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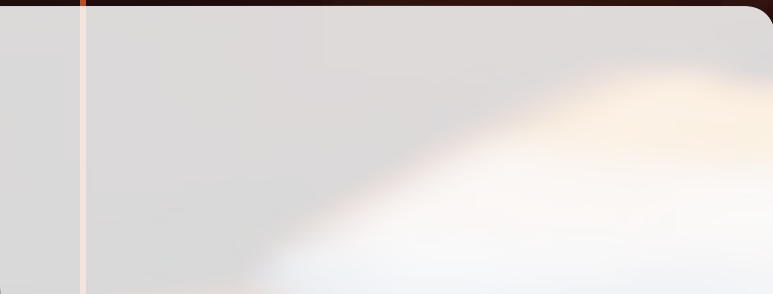
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³⁸ Adopt the Belhar

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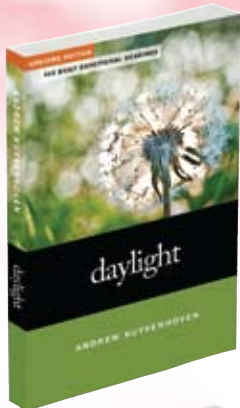
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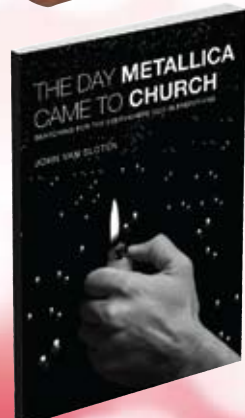
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In All Honesty

NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE IT: two devout Muslims at the front of our church's "sanctuary" facing Mecca and chanting their sundown prayer to Allah.

We invited them to introduce Islam to us for two Sunday evening education sessions. They did a marvelous job of it, sketching both the profound similarities and the key differences between our religions. It didn't hurt that the main presenter, an internationally recognized Islamic scholar, grew up in Edmonton and was raised by a Roman Catholic mother and a Muslim father. He knew, more or less, where we were coming from.

Because our session spanned sundown, our presenters needed to pray their evening prayer. They offered to go out into the parking lot, but we persuaded them to stay right where they were. They were courteously mindful of our "sanctuary," our "holy space," but in our branch of Christianity a church is a people, not a steeple.

We learned much about Islam. Dialogue doesn't have to make us see things the same way—it doesn't have to be a win/lose proposition. By understanding Islam better, Christians can critique it more honestly and fairly. That's a win/win. The ninth commandment forbidding us from bearing false witness against our neighbor extends to Muslims as well. If we criticize Muslim beliefs and practices, we'd better be sure we know what we're talking about or we sin against them.

Here's an example. Someone asked an excellent question: "If following the five pillars of Islam gets Muslims to heaven, then doesn't that mean that Islam teaches a 'works-righteousness' by which people earn their salvation?" The response was enlightening. Our presenters told us that Allah bestows on people the joys of heaven as a gift of overwhelming generosity and mercy, since that gift is so much unimaginably greater than all acts of human

If we criticize Muslim beliefs and practices, we'd better be sure we know what we're talking about.

piety. Besides, they said, those five pillars and Muslims' ability to follow them are in and of themselves gifts of Allah's grace.

I missed the next question because I was breathing a silent prayer asking God's forgiveness for maligning Islam in more than one catechism class on this very point. As the scholar clearly emphasized, there are enough differences between our religions that we need not invent more. Islam has its own holy book that, Muslims believe, trumps all others, including the Bible. Islam denies the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, original sin, and substitutionary atonement.

Nevertheless, after this experience I have much greater respect for Islam's view of Allah. Theirs too is a God of grace, not the vengeful tyrant our media tend to ascribe to all Muslims, rather than to the fundamentalist radicals they happen to be covering.

I'd like to go back for next week's Q&A session; it should be a real hummer. But I'm hopping a plane to attend the baptism of my new grandson. As wonderful and perfect as Micah seems, he needs a good scrubbing in the water that symbolizes our Savior's blood. That simple reenactment places in such bold relief how differently Christians and Muslims see our relationship to God. In contrast to Islam, the Bible teaches us how deeply we humans have fallen and how deeply God the Merciful, God the Compassionate, stooped down in Christ to bring us back to him.

How great is our God! ■



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

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Birthday Prayer

THE BLAZE of candles gives a warm, waxy taste to the lungful of air I just inhaled over the birthday cake on the table below me. I'm garnering sufficient breath to extinguish them. Another November 5 has come, and with it another year of living. I suppose I'm not properly amused.

After 30-plus go-arounds, birthdays are starting to become more wearisome than wonderful—another step toward midnight on life's ever-ticking clock.

As I mark time's passage, I'm struck by what changes and what doesn't. The old wooden dining room table supporting the cake has been around longer than I have. I think of the rise and fall of cities of Legos, Tinker Toys, and Lincoln Logs on its surface. I think of family Thanksgivings, the tabletop piled with steamy mashed potatoes, golden turkey, home-grown corn, and green beans glistening with dollops of melting butter.

My mind traces further back and the table changes. Or, rather, I realize that I have changed.

When I was a child this dining room table and its chairs were anything but utilitarian. Their towering mass could be the walls and roof of an epic castle, a stalwart fort, or a cozy home populated with smudged stuffed animals. I could walk under them or, as I grew, climb under them. But somewhere along the march of November birthdays, I outgrew their shadow.

The chair I once climbed under, and later sat on with dangling legs, became smaller. One birthday my toes touched the floor as I scooted forward. Then they touched even when I sat all the way back. A few birthdays later I could plant my feet squarely on the floor.

I wonder if something of the mystery and wonder of childhood isn't the swinging squirm of dangling legs. Toes that do not touch speak of an expansive world—a world of opportunities. Free-kicking feet inhabit a world infused with a sweet mixture of wonder and dependency, of hope and of trust.

