptized into Jesus Christ, we do not live our lives in a painful and futile attempt to prove that we somehow deserve to be loved by God. We are loved! We are accepted! God opens heaven above us, places his Spirit within us, and speaks to each of us his word of love and delight: "You are my chosen, my son, my daughter. I'm so delighted with you."



It's hard for us to remember that, day in day out, in our messy lives. We try to assure ourselves by taking our spiritual temperature, gauging our spiritual feelings, or measuring the holiness of our lives. But these things fluctuate day by day. As the old spiritual says, "Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down."

That's where baptism comes in. It's a sacrament, and sacraments are physical, bodily things that assure us of spiritual reality. Eating and drinking the bread and wine of communion is meant to assure us of our forgiveness in the sacrifice of Christ. In the same way, the water of baptism is given to assure us of our true identity in Christ.

But what about faith? Isn't it faith that brings us the blessings of salvation? Yes. God has given us these sacraments as handles for our faith. Their purpose is to provide us physical, embodied human beings something for our faith to grab hold of. We don't believe *in* our baptism; we believe *through* it.

What a gift to remember every day: "I have been baptized." It is the seal of our adoption into the family of God, the mark of our true identity in Christ, and the answer to every temptation of the Evil One. **B**

1. Think about a baptism you remember; either your own (if you were old enough) or a baptism you witnessed. What was most memorable? What resonated with you?

2. How have you understood the meaning of baptism? How does it...

[READ MORE ONLINE](#)



As stewards our  
role is to serve the  
interests  
of the King.



Matt Lundberg teaches theology at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Along with his wife and three children, he is part of the church family at Boston Square Christian Reformed Church.

## House-Sitting

*“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” —Psalm 24:1*

**WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE**, one of my professors occasionally asked me to house-sit when he and his wife were out of town. Mostly they were interested in someone being there to care for their pets—including rubbing ointment into the eyes of a cat named Blind Bartimaeus. But they also thought it would be nice for their home and belongings to be enjoyed by a college student who was used to the cramped confines of dorms and campus apartments.

During the times I house-sat for them, I didn’t just drop in to feed and let out the pets. I didn’t just stop by occasionally to turn a light or two on or off. I didn’t just pop by to make sure that the doors were still locked. Rather, I lived there. I took them up on their invitation to eat their food, sleep in one of the bedrooms, watch television, sit on their back porch, and even invite a couple of friends over to watch a movie. I lived in the house, enjoying its resources and comforts, but always with the awareness that the house did not belong to me. While living in it, my chief objective was to protect and preserve it for its owners.

House-sitting is an apt metaphor for our responsibility for creation. We are granted the blessings of living in creation and using it for our survival and comfort. But such use takes place in the context of recognizing that the world is not ours and therefore needs to be protected on behalf of its true owner, the Creator God.

While the land and waters and, a bit more controversially, the other animals can legitimately be used for human survival and well-being, they

do not ultimately belong to us. They are the property of God the Creator King, and we serve as stewards of the king’s resources. Our call is not to leave creation utterly untouched—we are creatures, after all—but to protect it and leave it in good shape for its owner and for other uses the owner may have for it.

I had a couple of friends over for a movie and conversation at my professor’s house, but not 50 people over for a raucous party. These dynamics of house-sitting are comparable to the decisions we must make as we live out our call to stewardship.

In Genesis, God calls humanity to “rule over” the rest of creation (1:26 and 1:28, NIV). Traditionally translated “have dominion” (as in the NRSV), this command to humanity has often been misunderstood as license to dominate or adopt domineering attitudes and practices toward the rest of creation, as if the non-human created world is mostly unimportant or merely raw material for human ambition. Such a view misses out on the fact that the Creator declares every aspect of the created order to be “good”—that recurring refrain in the Genesis 1 creation liturgy. The whole created order together, including human creatures, is declared to be “very good” (v. 31).

The created goodness of God’s world, combined with the command to humanity to “rule over” and to use the world’s vegetation for food and other needs (vv. 29-30), points to a model of our role as stewards. We are not the owner but the ones who use, care for, and protect what belongs to the owner. We have a royal role but are not ourselves the King. Our role is to serve the interests of the King. Our dominion is always a representative dominion, one that is supposed to represent the concerns, rights, and desires of the real Owner of the property.

Note that the language of “dominion” and “ruling” is the language of



lordship, which in the overall biblical context points to Jesus as Lord. Jesus expressed the true nature of lordship by being willing to make “himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant” (Phil. 2:7), and he exercised his greatest power through self-sacrificial love. If Jesus clues us in to the true nature of dominion and ruling, then our living out of our lesser dominion should follow suit.

There are, of course, countless complicated questions that the house-sitting image doesn’t answer. What precisely are the limits of our use of creation that still preserves it for the Lord? Having 50 people over for a party while house-sitting would have been too much, but what about eight? Ten? What if it’s not possible to balance the well-being of all creatures in the way we make use of the creation? Is there some sense in which human needs and desires have priority over the non-human aspects of creation? Aren’t there things we have to do in our contemporary culture that we know aren’t ideal for creation but are so hard to avoid? What does it mean when, in Genesis 1, God blesses humanity and tells us to “fill the earth and subdue it”? Doesn’t “subdue” sound more like “dominate”? These are indeed hard questions to answer. Care for creation, like

responsible house-sitting, requires decisions and discernment. And the way isn’t always clear.

On the latter questions related to “subduing,” however, we at least need to keep in mind what stage of humankind the author of Genesis 1 was portraying—the earliest humans in an uncultivated nature. Just as the Creator brought order to chaos, an order that blesses and honors the goodness of what is made, so also primal humanity is called to bring order to bear on creation—to enable the good structures of creation to develop and flourish, for creation to make possible culture. In other words, “subduing” suggests developing and using creation in a way that respects the inherent, God-declared goodness of what is used and developed.

In a situation where climate change is already harming the part of God’s creation that is our planet, with some of God’s human creatures—the global poor—apt to pay the highest price, it is imperative that we look for ways to protect the house of creation that we care for.