Somehow the rootedness of feet firmly planted uproots the mystery of innocence's dangling spaces.

At 6'3" I don't get too many daily experiences of smallness. Rather than peering over, I must now stoop down toward my birthday cakes. Rather than being overshadowed, I overshadow. Rather than kicking freely, I scrape and scuff with heavy footfalls.

As I've grown bigger, my world has grown smaller. As I've grown stronger, my world has grown more overwhelming. As my intellectual faculties have ripened, the scope of my imagination has withered.

So this year as I gather my lungful of candle-warmed air, I breathe a prayer:

Lord, you have grown us. Grow now the world around us. Let us kick tiny feet into the bigness of your rest. Expand our world, and with it, our hope and trust in you. Amen. ■



Rev. John Lee is pastor of Bethel CRC in Sioux Center, Iowa, where he now shares a new dining room table with his wife, Mary Jo, and their cat, Bear.



Lord, grant me
the grace of wonder.

—JOSHUA ABRAHAM HESCHEL

Burn the Quran?

There are better ways to get Muslims' attention.



MY WIFE AND I serve in the Muslim country of Bangladesh with Christian Reformed World Missions. As I write, we're now home on our first home service. Since we've been back in the States people have been asking me what I think about burning the Quran, as a pastor in Florida had publicly threatened to do.

I guess my question for that pastor and his supporters would be this: What was your desired outcome? If the desire was to get a lot of attention, make a bad name for the followers of Jesus, and burn bridges between Muslims and Christians, then burning the Quran would be an effective means to those ends.

But if the goal was to get Muslims to think about the truth of God in Christ, then burning the Quran would be burning a bridge between Muslims and Christians.

For Muslims the Quran is the compilation of God's final revelation to humanity through Muhammad. It is their holy book. But it's not just the words that they revere; the physical book itself is also considered holy. It is usually given an elevated position in the home on a top shelf or otherwise displayed honorably. It is handled with care. To a Muslim, the offense of burning the Quran is not comparable with burning the Bible to make

a point or to show disagreement with Christianity.

To consider burning the Quran as a threat against building a mosque near Ground Zero is to mistake the spiritual battle for truth as a battle of religious manipulation concerning physical places and artifacts. If we want to compel Muslims to think about the truth of God in Christ, our most effective means is to consistently show them how we revere God's Word not just as a physical book but in our hearts and lives. Burning the Quran would just confirm their belief that non-Muslims are infidels. But living the truth of God through loving relationships forces Muslims to think anew about truth.

One story from our work illustrates this point. I was talking with a Muslim friend of mine who was thinking about moving out of Bangladesh to get away from all the corruption and hopelessness.

Then he said, "You Americans are so lucky. You can go to almost any country in the world. But where can I go? We Bangladeshis have a difficult time getting into another country to work." I said, "What about going to one of the Middle Eastern Muslim countries?" He chuckled cynically and said, "I have no interest in going to those countries. They are wealthy and they are supposed to be my Muslim brothers, but what are they doing to help me or Bangladesh? They do nothing for us. But here you are, a Christian, and you have given up your nice life in America to come live with us and work here."

When we live out God's Word in our lives and hearts, that's when Muslims will be forced to reckon with their convictions about the truth of God. ■



Troy Bierma, his wife, Faith, and their son, Yazzie, live in Bangladesh. They work in Bangladesh and Nepal training leaders in ministry (CRWM).



Separation and Sin

During a visit with friends in Seattle, the article of Rev. Palmer ("Is Separation Always a Sin?" September 2010) came to my attention. As a retired minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and one of the original signers of the Belhar Confession in 1986, I am upset and concerned.

The cause for my alarm is that Rev. Palmer misses the whole message of the Belhar Confession, because he seems to be arguing from a position where prevalent culture and ethnic traditions are normative for the ordering of society—the same ideology that caused untold suffering in South Africa and countless communities in similar situations all over the world. Rev. Palmer warns against importation of confessions from "a different political and cultural context." I would point out that all three of our other confessions and even Scripture itself originated in cultures distinctly different from our own.

I agree with him that "it is beautiful when Christians from different ethnic groups worship together," provided, of course, that it is practiced in such a manner that it does not obstruct the God-given unity of the body of Christ.

LETTERS

But, I would ask, is it not exceedingly more beautiful if we worship all together in spite of our cultural differences so that the words of Jesus are fulfilled: “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another?” (John 13:35).

—Rev. Anton Doyer
Ohrigstad, South Africa

Thank you for publishing Rev. Palmer’s brief, timely, and refreshing piece in September’s *Banner*. Far too much of the denomination-wide conversation concerning the Belhar has focused on the universally appreciable themes of unity, justice, and reconciliation rather than the text of the Belhar Confession itself. We would all do well to read the Belhar carefully with Rev. Palmer and weigh it on the basis of what it says, which in places is indeed questionable.

—Rev. Nicholas Davelaar
Hospers, Iowa

In suggesting that “it is risky to import a confession from a different political and cultural context,” I want to suggest that it is equally risky, if not dangerous, to import and use the modern concept of race and ethnic purity, which have been creations of the worst of 20th-century ideology. I say there is only one race—the human race; a reading of the gospels and Acts would second that, I think.

—Henk Smidstra
Surrey, British Columbia

Homeschooling

I was disappointed with Judy Cook’s answer in the FAQs section (September 2010) regarding how to respond to a son and daughter-in-law’s plan to homeschool their children rather than follow in the

family footsteps of Christian day school. What is truly important is that the children receive an excellent Christ-centered education that thoroughly prepares them to go forth for Christ. Many families today find that homeschooling is just as effective or, in some cases, even more effective than Christian day school in academics, extracurricular activities, and spiritual formation. Christian parents who homeschool generally do so out of a deep commitment to their children’s education and spiritual health.

—Sallie Borrink
Grand Rapids, Mich.

The grandparents’ concern over the possibility of their grandchild being homeschooled is unfounded and should not be seen as a put-down of their dedicated careers in Christian education. They should be excited that their daughter-in-law is choosing to follow in their footsteps in becoming the primary teacher to their grandchild. Education begins at birth, and it can be a natural progression for the parents to continue this process. What a blessing for their grandchild to receive a Christian education from his or her mother, to develop a closer relationship with his parents during his education, and to receive a personalized, mentor-type education. Many studies show that homeschooling students are very successful. Homeschooling also honors our denomination’s support of the beauty of Christian education.

—Dick and Renee Van Eck
Yorba Linda, Calif.

Yes, We Have No Water Buffaloes

While we enjoy the “Just for Kids” pages in *The Banner* each month, we take exception to the comment of the one crow to

the other crow in the September issue. We don’t think the crow should be saying, “Everybody has a water buffalo” when, in fact, *not* everyone has a water buffalo. We fear *The Banner* will be overflowing with letters and emails saying, “Where’s my water buffalo? Why don’t I have a water buffalo?” Is *The Banner* prepared to deal with that? I don’t think so! With apologies to Archie Asparagus,

—Peter Beimers
Norwich, Ontario

Corrections

Regarding “Seminarists Study Abroad” (October 2010, p. 28), the timing of a miracle got lost in editing. The Turkish pastor’s interrogators tried forcing him to renounce his faith in Jesus, but he could not do so because he suddenly found himself unable to speak. The corrected version has been posted online, and *The Banner* apologizes for the error. We also apologize for the glaring misspelling on p. 8 of that issue, which we hope you missed.

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Canceled Calvin College Concert Stirs Media Storm

Calvin College, in Grand Rapids, Mich., grabbed headlines worldwide when it canceled an October on-campus concert by Canadian indie rock band “The New Pornographers” because of the band’s name. The band’s music has nothing to do with pornography.

Many people wanted to know why the college, owned by the Christian Reformed Church, booked the band in the first place.

Calvin staff said Student Activities Director Ken Heffner booked the show because it didn’t



The New Pornographers, a Canadian band

occur to him that the name would be offensive.

The band’s name is an “ironic, creative statement with multiple meanings,” Heffner said. “It seems that there’s a generational difference. The people concerned are primarily 50 and over, and the unconcerned are younger than 50.”

“It was ... a human miss,” said Shirley Hoogstra, Calvin’s vice president of student life.

Some students and alumni accused the college of caving to

pressure from conservative donors. Hoogstra said, “This was never about donors. This was about ordinary brothers and sisters in Christ who were saying, ‘[Pornography] has been a problem for me. This feels like trivializing it.’”

College leaders discussed their decision with the band and voluntarily paid the full artist fee.

Scott Genzink, a Calvin sophomore, had mixed feelings. He likes the band, but also understands the strong feelings that mentions of pornography elicit.

Chicago Church Responds to Violence in the City

Roseland Christian Reformed Church in Chicago moved its midweek prayer service out to the parking lot in August to replace the sounds of violence plaguing its neighborhood with sounds of praise.

The violence struck close to home on August 10 when the niece of Roseland member Carolyn Zeigler was killed by a gunshot while jumping rope two blocks from the church.

The church plans to hold the midweek service outside until the weather becomes too cold.

Since moving outdoors, the service has nearly doubled in attendance. Ministry Associate Joe Huizenga said, “By taking the service outside we’re reclaiming the area for God’s kingdom.”


—Ruth Moblard DeYoung



Derrick Smith shares a rap as Roseland CRC fills the neighborhood with sounds of praise instead of violence. Shown behind him are Raphael Beecham Jr. on drums and DeWitt Casey Jr. on congas.

"I wish Calvin had not canceled the concert, but I can understand why people in the community are opposed to the show."

Other students were less understanding. "Calvin is now being written off as a conservative Christian college unwilling to engage with popular culture," said Calvin sophomore Grace Hardy. "This is a large backwards step for Ken Heffner and the Student Activities Office, who have worked so hard to create a space for open discussion of popular culture."

The band booked a nearby venue to replace the canceled Calvin show, and Genzink planned to organize a group of students to attend the rebooked concert wearing Calvin College garb as a show of support for the band. 

—Roxanne Van Farowe

Connecting the Church with Young Adults

Christian Reformed young adults ages 18 to 30 gathered in Grand Rapids, Mich., in August to voice their concerns about the CRC to denominational leaders and to develop plans for the future. The roundtable discussion was hosted by the Leadership Exchange, the denomination's ministry to promote leadership development. It included 28 men and women from across the continent.


Some, like Dan DeGraff from Lowell, Ind., are frustrated with what they see as the denomination's lack of action regarding young adults. "We hear [the denomination] talking about how they want to connect, but we don't see it getting done."

The group noted several problems, including the lack of ministries for single young adults in churches and the fact that few young adults hold leadership positions in the denomination.

But they also tried to focus on next steps. One thing the participants want is better support. Amy VanderVliet, from the Washington, D.C. Christian Reformed Church, said, "Young adults are looking for support and mentorship from their councils and pastors."

Rev. Mark Hilbelink, 26, from Sunrise Community CRC in Austin, Tex., said this is a step in the right direction, but "we can't make it the typical CRC thing where we talk and we don't take any action."

One suggestion was to hold additional regional events to raise awareness, and to use electronic communication to keep the discussion going. The group plans to use social networks such as Facebook to list more ideas and plans.

"Young adults need to take ownership of their own future," Leadership Exchange director Chris Pullenayegem told them. "It's your church. You are the denomination." 