For me, that could take the form of deciding to take the bus to work on certain days of the week. It involves reminding my elected officials of the importance of taking the long view on

climate issues and sticking with legislation and treaties intended to preserve the natural world and mitigate the effects of climate change. It calls me to be more careful about what chemicals I use when treating my lawn and landscaping. Even though I’m at the point in life where my family and I have our own house, and sometimes I call upon one of my students to house-sit and care for our pets and belongings while we are gone, I know that what is mine is not ultimately mine. Even in my own house, my own yard, my own community, I am merely a steward, house-sitting for the King. **B**

What might creation care look like for you? See the suggestions offered by the CRC’s Office of Social Justice at [justice.crcna.org/creation-care](http://justice.crcna.org/creation-care).

**READ MORE ONLINE**

# Four Christian Podcasts You Should Be Listening to Right Now

**AS SOMEONE WHO** spends at least two hours commuting to and from work each day, I don't know how I would get along without the manna that is Christian podcasts. The sonic ministry of the ones I've subscribed to over the past few years has given me many occasions to repent, learn, be encouraged, and rejoice. Here are some you should try:

**1 "Doctrine and Devotion":** Chummy co-hosts Jimmy Fowler and Joe Thorn of Redeemer Fellowship in St. Charles, Ill., sometimes smoke cigars while recording episodes for this podcast (new segments are posted twice a week). They have a way of putting you at ease and having helpful, casual conversations on interesting and sometimes intimate Christian topics (like their episode "Why Pastors Cheat").

**2 "Help Me Teach the Bible with Nancy Guthrie":** This Gospel Coalition podcast is a must for anyone who is in a position of service that requires them to teach the Bible. As a small group leader at my local church, I've been built up and humbled by this podcast. Guthrie is a fantastic host who truly activates each conversation with a keen sense for what Bible teachers want and need to hear.

**3 "White Horse Inn":** This weekly series of roundtable discussions has long been a mainstay in my podcast subscription list. Michael Horton, professor at Westminster Seminary in California, leads each panel through a discussion of the week's topic, clarifying the Reformed view of things. I particularly enjoy examinations of person-on-the-street interviews they conduct to get insight

I don't know how I would get along without the manna that is Christian podcasts.

into what everyday believers and skeptics think about popular theological questions.

**4 "Antioch Worship Leadership Podcast":** This podcast, hosted by worship leaders at Madison Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., is primarily intended to edify worship leaders. However, each episode makes it clear that worship and praise are intimately linked to all facets of life. The thoughtful conversations on this young podcast address topics like race, politics, and culture, always with a view to the truth that worship and life are meant to be one and the same, no matter who you are and no matter who you worship with.

Gospel-centered podcasts can be a great help in keeping your thoughts fixed on "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable" (Phil. 4:8). **B**



Jason Hahn is a corporate communications professional and a member of Grace Community Chapel in Teaneck, N.J.



## Your Heart Is the Size of Your Fist: A Doctor Reflects on Ten Years at a Refugee Clinic

by *Martina Scholtens, M.D.*  
reviewed by *Jenny deGroot*

On arrival in Canada, every newcomer must see a physician. The Vancouver refugee clinic where Martina Scholtens worked for 10 years provided this initial entry into the healthcare system. Scholtens weaves the stories of her time in the clinic with reflections on her own life and family. She is transparent about her conflicting feelings regarding guilt and gratitude, poverty and privilege, faith and doubt. "I came to believe in the healing power of bearing witness to suffering," writes Scholtens. Her desire to "reflect, memorialize, and advocate" as a writer-physician is fulfilled in this slim volume. (Brindle & Glass)



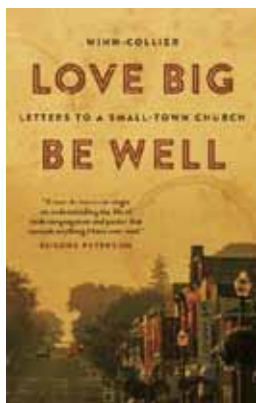
## A Deeper Understanding

by *The War on Drugs*

reviewed by *Jordan Petersen*

The latest album from this Philadelphia band speaks in the dialect of nostalgia. This is music rooted in sentiment and time-stamped somewhere near the



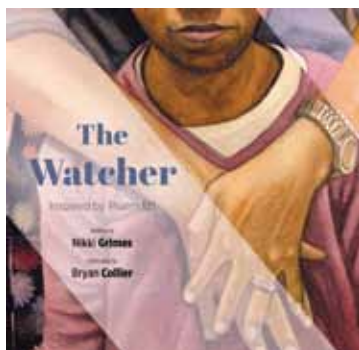


## Love Big, Be Well: Letters to a Small-Town Church

by Winn Collier

reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

The search committee at Granby Presbyterian Church is exhausted, so committee member Amy writes a straightforward letter to potential candidates. Jonas McAnn, a disillusioned salesman and former pastor, reads Amy's letter and his soul is stirred. After Jonas accepts the church's call, he continues writing letters to them, "looking for every possible way to keep the conversation going." This fictional collection of letters is filled with pastoral wisdom and earthy insights, both humorous and tear-inducing. It's a worthwhile read for anyone who is longing to grow as a Christian and understand more fully what it means to be the church in the world today. (Eerdmans)

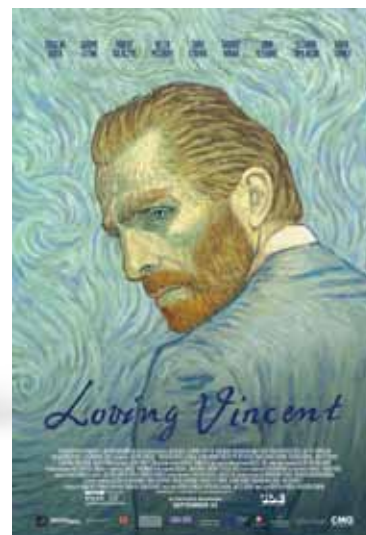


## The Watcher

by Nikki Grimes

reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Jordan struggles to cope with Tanya's bullying, while Tanya feels lonely and afraid behind a shield of anger. As they experience alienation and, later on, reconciliation, they learn that God is faithful to them. This picture book is written in a poetic form called the Golden Shovel. The words of Psalm 121 conclude each line of Grimes' masterful poetry, allowing the reader to experience the psalm from a fresh perspective and to relate it to a story of God's care set in contemporary times. With powerful illustrations from Bryan Collier, this is a book to be treasured. Ages 6 and up. (Eerdmans)