MARIA SWILDE

(l-r) Joshua Herr, Dan DeGraff, and John Hwang at the Leadership Exchange's young adult roundtable.

—Ryan Struyk

California Student Laments Israeli 'Apartheid'

Katharina Beeler came home from a recent trip to Israel and Palestine with a passion for justice and a concern that her nation's government is "supporting some awful things."

Beeler, member of First Christian Reformed Church in Ripon, Calif., traveled with Hope Equals, a program of Christian Reformed World Missions.

Participants spent time in the Bethlehem area where they joined forces with reconciliation groups, lived with host families, and rebuilt the house of a Palestinian family.

As Beeler learned more, she came to a conclusion: "This is an apartheid system." Israeli extremists

establish settlements in violation of the Israeli Supreme Court and take over Palestinian land, she said. She acknowledged there are injustices on both sides of the conflict.

Anna Vogt, a Canadian from Langley, British Columbia, is also concerned that Canadians have no idea about the actual reality on the ground. "Our media does not often provide a complete picture and we end up supporting injustices without being aware of what we are doing."

Mariano Avila, director of Hope Equals, said, "The greatest success of the trip was that people saw both sides: not all Israelis are oppressors and not




Katharina Beeler traveled to Israel and Palestine with Hope Equals.

all Palestinians are violent terrorists."

Hope Equals has numerous groups starting on campuses all

across the country and they hope to host two or three trips next year.

The only hope in the situation is the living Christ, said Beeler. "Be light in the situation because there is so much darkness." 

—Heidi Wicker

NEWS



Small Groups, Big Impact in Korean Churches

More than 200 small group leaders attended Korean Coffee Break International Ministries (www.coffeebreakkorea.org) in West Covina, Calif., in September. Speakers included Grace Paek, Korean ministry developer for Christian Reformed Home Missions; trainer Myung Lee; and Rev. Tong Park, Home Missions' Korean ministry director. There are 35 Korean Coffee Break groups, including 25 in southern California.

—Jonathan Kim

Wisconsin Church Offers New Ways to 'Get Our Hands Dirty'

Spurred by the needs of new elders and deacons for training, First Christian Reformed Church of Waupun, Wis., held its second annual leadership training conference, which was open to members of other churches. This year, the conference was expanded to include Sunday school teachers, worship leaders, and others.

Rev. Craig Van Hill, pastor at First CRC, said that the idea for the conference, called "Focus on Leadership," started with a growing awareness that many elders and deacons struggle to understand their role as officebearers. Van Hill found that the need for leadership training extended beyond his own church, so he worked with a small team to develop a practical workshop for church leaders.

Attendance at this year's event in late August was 120, up from 80 last year. In addition to sessions for elders and deacons, there were



Bevan and Ben Becksvoort lead a session at the "Focus on Leadership" conference in Waupun, Wis.

sessions on leading worship, outreach, parenting, prison ministry, healthy congregations, and sharing your faith story.

Al Ven Huizen, an elder and catechism teacher, especially appreciated a session he attended on community transformation. Ven Huizen said that the opportunity to learn and share information was helpful "especially for those of us not in urban areas who feel far away from the denomination."

Van Hill hopes to continue expanding the conference to include additional topics, such as youth ministry.

"One of the realizations we want to come out of this conference is that everyone is called by God to do something," he said. "It is our desire to instruct, to grow our passions, and to find new ways to 'get our hands dirty.'"

—Doug Evenhouse


Bringing Synergy from Seattle to New York City

Rev. Peter Armstrong understands the need for synergy among city churches after serving three Christian Reformed churches in the Seattle Cluster (see *Banner*, November 2009, p. 12).

Clusters are a gathering of pastors and church planters located in a particular city who meet together on a regular basis for support, encouragement, learning, evaluation, and fellowship.

Now Armstrong is taking that synergy across the country to New York City. He is an associate pastor of City Grace CRC in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Manhattan, with a vision for planting a new faith community one mile away in the Little Italy neighborhood. Over 70,000 people live in the square mile encompassing Greenwich to Little Italy.

Rev. John Algera, pastor of Madison Avenue CRC in Paterson, N.J., helped launch the Manhattan cluster. "We have discovered that there is great value in clustering churches together to build synergy and momentum in ministry as well as to encourage one another," says Algera.

Armstrong looks forward to working with the church planters in New York and New Jersey. "I hope to be able to learn from them and encourage them as we plant churches in that influential corner of creation."  —Amy Toornstra



Rev. Peter Armstrong moved to New York City to be part of a Manhattan cluster of city churches.

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Jose Marcelo Sanchez
1932-2010

Rev. Jose Sanchez, 78, one-time Cuban journalist and radio official and tireless pastor to Latin American immigrants, died from complications of prostate cancer.

Sanchez initially trained at the University of Havana as a journalist. But he always felt drawn to the ministry, and graduated from Matanza Seminary in 1962.

Sanchez served with the Cuban Interior Mission, in which the Christian Reformed Church played a prominent role, and was ordained in the Cuban CRC in 1972, serving the Emanuel congregation in Havana.

The Sanchez family immigrated to the U.S. in 1981, where Sanchez led two congregations in Hialeah, Fla. He retired in 1995.

Sanchez was widely loved for his empathetic service to Latin American communities in Florida. He was as adept at preaching and teaching as he was at counseling and writing.

Sanchez was predeceased by his first wife, Mercedes. He is survived by his wife Josefina, two children and their spouses, and five grandchildren.

—Louis M. Tamminga

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

California Teens Travel to Japan for Summer Missions

Rev. Charles Oh and seven Korean American teens from the TtoKamsa Mission Christian Reformed Church in Los Angeles traveled further than most for a mission trip: they spent a month in Japan sharing the gospel.

Team members prepared for months, studying basic Japanese, learning praise songs in Japanese, and preparing their testimonies.

Once there, they were led by Rev. Ken Lee, a missionary in Japan with Christian Reformed World Missions. They led worship using the songs and pantomimes they had learned, and shared their testimonies with translation assistance.

The teens led three vacation Bible schools and two camp ministries, staying in Japanese homes as part of their cross-cultural experience.

Lee said, "This ministry can be fulfilled by anybody. However, it is more effective for Korean Americans because their similar appearance and somewhat similar culture makes it easier to approach the Japanese."

Lee noted that, through the Korean American teams, "God wants us to heal the broken relationship between Korea and Japan and lay down the foundation for developing future Christian leaders for Japan."

—Ruth Moblard DeYoung



Teens from Los Angeles at the Tokyo airport, embarking on the summer mission trip of a lifetime.

Rev. Rich Systma holds a gift given to Christian Reformed World Missions by the Shin Urayasu Church.

Michigan Church Celebrates Church Growth in Japan

When the Shin Urayasu Reformed Church in the Tokyo area celebrated becoming a full-fledged congregation with its own elders and deacons, a church on the other side of the ocean in Grand Rapids, Mich., also celebrated.

Woodlawn Christian Reformed Church has a special relationship with the Japanese congregation and its pastor, Rev. Takayuki Ashida. When Ashida attended Calvin Theological Seminary, he and his family worshiped at Woodlawn. The relationship has been maintained since his return to Japan four years ago.

So when the Shin Urayasu church celebrated in June, among the 200 people in attendance were Rev. Richard and Sandy Sytsma, members at Woodlawn and former missionaries to Japan. Richard Sytsma said, "God has really blessed that church with dramatic growth. Average attendance has grown from 10 to 70."

Shin Urayasu Church was started in 1994 by retired Christian Reformed missionaries Rev. Michiel and Trudy De Berdt.

—Ruth Moblard DeYoung

IKURO AIBA

NEWS

New Jersey Church Celebrates 100th

Madison Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Paterson, N.J., celebrated its 100th anniversary this year.

A celebratory service in October included an original play and a 100th anniversary choir. Madison's former pastor, Rev. Anthony Van Zanten, attended. The event also raised funds for Crossroads Community Ministries, Inc., the service arm of the church.

A highlight of the evening was a reunion of the Voices of God, a touring choir begun in the 1960s under Van Zanten. Choristers performed songs they sang when they were teenagers.

According to Rev. John Algera, the church's pastor since 1979, at one time there were six Christian Reformed churches in Paterson, but today Madison Avenue is the only original one left.

In response to the changing neighborhood around the church, Crossroads Community Ministries was created to serve the community with a food pantry, a homeless shelter, a child care center, English classes, and many other ministries.

—Calvin Hulstein

Iowa Girl Competes in National Soapbox Derby

Mariah Bonestroo, 12, earned the right to compete in two races at Akron, Ohio's All-American Soapbox Derby with just two qualifying races.

"That is very unusual," said Doug Bonestroo, Mariah's father. "Most competitors need many more attempts to qualify."



Mariah Bonestroo with her derby car

Three hundred competitors came from all over the world for the Akron event. Bonestroo competed in the stock car division against entrants from 40 U.S. states, Canada, and places as far away as Germany, Japan, and New Zealand.

Bonestroo, whose older brothers also raced in derbies, placed 25th out of 125 cars in Akron.

"It was just interesting," she said. "I followed my brothers."

Bonestroo is a member of Hope Christian Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa. —Sherry Kooiker

Colorado Church Builds Bridges of Hope

Faced with an unemployment rate that's one of the highest in Colorado, Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Greeley started Bridges of Hope, a ministry that connects church, government, and community agencies with those who need services.

One evening every month, the church hosts a meal where representatives from up to 20 different agencies are present to offer legal advice, career or budget counseling, and various other forms of professional help.

It is helpful that people who need assistance can find it all under one roof, but Rick Hartman, director of the program, said it's not all about the assistance.

"People don't get helped by programs, they get helped by people," he said. "People are not a number here. We just try to sit down and talk to them, find out what's going on, and train our volunteers to ask open-ended questions."



Pat Logan (left) and Cyndi Sagel both help through Bridges of Hope.

Pat Logan and Cyndi Sagel are two women who have received and now give assistance.

"When we started [volunteering], I had lost my job after 14 years," Logan said. "Cyndi lost her job, another gal lost her job, and another girl in the class lost her job. . . . I was the breadwinner,

the 401K person, the insurance person."

But because of Bridges of Hope, she did not feel hopeless or alone. "This group is a community coming together," she said.

—Sarah Boonstra

Teens Find Home at The Shop

Carissa Byers, 17, is among the 30 or so teens who show up regularly on Tuesday evenings at Hope Christian Reformed Church in Grandville, Mich. When asked why she's there, Carissa says "Because of her," pointing to her friend Amber Miller, 17. Miller said she heard about it from another friend.

Skateboarder Richard Main, 13, couldn't wait to come. "My brother found out about it. When I got old enough, I started coming," he said.

Word is spreading that teens ages 13 to 18 can drop in at "The Shop" for skateboarding, pool, video games, snacks, guitar playing, and Bible talks.


Leaders Sam Krikke and Rev. Darin Compagner lead short devotions aimed at teens' needs.



From left, Rev. Darrin Compagner, Brian Tanner, Greg Main, and Levi Kitler at The Shop in Grandville, Mich.

Although Cameron Brocker, 18, admits to an ambivalent opinion about the talks, he said, "They make me think about my life."

"For many of the students, The Shop is 'church,'" said Krikke.

The program has also opened the way for the church to visit neighborhood families during bereavement, illnesses, and financial crises. 

—Carolyn Koster Yost

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Lambert Doezema

1912-2010

Rev. Lambert Doezema, 97, careful scholar and advocate for church unity, passed away after a long and full life.