## Loving Vincent

reviewed by Jenny deGroot

*Loving Vincent* celebrates the work of artist Vincent van Gogh, whose famous paintings and characters come to life in the film. The story revolves around van Gogh's mysterious death at the age of 37, but plot takes the backseat to visuals in this amazing masterwork of a film. A creative work of devotion from its directors, *Loving Vincent* is the first fully painted animated feature film in history, involving 125 painters and nearly 65,000 frames in traditional oils. Many video clips about the process are available on YouTube and are worth watching before and after viewing the film. It is a movie to be savored. (Good Deed Entertainment)

wistful decade of the 1980s—a time where many of the most resonant films focused on stories of teenagers navigating adolescence, seeking to grow up without conforming to a drab and lifeless adult life. Our sometimes escapist penchant for nostalgia comes from a place of righteous yearning; we believe that more can be achieved than our present existence offers. In creating an ideal out of the past, we project a little bit of heaven onto earth. The *War on Drugs* avoids the temptation of believing the past actually *was* heaven. They create a familiar world in borrowed aesthetics before pushing that world past its limits and into something more magnificent and untamable. (Atlantic)

### The Lowdown

**Two Timer:** Everyone's favorite pal from Peru, Paddington Bear, is back on the big screen in *Paddington 2* on January 12. (Warner Bros)

**Extra! Extra!** The Northern Irish folk worship group Rend Collective releases the new album *Good News* this month.

**All Hail:** The royally anticipated second season of the period drama *Victoria* begins on PBS on the 14th.

**Bleak Blake:** British indie film *I, Daniel Blake* takes on the indignities of government assistance in this gritty drama; read the Banner review at [TheBanner.org](http://TheBanner.org).

READ MORE ONLINE

# The Mystery of Faith

Apologetics is a particular way of loving God with our minds.



Joella Ranaivoson is an associate chaplain at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich. This article is adapted from a study on apologetics she wrote for Calvin College in 2017.

**YOU CAN'T ARGUE** someone into faith or into the kingdom of God. Only God can draw people by the Spirit to faith in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, Christians can join in the ancient and rich tradition—2,000-plus years strong—of Christians articulating and making sense of their faith, giving reasons for “the hope that [they] have” (1 Pet. 3:15).

Apologetics is the discipline and practice of Christians giving reasons for why they have faith, for the sake of drawing others to faith. It's a particular way of loving God with our minds (Luke 10:27). And it always happens in the context of cultivating relationships; without a good relationship, it's hard to speak credibly to someone about your faith.

As Christians, we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that God is reconciling all things to God's self through Christ. That means the brokenness in the world—the Syrian civil war, millions of refugees being displaced, institutional racism, environmental crises, damaged relationships, environmental degradation, wounded bodies and souls—all of these things will find their restoration in Christ and in the kingdom of God that will come in its fullness when Jesus returns.

Our capacity to think deeply and critically about all manner of things in life, including our faith in God and belief in Jesus Christ, is a gift of God. Our minds and our intellects are a gift. We are commanded to love God also with our minds (Mark 12:30). We do so by thinking deeply about our faith, and our faith can be strengthened by this practice.

Since the Enlightenment, an emphasis on reason has taken hold of the Western imagination. “If you cannot reason or verbalize it, it must not be real or true” is the air that we breathe. Thus, if you cannot understand something about your faith, it might cause a faith crisis.

Here is an alternate proposition: There are and will be many things in life you do not understand, but that does not stop them from being true or real. Some things we cannot reason, cannot take apart by our wills or fully comprehend with our intellect—things like love, death, time—but they are nonetheless real.

Similarly, God and faith in God are true and real, though we may not always understand or be able to reason them. Likewise, if we were to stop believing (perhaps because we do not understand), our disbelief doesn't change the objective reality of God (that in itself is a claim needing evidence, but the claim that God is not an objective reality *also* needs evidence).

The point is that faith is a mystery. It is a gift of God by the Holy Spirit. God reveals God's self to us through Scripture, and the Spirit impresses it upon our hearts and minds that it is true. Yet we do not know all there is to know of God.

The theologians St. Augustine and Anselm of Canterbury have expressed the relationship between faith and reason as “faith seeking understanding,” or “I believe in order to understand.” Faith informs the reasoning, and reasoning informs the belief.

To reason without faith can lead to misunderstanding the mysterious nature of faith when the limitations of reason are reached. And yet, to insist on faith without allowing for reason can lead to crises of faith when you come upon honest intellectual questions of faith. So we hold faith and reason together, understanding that we believe in order to understand, and that we understand more as we believe. **B**

# Cross Exchange

**Grocery store clerk (at checkout):** Sir, I really like your cross.

**Me:** I like it too. My wife gave it to me.

**Clerk (pointing to his chest):** I have one, but it's not as cool as that.

**Me:** Yeah, I'm quite fond of it.

**Clerk:** If you're wearing it, you should know that it is more blessed to give than to receive, right?

**Me:** I've heard that.

**Clerk:** So what do you think about giving that cross to me?

**Me:** I'm thinking, "Thou shalt not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Not his wife or his house or his silver cross."

**Clerk:** Hmm, that's strange, because I was thinking that each of us should seek to please his neighbor for his good.

**Me:** To which I'd say, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." I'm just looking to my own interests here.

**Clerk:** How about the part that says to sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven?

**Me:** It goes well with the part that says that the poor you will always have with you.

**Clerk:** Does that mean I'm not getting the cross?

**Me:** Pretty much.

**Clerk:** Are you a pastor?

**Me:** I am, and I can do this all day.

**Clerk (laughing):** Grandma said never get in a swordfight with a sword swallower.

**Me:** I like Grandma.

**Clerk:** Me too. She bought me my cross.

**Bagger:** You dudes had a whole conversation and it's like you're quoting from something I've never heard.

**Clerk:** We have. It's a book called the Bible.

**Bagger:** My girlfriend gave me one of those.

**Clerk:** You should read it. . . .

**B**



Rod Hugen is pastor of the Village Church and leader of the Tucson Cluster, a church planting effort in Tucson, Ariz.



*our journey*  
2020

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY ▪ DISCIPLESHIP ▪ LEADERSHIP ▪ IDENTITY ▪ COLLABORATION

To learn more about Our Journey 2020, the ministry plan of the Christian Reformed Church visit [crcna.org/OurJourney](http://crcna.org/OurJourney)



# ADS

**Deadlines:** 1/2/18 for Feb.; 2/6/18 for March. 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.

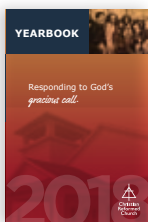
**To Advertise:** Place your classified ad online at [www.thebanner.org/classifieds](http://www.thebanner.org/classifieds) or email it to [classifieds@thebanner.org](mailto:classifieds@thebanner.org) or fax it to 616-224-0834. Questions? Call 616-224-0725.