Doezema entered the ministry in the Protestant Reformed Church (PRC) in California. He subsequently did doctoral studies at the Free University in Amsterdam, focusing on the unity of the church. Later, he also came to admire the work of liberation theologians, as his thought became more and more liberal and inclusive.

Doezema went on to serve another Michigan PRC congregation, then joined the Christian Reformed Church, serving churches in Ontario and Michigan.

He retired in 1977. During retirement, Doezema taught students in Nigeria and the Philippines under the auspices of the CRC.

Doezema was a quiet man who through his serious and thoughtful words and prayers set a profound example for his parishioners and his children.

He had a love of the outdoors and often took the family camping and hiking in state and national parks.

Doezema was preceded in death by his wife, Joanne, and by a son. He is survived by six children and their spouses, 19 grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren. 

—Louis M. Tamminga

South Dakota Women Sew for Orphans

A stash of fabric, love of sewing, and a desire to help were all combined when 27 women and girls sewed 70 dresses in three days, each with a teddy bear in the pocket and a note with the words to the song "Jesus Loves Me."

Cindy Heckenlaible was the one who started the project at Peace Christian Reformed Church in Menno, S.D. Heckenlaible donated her stash of fabric. "It was almost all the fabric I had, but God had a purpose for it I didn't know about," she said.

When asked why she participated, Linda Brinks answered, "Because we love Jesus and we want to share his love."

The dresses are distributed to orphanages in Africa through the organization Little Dresses for Africa (www.littledressesforAfrica.org). So far more than 35,000 dresses have gone to 10 African countries.



Madelyn (7) and Paige (10) Heckenlaible stuff teddy bears to go in the pockets of the dresses.

—Sherry Kooiker

Indiana Church Reaches Out to Ex-offenders


JoAnn calls the congregation at Community Christian Reformed Church in Fort Wayne, Ind., her extended family.

JoAnn is a participant in Celebrate Recovery, through an early release prison program for ex-offenders. She has been embraced by Community CRC, which helps lead the weekly meetings at Allen County Corrections.

Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered 12-step addiction recovery ministry for adults, their families, and their friends. The meetings include dinner, worship, small-group sessions, and a children's program.

Community CRC got involved with the Celebrate Recovery ministry through Rev. Jim Halstead. He is currently ordained in two other denominations and is working toward becoming a ministry associate in the Christian Reformed Church.

Reaching out to the Fort Wayne community is one of the church's goals, Halstead said, and the congregation has warmly welcomed several Celebrate Recovery participants, including JoAnn.

JoAnn said the church has shown her love and compassion in ways she has never known. "The church helped out with things I didn't even ask for," she says. "It was like angels coming." 

—Henry Huisjen




A.J. Christian (left) and Kendall Christian attended Encounter Church's carnival.

Church Carnival Draws 2,500 on National Night Out

Encounter Church in Kentwood, Mich., drew 2,500 guests to its carnival that included rides and games, a bounce house, and an inflatable slide.

Encounter Church is a church plant supported by Brookside Christian Reformed Church and Classis Thornapple Valley (a regional group of churches). Encounter used the event to get to know its neighbors and promote its official launch in October.

Rev. Dirk VanEyck, pastor at the church, said, "We are about connecting people, and ultimately, it's about connecting people to God."

Although the event primarily promoted the church's launch date two months in the future, Van Eyck noticed a few new families at the church's next service. 

—Ryan Struyk

U.S. Churches Help AIDS Orphans in Africa

From California to Michigan to Africa, God unites his people in common work. As evidence of that fact, The River Christian Reformed Church in Redlands, Calif., CrossPoint CRC in Chino, and Haven CRC in Zeeland, Mich., have come together to support Beautiful Gate orphanage in the African country of Lesotho, which serves a region that has one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the world and lots of needy children.

The churches commit more than just their finances as they send teams of short-term volunteers and even long-term missionaries.

Recently CrossPoint CRC sent a team for 10 days. Danell Czarnecki, member of CrossPoint, said of the workers she met at Beautiful Gate, "They have so little, yet love and give so much, trusting that God will provide what is needed."

—Heidi Wicker



May Findley from CrossPoint CRC holds a baby girl who was found in a dumpster.

FAQs

Relationships

QOur daughter cuts herself, and we don't understand her need to do this. Can you shed some light on this disorder?

A Cutting or self-harm is baffling, and I can understand your confusion and feelings of helplessness when your daughter uses self-inflicted pain to feel better. It's likely that your daughter will say she does not know why she feels the need to do this and will promise not to do it again. Things might settle down somewhat, but, more often than not, the cutting continues.

The reasons for self-harm are complex and varied. It occurs most often in teens and young adults, and more often in girls than boys. Most often it relates to the inability of a young person to cope with intense feelings. If there are no proper outlets for those feelings, or if tender feelings are seen as weak or bad in a family or school culture that is often competitive and success-oriented, then the temptation for some teens is to begin to live a life of pretense.

A young person can also be hiding overwhelmingly bad feelings related to some trauma, such as the death of a parent, sibling, or friend; a failed relationship; or the hidden experience of childhood abuse. This is something to explore with the help of a professional family counselor.

Your daughter needs a therapist she can learn to trust, and who will help her explore what is at the root of her disorder. This takes regular (weekly) therapy for at least a year, and possibly longer.

At its basic level, cutting brings immediate relief from stress, anxiety, and other psychic pain. The need to cut becomes addictive because it triggers relief via the brain's opiate receptors.

God knows our struggles and promises freedom when we embrace his truth.

In the final analysis, therapy can only work if your daughter knows she has a problem and wants to overcome it. The conquering of any addiction starts with the decision that the addictive substance or behavior is no longer an option for relief. The good news is that God knows our struggles and promises freedom when we embrace his truth, rather than the lie of quick relief that addiction holds out for us.

—Judy Cook

Judy Cook is a family therapist living in Hamilton, Ontario. She is a member of Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Ancaster, Ontario. You may e-mail her at judycook.thebannerqanda@gmail.com. All responses will be held in the strictest confidence.

Calling

QIf the media are right and I should expect to change careers/jobs at least four times in my lifetime, what does that say about God's calling in my life? Does God keep changing his mind?

A Speaking as someone who's had approximately nine jobs over the course of my work life, I have a bird's-eye view of the job-change thing. Some of those jobs/careers were a great fit—I knew that I was in the right place to use my gifts and talents. Other jobs ranged from mediocre to horrible; I hated the work and wasn't good at it. In both cases, however, I can now see the Lord working to teach me his lessons in his ways.

One of the lessons I learned along the way was that I have not been designed to do all things equally well. Working with myriad minute details in exacting ways, for instance, challenges me to the core. On the other hand, I know that God has given me the gift of listening to someone's story and discerning a path through the muddle.

There are a number of ways to go about finding innate giftedness. Get feedback from friends and family, of course. But also examine yourself: what are those things toward which you are naturally drawn, your areas of rapid learning, and activities that you eagerly anticipate doing again? And finally, career tests can offer helpful and objective feedback.

Sometimes when I speak to groups about this topic, I show two different drinking utensils: one a portable plastic bottle with a detachable top and one a delicately crafted hand-painted china cup. Both instruments were created to hold liquids, but their design and use is for different purposes. In a similar way, each of us has been uniquely crafted for God's will and purpose.

—Bonnie Speyers

Bonnie Speyers is a career counselor at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. ■

{ An Improvable Feast }

When the last thing we want to do is gather at the table, it's likely what we need most.



THE FIRST PIECE of furniture I purchased after I bought my home was a large rectangular Shaker-style table of naturally finished pine with six matching chairs. I installed it in my dining area and called

my oldest sister, Joyce, to come see it.

Joyce pronounced it good—a double win for me, since she has an eye for decorating and a heart for bargain shopping. And she didn't even realize that it was more than a table.

No, for me—a single, first-time homeowner after years of apartment living—this was not just a table; it was a symbol of my new status as “the lady of the house” and the hospitality I wanted to express as such.

I was proud of that table and imagined myself hosting dinners at it or standing at the head of it with a huge platter of turkey in my hands, like a matriarch in a Rockwell painting.

Never mind that I rarely ever cooked except by microwave oven and usually dined alone, either in front of a television or behind a steering wheel. I had a table now, so things would be different—eventually. Of course, I still had other rooms to furnish, repairs and renovations on the house to complete, settling in to accomplish. It would be months, I thought, perhaps longer, before I actually had to become the woman in the picture.

Resentment at the Table

Joyce, however, took it upon herself to accelerate my timetable. Looking around my spacious new home, she instantly got an idea about the upcoming holiday weekend, just days away. And before I knew how it happened, she had invited herself and other family members over for a big weekend family dinner and get-together, with a number of overnight guests.

It would be an especially significant celebration for our elderly mother, whose health had been compromised by a stroke and severe dementia. For Mom, the world had shrunk to a tight focus on her own comfort and the well-being of her chil-

dren—and she worried most about those who lived the farthest away. She would love having all of us together for a sit-down dinner and extended visit.

I don't clearly remember agreeing to host; I probably just fell into the old habit, as youngest in the family, of going along with things decided without me. I didn't even mind that much, except for one thing. Joyce had invited an estranged family member, our “middle” sister, Jan, with whom I was angry and not that eager to be reconciled.

So throughout my hasty preparations for the weekend, I seethed with resentment. I kept imagining having to sit at the table with a sister who I felt had wronged me and others in the family, one

Throughout my hasty preparations for the weekend, I seethed with resentment.

who neither acknowledged any guilt nor expressed any remorse.

Ruefully, I imagined serving Jan food in my house, and the very thought dulled the shine of my new table for me. I couldn't help thinking, “Some feast *this* is going to be!”

A Divine Precedent

As the holidays approach, many people anticipate gathering with family or friends or coworkers to celebrate, often with some sort of banquet or buffet. From ancient times to the present and in cultures around the world, it has long been customary for people to mark important or sacred events with festive meals together. After all, we have to eat anyway, right?

Yet the phenomenon of dining together on special occasions is more than simple custom or pragmatics. Whether we realize it or not, ritual feasting is a matter of biblical principle and precedent—with a heavenly mandate.

God himself approved of the practice: after calling on Moses to lead the Israelite people out of bondage and into the Promised Land, the Lord instituted a number

of holy feasts and instructed his people in the proper observance of them.

God meant for those festivals to remind his people of his continued presence and the ongoing history of his grace.

In the New Testament, Jesus' first recorded miracle occurs at a wedding feast (which, incidentally, is perhaps why bringing good wine to a dinner could be considered a very Christlike gesture). Later Jesus repeatedly presided over important meals, from the miraculous feedings of thousands of listeners to his intimate breaking of bread with his disciples.

During his life and even after his death and resurrection, Jesus frequently shared a meal with those he wanted to comfort or encourage.

Jesus also mentioned feasting in his parables, as when he compared the kingdom of heaven to a king throwing a wedding banquet for his son (Matt. 22). In that story, the king works hard to get people to his table. Nevertheless, many of the invited respond rudely and ruthlessly, if at all.

Eat, Drink, and Be Wary?

Jesus' parable of the king's banquet may strike some hearers as an unlikely scenario. Why would anyone refuse such an invitation? Most of us like to celebrate, after all, and a fancy dinner paid for by a rich host is nothing to blow off.