Advertising in *The Banner* does not imply editorial endorsement.

## YEARBOOK 2018

### Printed version Yearbook:

- Denominational offices directory
- Classical stated clerks and member churches
- Churches and ministries
- Ministers and commissioned pastors



### Yearbook Supplement:

- Church information, including service times and membership statistics, clerk, former and current ministers

To order, visit [FaithAliveResources.org/Yearbook](http://FaithAliveResources.org/Yearbook), call 800-333-8300, or email [Orders@FaithAliveResources.org](mailto:Orders@FaithAliveResources.org)

**Regular Edition** \$10.00<sup>US</sup>/\$<sup>CDN</sup>

**Spiral Bound** \$12.00<sup>US</sup>/\$<sup>CDN</sup>

**PDF Download** \$7.00<sup>US</sup>/\$<sup>CDN</sup>

**Supplement PDF Download** \$7.00<sup>US</sup>/\$<sup>CDN</sup>

**Available February 2018**

**Yearbook online at [crcna.org/Yearbook](http://crcna.org/Yearbook). Always current, always available. FREE access to:**

- Directory of churches
- Classical personnel, statistics, and more
- Churches' current and former ministers
- Directory of ministers and commissioned pastors



## Denominational and Classical

### Financial Aid

**CLASSIS GRAND RAPIDS SOUTH** invites students from their Classis who are planning to pursue full-time ministry in the CRC (undergraduate or graduate level) and are in need of financial assistance for the academic year 2018-2019 to apply for a classical grant. Applications must be received prior to February 15, 2018. Please apply at [onefaith-manyfaces.org/leadership-development](http://onefaith-manyfaces.org/leadership-development). Contact Rev. Stephen DeWit with any questions at: [stephend@algerparkchurch.org](mailto:stephend@algerparkchurch.org) or call 616-452-9686.

### Retirement

**ALGER PARK CHRISTIAN** Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, MI, congratulates Reverend Dr. David Deters, who, after 38 years of faithful ministry, will retire January 31, 2018. We are especially thankful for his 23 years pastoring Alger Park Church and for his leadership in classis and denominational service. Pastor Deters was ordained in May, 1979. He previously served West Leonard CRC in Grand Rapids, Eastern Hills Community CRC in Aurora, CO, and Lighthouse/Victory Point CRC in Holland, MI. Pastor Deters' farewell service will be Sunday, January 21, 2018 at Alger Park Church. We ask you to join us in praying for an exciting and healthy transition to this new phase of his life.

## Miscellaneous

**CHHS CELEBRATES 100 YEARS!** Chicago Christian High School will celebrate its 100th Anniversary on April 20th at 6pm at the Tinley Park Convention Center. Free event - donations accepted. To register and for more information, go to [www.SWChristian.org](http://www.SWChristian.org). 708-388-7656

## Birthdays

### 90th Birthday



**TRUDY BORST** will celebrate her 90th birthday on February 10. She would be delighted to receive birthday greetings at 2236 Merton Ave, Eagle Rock CA 90041. Trudy's husband Gerry, their children, & grandchildren thank God for Trudy's faithfulness and lovingkindness to everyone around her!

**DYKSTRA, DONALD** of 2192 Timberidge Lane, Highland, IN 46322, plans to celebrate his 90th birthday on February 2. Family and friends are invited to an OPEN HOUSE from 2-4pm on February 3 at the Hammond CRC, 1910 167th St, Hammond, IN. No gifts please. His children thank God for Dad's godly example and dedication to the Lord's service.

**SWENNA (SUE) HARGER** nee Bueter of Holland, MI, will celebrate her 90th birthday on January 25, 2018. Celebrating her life are her children: the late Jean Sytsma, Jim (Lisa) Harger, Gary (Brenda) Harger, and her grandchildren: Jana, Susan (Peter), Katie, Hallie, Anneke and Emma and great granddaughter, Emma (Susan and Peter) We thank God for his faithful provisions. Cards may be sent to 663 W. 29th St. Holland, MI 49423.

**REV. LEONARD J. HOFMAN** will celebrate his 90th birthday on January 31st! During his 66 years as an ordained minister in the CRC,

he pastored 5 congregations (in Wright, IA; Kenosha, WI; Zealand, Jenison, and Holland, MI) and served as the CRC General Secretary, all with the loving support of his late wife, Elaine. He has been a great Dad and Grandpa to his children: Laurie & Jack Harkema, Jan & Dave Musch, Kathy & Doug Smith, Joel & Nancy Hofman, and their families. We invite friends to honor and congratulate our Dad for his God-given gifts to the church, our lives, and those of many others at an Open House to be held on Sunday, January 28, 2018, 2-4 pm, Raybrook Estates II, 2105 Raybrook SE, Grand Rapids, MI. Cards and letters to that address are also welcome!

**DANIEL MINKEMA**, of North Haledon, NJ, will celebrate his 90th birthday on January 11, 2018. Celebrating his life are his children, Lois & Ron Modelski, Gary Minkema, Lynn & Rick Ver Hage, & Denise & Tony Sardinas, along with 4 grandchildren & 9 great-grandchildren. We thank & praise God for your life and steadfast faith!

## Anniversaries

### 65th Anniversary

**VANDEN BOSCH RON & NORMA** (Bordewyk) Nov 19 blessed with two daughters Rhonda (CJ Oliver) and Lynn (with the LORD) 4 grandchildren (one married) 2 great grandchildren & many friends celebrated with an open house at the FAC of the 1st CRC of Artesia CA Norma is presently a resident of the skilled nursing section of the adjacent Artesia Christian Home dealing with disabilities of MS

## Obituaries

**BUTEYN, ROLAND** Roland Buteyn, 88, passed from this life into glory on November 17, 2017. He was preceded in death by his wife Kay, his daughter, Cheryl, and his grandson Derek. His surviving children are John (Anne) Buteyn, Barb (Mike) Galuzzi, Susan (Steve) Van Bronkhorst, (Jim) Bratt, and Ed (Rhonda) Buteyn, as well as 15 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren. His many volunteer projects, particularly with Disaster Response Services gave him the opportunity to live out the theme of his life....."Saved by Grace, Saved to Serve". We praise God for his life and the countless ways God used him in the lives of so many people.

**KAMP, WILLIAM (BILL)**, age 85 of Tinley Park, IL passed away peacefully to his eternal home on Oct. 20, 2017. Beloved husband of the late Doris (nee Wierenga - 2008). Loving father of Debra, Cynthia Black, Beverly (late Harold) Hamstra, Donna (Fred) Bergsma, William Jr. (Karen) and Richard (Karin). Cherished grandfather of 16 and great-grandfather of 16. Loved by his siblings and many nieces and nephews. Thanking God for a tender-hearted family man who will be dearly missed

**MARY CLAIRE LAGRAN** Bouma, age 81, went to be with her Lord on Friday, November 3, 2017. She was preceded in death by Henry, her husband of 59 years; her brother John and sister-in-law, Julie LaGrand; and by her brother James LaGrand. She is survived by her children, Lisa (Steven) Garvelink, Sharon Bouma (Stephen Holtrop), Mary-Lee Bouma, and Katherine Bouma (Robert Sims); her grandchildren, Katherine (Timothy) Hirschberg, Julia (Wesley) Holmes, Stephanie Garvelink, Rachel Holtrop, Elizabeth Holtrop, Jimmy Bouma-Holtrop, Jacob Bouma-Sims, and Elijah Bouma-Sims; and her great-grandson, Benjamin Hirschberg. She is also survived by her sister, Sharon (Edward) Start; her sister-in-law, Virginia LaGrand; and her brother, Paul (Kathryn) LaGrand.

**BETTY ANN MEYER**, nee Bielema, age 82, went to be with her LORD on November 12th, 2017. 505 S. Monterey Ave, Villa Park, IL 60181. Beloved wife of the late Emmett Meyer; loving mother of Daniel and David (Linda) Meyer; devoted grandmother of Benjamin (Melinda), Joshua (Anna), Matthew, and Samuel (Michelle) Meyer; great grandmother of Callan, Corbin, and MacKenzie. Memorials to Providence Life Services or Timothy Christian Schools are appreciated.

**VANDENBERG, JOHN** (98) of GR MI--family man, church man, athlete, soldier, politician, academician, visionary, child of God--passed

away Nov. 11, 2017. His legacy will be cherished by all who knew him. Children: Mary & Jim Speyer, Patricia VB & Julian Olf, Jack & Mary Lyn VB, J David & Betsey VB; 12 grandchildren; 5 great grandchildren. Soli Deo Gloria.

**VAN GRONINGEN, HARRIET** (Stuitje). Age 93 taken to her Lord Nov. 21, 2017. Preceded in death by husband Dr. Gerard and great grandson Denver Post. Survived by children Betty (Herman), Jerry (Sherry), Jay (Laura), John (Patti), Bill (Connie), Bev (Bob), Dave (Dawn), Chuck (Laura), 34 grandchildren, 45 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.firstcristthomas.com](http://www.firstcristthomas.com) for more details. Email a cover letter and resume to [firstcristthomas@gmail.com](mailto:firstcristthomas@gmail.com) or by mail to 320 Elm Street, St. Thomas, ON N5R 1J7

**PASTOR:** We at First CRC of Allendale, MI are looking for a lead pastor to help us connect with God in Worship, to Grow our faith, and to Serve our community. If you are interested in sharing your faith and story with us, please contact our search committee at [SearchCom@firstallendalecc.org](mailto:SearchCom@firstallendalecc.org).

**SEEKING LEAD PASTOR** Mill Creek Community Church, located in the exciting, growing north Seattle area, seeks a pastor to lead it into the next phase of its mission. We are an open and inviting church, seeking in all we do to reflect the renewing love of God in our community. Check out our church profile at [millcreekchurch.com](http://millcreekchurch.com) with information on how to apply. We are open to both women and men in leadership.

**SENIOR PASTOR:** First CRC of Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, is looking for the pastor God has prepared to continue on as shepherd of this flock. We are looking for a praying pastor to grow us in the Word so we can live relevant Christian lives in a changing world and reach the lost. To learn more about who we are go to our church website. <http://www.firstcrrcky.ca/> To pursue this opportunity please contact Case Krover. [cmkover@hotmail.com](mailto:cmkover@hotmail.com) or call: (403) 729-2185.

**LEAD PASTOR POSITION** San Jose CRC, a small suburban church in the San Francisco bay area, is seeking a dynamic individual with excellent gifts for preaching, teaching, pastoring, and administration. Please email Steve Bouman at [steveb@sanjosecc.org](mailto:steveb@sanjosecc.org) for more information.

**DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & WORSHIP** Modesto, CA CRC is seeking a full time Director of Music and Worship. See detailed description at <http://www.modestocrc.org> 209-523-1906

**PASTOR** Inwood CRC in Inwood, IA values a pastor that is distinctively reformed and eager to preach God's Word. We ask those interested in shepherding our congregation to contact Gerald Brands at [gerbrand@alliancecom.net](mailto:gerbrand@alliancecom.net) for more information and our church profile. [www.inwoodcrc.org](http://www.inwoodcrc.org)

**DUNCAN CRC ON** beautiful Vancouver Island is seeking a full-time, dynamic pastor who would be a caring shepherd ministering to all ages in our congregation. More info available on our website [duncancc.org](http://duncancc.org) or by contacting the search committee at [search@duncancc.org](mailto:search@duncancc.org)

**SOLE PASTOR - HANLEY CRC** located in Grandville MI is seeking a full time pastor. We are a warm supportive congregation who desires a leader with strong Biblical teaching, ability to interact with all age groups, enjoys pastoral care, and a heart for reaching and serving the community. Please see our church profile at [CRCNA.org](http://CRCNA.org) for more information, contact Jack Nyenhuis at 616-299-0596, or email: [hanleychurch@att.net](mailto:hanleychurch@att.net)

**YOUTH DIRECTOR** Hillcrest CRC in Hudsonville, MI is looking for a Youth Director to disciple our youth to be lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ. Visit our website at [www.hillcrestcra.org](http://www.hillcrestcra.org) to learn more about our church. To inquire or apply, contact us at [office@hillcrestcra.org](mailto:office@hillcrestcra.org) or 616-669-6556.

**ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP:** Pease CRC in Pease, Minnesota, is looking for an associate pastor to give vision, direction and leadership to our youth programs. This position will also include opportunity for leadership in worship, outreach, and/or congregational care. For more information and to see the full job description, visit our church website [www.peasecc.org](http://www.peasecc.org) or contact the church office at [peasecc@frontiernet.net](mailto:peasecc@frontiernet.net) or 320-369-4228.

**DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES** Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Sioux Center, IA is seeking a full time Director of Youth Ministries to help lead our vibrant and growing youth ministries. As a Director of Youth Ministries, you will provide guidance and instruction to the youth of Bethel to help them grow in their faith in Christ. Alongside the church, school and parents, this role will work to instill in the youth an understanding and importance of worship, fearing God, and obeying His Word. Please forward resume/questions to: [office@bethelsc.org](mailto:office@bethelsc.org) Attn: Youth Elder - Arlin Franken. You can also visit our website: [www.bethelsc.org](http://www.bethelsc.org) for more information.

**PASTOR OF COMMUNITY AND DISCIPLESHIP:** Alger Park CRC in Grand Rapids, MI, a growing and vibrant congregation is seeking a full-time pastor, with primary responsibilities including discipleship, pastoral care, and community development. This individual will partner with our Pastor of Worship and Vision, along with an engaged and dynamic staff, as we together continue to grow deeper as a congregation in our relationships, in our community, and in the gospel of Christ. For more information please see the job posting on the church website or contact our search committee at [searchcommittee@algerparkchurch.org](mailto:searchcommittee@algerparkchurch.org)

**DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP** - As it enters into an exciting new chapter, Fuller Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, MI has launched its search for a Director of Worship. The ideal candidate will be a people person experienced in both the planning and leading dynamic and participatory worship. The position is flexible, up to and including full time employment. In the case of this position becoming a full time position the candidate must demonstrate interest and ability in either Outreach or Faith Formation ministries. Interested applicants should visit our website - <http://fullercrc.org/welcome/employment-opportunities> - for application information and job descriptions. We look forward to speaking with you.

**FULL TIME SOLE PASTOR** Our pastor at Christ Community in Tualatin, OR is soon to retire. We are a small, warm congregation engaged in renewal and excited to see what The Lord has in store for us. Please email [ericml@aol.com](mailto:ericml@aol.com)

**FOURTEENTH STREET CRC, HOLLAND, MI**, an intergenerational church with a liturgical flavor, is seeking a full-time pastor to join us in our mission to celebrate God's gifts, tell God's story, and renew God's world. Position to open Summer 2018. See [14thstreetcra.com/pastorsearch](http://14thstreetcra.com/pastorsearch) for more information.



Puente Nuevo Bridge, Ronda, Spain

# Explore. Connect. Experience.

## GO with WITTE!

2018 GUIDED ITINERARIES:

**Rhine River Cruise**

June 15 – 24 | Keith Cole

**Israel Study Tour**

June 18 – July 1 | Tim Blamer

**Rhine River Reformation Cruise**

July 9 – 23 | Dr. Joel R. Beeke

**Acadia Hiking & Biking Adventure**

August 2 – 9 | Roy Zuidema

**From Madrid to Lisbon**

September 12 – 27 | John & Lynda Witte

**Shining the Light of Jesus:  
Greece & Italy**

September 20 – October 2  
Pastor Bill & Lyn Vanden Bosch

**Paul's Missionary Journeys  
in Greece**

October 4 – 16 | Dr. Jeffrey Weima

## SIGN UP TODAY!

For a full list of tours please visit:

[www.wittetours.com/banner](http://www.wittetours.com/banner)

### 800 GO WITTE

COMING SOON!

**Kenya & Tanzania**

November 2 – 17 | John & Lynda Witte

**Oberammergau 2020**

Join or Host a Tour to the Passion Play!

**witte**  
Travel & Tours  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

**JACOB J. VANTLAND** 305 E. Jefferson St. Apt. 5 Inwood, IA 51240 (age 82) died August 24, 2017 at Fellowship Village. He is preceded in death by his parents, John and Johanna (Juffer). He is survived by his wife Carolyn, his children Jay (Julie), Calvin (Dawn), Clinton (Lisa), Jonathan (Sharon), Jonell Addison, and ten grandchildren Stephanie, Brandon, Shona, Ian, Dylan, Brent, Jenna, Jeff, Charoline, and Jonathan. His brothers Theodore (Irene), Alvin (Marlene), Raymond (Elaine), Marvin (Judy), his sisters Arlene (Cliff) Vande Vegte, and Mary (Edwin) Blankerpoor.

**ZYLSTRA, ED**, age 90 of Western Springs, IL, passed away July 23, 2017. He is survived by children Patricia (Byron) Hoekstra, Paul (Nancy) Zylstra, Cynthia (Carl) D'Acosta, 8 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

Travel with Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary on a 15-day study tour and cruise featuring  
*Switzerland, Germany, France, and the Netherlands.*

July 9 – 23, 2018

Highlights include majestic Alpine scenery, uniquely Puritan and Reformed historical sites, a week-long cruise on the lovely Rhine River, and a stay in Dordrecht to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Synod of Dordrecht (Dordt).

We'll enjoy frequent academic lectures and theological addresses by Dr. Joel Beeke, Dr. Ian Hamilton, Dr. Michael Haykin, and Mr. David Woollin. Our journey also includes Sunday services and time for reflection.

*For more information*

Kristina Choura  
KristinaC@wittetravel.com  
616-954-7492  
bookings.wittetravel.com/  
tour/5656



## Employment

**TRUE BLUE** is hiring (non-medical), in home caregivers for the Grand Rapids area. Part-time, 12-15\$ an hour. Send enquiries to: truebluecaregivers.com or 616-406-6819

## Real Estate: Sales and Rentals

**ANNA MARIA ISLAND, FL CONDOS** pool, beach access, linens, fully equipped. 1 and 2 bedrooms. \$650-850/wk. D. Redeker, 941-704-7525. redekercondos.com

**LAKEVIEW RESORT - FREMONT, MI** All-sports Fremont Lake cottage rentals. 5 cottages that can sleep 28. No pets/smoking. \$450-670/week. (616)826-8352

**MOTHER IN LAW APARTMENT** Beautiful Walker home. Lower level walk out with patio. Full kitchen/bath, 1 bedroom, spare room, washer/dryer, garage. Prefer mature single individual. \$850.00 includes all utilities except cable. Call or text 616-560-1297

**CABINS** Available 2 and 3 bedroom cabins on Fremont Lake in Fremont, Mich. Summer season June 16- Labor Day, and off season avail. Labor Day - June 15. No pets, no smoking. Reservations or info call 231-924-3183 or 231-578-8583.

**COTTAGE 4 RENT** 4 bed, 3 bath, updated. Sleeps 12, Hess Lake, MI private waterfront. \$1,500/week. Call Lonnie 616-942-0048.

## Travel

**HOLIDAY IN HOLLAND** in our self-contained cabin or suite. We also offer vehicle rentals and tours. www.chestnutlane.nl

**HOLLAND TRAVEL** can make your holiday a personal experience by assisting you with your travel plans for Holland. info@hollandtravel.tours or visit www.hollandtravel.tours

## Products and Services

**ABSOLUTELY BEST PRICES** paid for religious books. Contact Credo Books, 1540 Pinnacle East SW, Wyoming, MI 49509, ph. (616) 249-9291. gvsbooks@gmail.com

**BOERS' TRANSFER & STORAGE, INC** Offering professional moving services within the United States and Canada. EXCELLENT CLERGY DISCOUNTS and an approved mover for retired CRC clergy! 13325 Riley Street, Holland, MI; 1-800-433-9799 or 616-399-2690 email: larry@boerstransfer.com; www.boerstransfer.com Agent for Mayflower Transit, LLC.

**CARING FOR AGING PARENTS?** Visiting Angels offers in-home assisted living. Our caregivers will prepare meals, do light housekeeping, run errands, provide transportation to appointments, and joyful companionship. Whether you need a few hours a day or live-in care, for assisted independent living in your home anywhere in West Michigan call Trish Borgdorff at 616-243-7080 or toll free at 888-264-3580. TRIP Participant.

**I CAN LIST YOUR HOME FOR \$1000 OR 1.5%** Local Calvin grad will sell your house for \$1,000 or 1.5% commission. Full, complete service but with savings! The system works! 165 closings in 2017 alone. Ranked in the top 2% of all West Michigan agents. **Call or email Doug Takens: 616.262.4574 takens@sbcglobal.net**

**REMODELING?** Call Ken DeVries today for an estimate on windows, kitchen/bath renovation. 616-457-5880. Since 1985. www.homework-construction.com

**TRUE BLUE CAREGIVERS** offers in home(non-medical) care to seniors. Contact us at truebluecaregivers.com or call (616)406-6819. Owned by Calvin alumni, serving the Grand Rapids area. Bonded and Insured

**ESTATE PLANNING** (Wills, Trusts, etc.) Attorney Daniel J. Veen - Southwest MI (including G. R.) with over 20 years experience. Calvin College '87. (269)381-4476 Veenville4@aol.com

# Exciting things are happening at the Christian Reformed Church. Get the latest.

Subscribe to **CRC News** for CRC Ministry updates, volunteer opportunities, upcoming events, and much more.

**crcna.org/Subscribe**

Connect with others on **The Network** and find resources to serve your church, ministry discussions, church jobs, and much more.

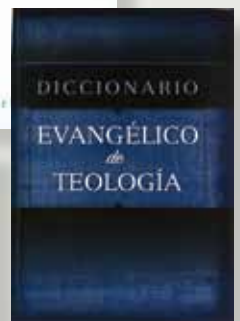
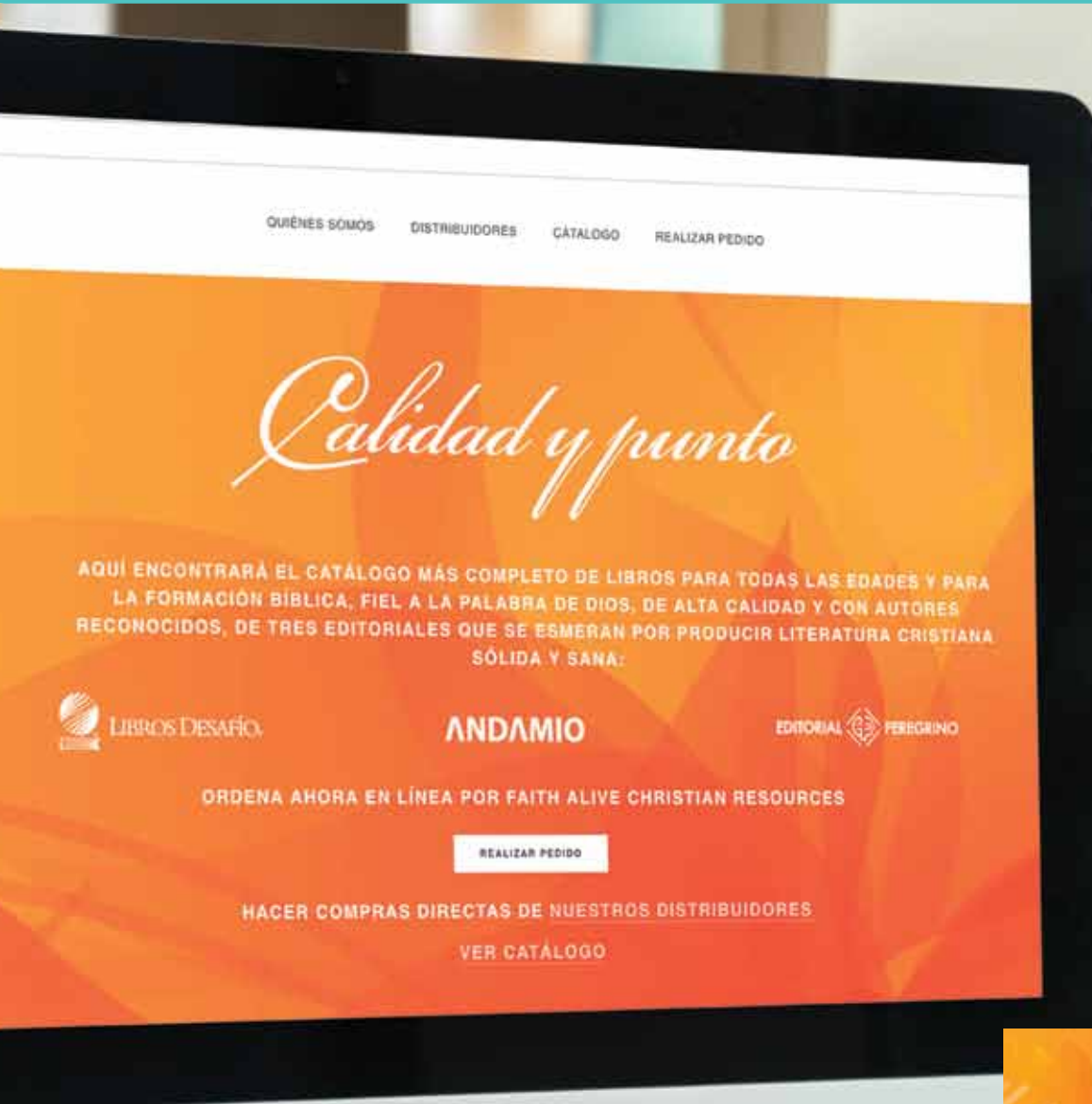
**crcna.org/Network**





Ahora los mejores recursos académicos teológicos  
los puede adquirir en: [www.librosdesafio.org](http://www.librosdesafio.org)

Libros Desafío pone en manos de los lectores obras de excelente calidad que serán de utilidad para quienes quieran conocer más de la Palabra de Dios.



LIBROS DESAFÍO®



# Engaging People. Embracing Christ.

## God is at work throughout the world.

Resonate partners with people in every nation to discover God's desire for their church, community, and life. We are answering God's call to go and make disciples of all nations.

## The world is at our doorstep.

People from different cultures, backgrounds, and countries live in our own neighborhoods. Resonate equips churches to reach across cultural barriers and forge partnerships with people from all backgrounds.

**IT'S TIME TO RESONATE WITH  
GLOBAL MISSION, BECAUSE  
THE GOSPEL WILL  
CHANGE THE WORLD.**

**IT'S TIME TO REACH ACROSS  
CULTURAL BARRIERS, BECAUSE  
OUR NEIGHBORHOODS  
NEED THE GOSPEL.**



Christian Reformed  
Home Missions

&



Christian Reformed  
WORLD MISSIONS



**Resonate**  
GLOBAL MISSION



A Ministry of the Christian Reformed Church

[WWW.RESONATEGLOBALMISSION.ORG](http://WWW.RESONATEGLOBALMISSION.ORG)

# My Father's Voice

Night after night, I listened  
to my father's voice as it crept  
up the stairs to my cold bedroom  
my twelve-year-old mind not quite  
grasping the full meaning of its earnest  
pleading tone, knowing only  
that it fought for my soul.

There would be my father, a proud man  
kneeling at a dining room chair  
surrendering to you, night after night  
while I listened to the earnest pleading  
in the stillness of my room  
for your answer. When his voice  
stopped, the stillness remained.

Now, decades removed, I pray  
silently from an upstairs bedroom  
remembering the souls of my  
children and grandchildren as he  
did then. In the stillness  
of my night, I listen again  
understanding that you listen  
in silence also. And so now  
I continue, night after night  
raising my voice silently so that  
only you might hear what I  
in turn, surrender, an echo  
of my father's voice, still recalled  
from those times long past.



Arie Staal is a retired English professor who lives in Ann Arbor, Mich. He is a member of the Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church.



LISTEN  
LEARN  
DISCERN

the **January Series**

2018

Covenant Fine Arts Center  
12:30 to 1:30 p.m. EST  
free admission  
[calvin.edu/january](http://calvin.edu/january)

**3** **Wednesday**

**MARY HULST**  
Why Millennials Are the Hope of the Church  
*Underwritten by*  
Jeff & Shirley Hoogstra

**4** **Thursday**

**DAVID R. WILLIAMS**  
Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making us Sick?  
*Underwritten by*  
John & Mary Loeks

**5** **Friday**

**RANDY LEWIS**  
No Greatness without Goodness: How a Father's Love Changed a Company and Sparked a Movement  
*Underwritten by*  
Bruce & Mary Okkema and the Calvin Center for Innovation in Business

**8** **Monday**

**SHANE CLAIBORNE**  
Executing Grace: How the Death Penalty Killed Jesus and Why it's Killing Us  
*Underwritten by*  
The Center for Excellence in Preaching

**9** **Tuesday**

**PASHON MURRAY**  
Detroit Dirt: Zero Waste from the Ground Up  
*Underwritten by*  
Grand Rapids Christian School Foundation

**10** **Wednesday**

**JOHN INAZU**  
Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving through Deep Differences  
*Underwritten by*  
Calvin Academy for Lifelong Learning and the Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics

**11** **Thursday**

**LAURA SUMNER TRUAX**  
Love Let Go: Radical Generosity for the Real World  
*Underwritten by*  
Holland Home and I.C.N. Foundation

**12** **Friday**

**CAROLINE WEBB**  
How to Have a Good Day: Using Behavioral Science to Improve Everyday Life  
*Underwritten by*  
Calvin Center for Innovation in Business

**15** **Monday**

**BEVERLY DANIEL TATUM**  
in celebration of MLK day  
Why Are All the Black Kids Still Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations on Race  
*Underwritten by*  
Miller Johnson

**16** **Tuesday**

**KATHERINE BOO**  
Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity  
*Underwritten by*  
Friends of the January Series

**17** **Wednesday**

**KEVIN OLUSOLA IN CONCERT AND CONVERSATION**  
**Repeat Performance 7:00 p.m.**  
*Underwritten by*  
GMB Architects + Engineers

**18** **Thursday**

**JEREMY McCARTER**  
Hamilton, Hope and Change  
*Underwritten by*  
Samaritas

**19** **Friday**

**R. DAVID EDELMAN**  
Cybersecurity & Geopolitics  
*Underwritten by*  
Barnes & Thornburg, LLP

**22** **Monday**

**KEVIN PALAU**  
Unlikely: Exploring Partnership between Churches and Cities  
*Underwritten by*  
Holland Litho Printing Services

**23** **Tuesday**

**JOHN SWINTON**  
Still Waters Run Deep: Reimagining Dementia and Humanness  
*Underwritten by*  
The Stob Lecture Series and the Peter C. & Emajean Cook Foundation



Parking/shuttle service available from the Prince Conference Center. For further information, visit us at [calvin.edu/january](http://calvin.edu/january) or call 616-526-7018.

Sign language interpretation available with 48-hour notice. The Covenant Fine Arts Center is barrier-free.

Find us on Facebook

@JSeriesCalvin

GRATEFUL TO OUR SPONSORS

Series partners



Community partners



Creative partners