Yet how many of us have foregone a holiday dinner with family to avoid difficult relatives or uncomfortable confrontations? How many workers, perhaps angry over a small or absent bonus or stressed

continued on p. 37 »



Jennifer Parker is a writer, teacher, and librarian who lives in Jackson, Miss.



When Kids **STOP** Walking with God

MANY CHRISTIAN PARENTS share a common joy: children who are walking with God. But many also share a common grief: children (or grandchildren) who have walked away from God.

If it becomes clear that your son or daughter has no desire to walk with God, you will probably go through a time of painful soul-searching. How could this happen? Why my child? Where did I fail? Is the Lord punishing me? Should I tell the church? How should I pray? Is God even listening? Should I talk to my child? How? Where can I turn for help?

Fear can gnaw away quietly at you as you wonder what to do. Spouses may at times feel impatient with each other—moments of disagreement can carry a sense of accusation. A sense of resentment may invade your family life.

Sometimes life brings problems for which there are no solutions, but we still have to face those problems. Here are some places to start if you have a child who isn't walking with God.

Take Stock

First, I would invite you to sit down with your spouse or, if you're a single parent, with a trusted friend. Take stock of the things you know for sure. Perhaps the most important is this:

God is in charge. The destiny of your children is in *God's* hand. The Lord gave parents a wonderful role to play in their children's faith life, but we must realize that God, not us, is the source of that faith.

So you can commit your child to God, knowing that God will deal salvation-wise with him or her in *his* time.

Salvation is by God's grace. Your child's faith-decisions are between him or her and God's Holy Spirit. But what is beyond you is *not* beyond the Spirit, so leave your fear and worry before your Father's mercy seat.

Remain a Friend

Second, I encourage you to consciously recommit yourself to your child. Parenting includes being your child's friend—playing a supportive role that needs ongoing expression. Continue to show delight in your child, to show your appreciation of his or her gifts and interests. Praise her for her efforts. Listen to his stories. Your parental friendship should remain solid for every child, believer or unbeliever. Your unbelieving child is equally entitled to your friendship for the simple reason that he or she is your child.

This has another side. Children have an uncanny psychological sense. They watch you—how you relate to your spouse, how you relate to God. And they watch how you express your values and ideals.

Your commitment to love your kids is not negotiable.

What a child watches for especially is whether Mom and/or Dad are just church members or whether they are truly followers of Jesus.

Kids experience a lot of insecurity. They face a threatening world. Your home is their God-appointed shelter. They need your friendship, but they don't want you to be their *buddies*; rather, they seek your protection, your acceptance, your affection, and your sincere interest.

Children can accept correction and even discipline, but they dread being emotionally disowned by their parents. Your commitment to love your kids is not negotiable—so be Christ to them!

Such loyalty creates an atmosphere in which children feel secure and free to confide in their parents. And it is especially your “wayward” child who needs that warmth and security. Your child must know that you remain on her side with love undiminished. That will help her deal with one very paralyzing thought: “Now that I don't believe anymore, my parents will think that they have failed in bringing me up.”

Does your continued love mean that you will not be sad if your child walks away from God? No, you will experience real sadness. But in your sadness your trust remains in the Lord.

God is patient. He is not through with your child yet. And that's why your prayers can continue unhindered. (Consider the following Scripture passages to bolster your trust and faith: Rom. 8; Eph. 2; and Col. 1.)

A Hot Topic

I think we may generally agree that the Christian Reformed Church cares about young people. Youth work is rated high in individual churches. And our most recent synod (annual leadership meeting) highlighted the challenge to care for children and young people. Representatives of the Calvin College Center for Social Research presented a summary of the splendid study *Spiritual and Social Trends and Patterns in the Christian Reformed Church in North America*. Lots of good advice!

The denomination's recently formed Youth Ministry Task Force is working hard on a coherent youth ministry plan. Churches have been urged to address the disconnect between adolescents and the older generations and to keep track of young members who move away.

In a *Banner* editorial as long ago as May 2006, editor Bob De Moor suggested that young people be represented at meetings of synod, with the privilege of “having the floor.” Good thinking, though just now being implemented with the invitation of youth advisers to synod.

Finally, the June 2010 issue of *The Banner* contains an article on youth ministry by Pieter Pereboom and Anita Kuiken, “Shaping a Youth-Friendly Church,” which contains splendid advice. You may wish to read it again at www.thebanner.org.

—Louis Tamminga

Can the Church Help?

Yes, the church and individual members can help. But it is not easy; grieving parents face complex, highly nuanced situations. And no two situations are alike. Parents themselves have a hard time understanding their young adult children.

On the one hand parents feel a need to talk with trusted church members about these problems, but on the other hand they hesitate because they know how difficult the situation is.

Here are some things concerned church members can keep in mind when talking with a parent who is saddened by a child's lack of faith:

- Ask the parent how all his or her children are doing; then ask about the child for whom this parent worries.
- Don't be in a hurry. Don't look around as if you're eager to move on.
- Don't change the subject or cut the parent short.
- Don't offer unsolicited advice.
- Don't look anguished.
- Don't refer to other situations that you think are similar.

In other words, just listen—the kind of listening that clearly comes from being engaged.

Why is listening to burdened people so helpful? It affirms to them that they belong. Their plight can make them feel inadequate. Heart-to-heart listening assures them that you value and esteem them.

After listening, assure the parent of your prayers (and be sure to keep your promise). Perhaps the situation will be suitable for a short prayer there and then.

Do not wait too long before following up with this mom or dad by phone or in person: “Hi, it's good to speak with you again. How have you been since we talked last? I've continued to think of you and pray for you.”

The church can also help by bringing concerned parents together for mutual support and encouragement. See “Living Room Compassion,” in the September 2009 *Banner* (www.thebanner.org) for a description of how one church brought hurting moms and dads together to share their stories.

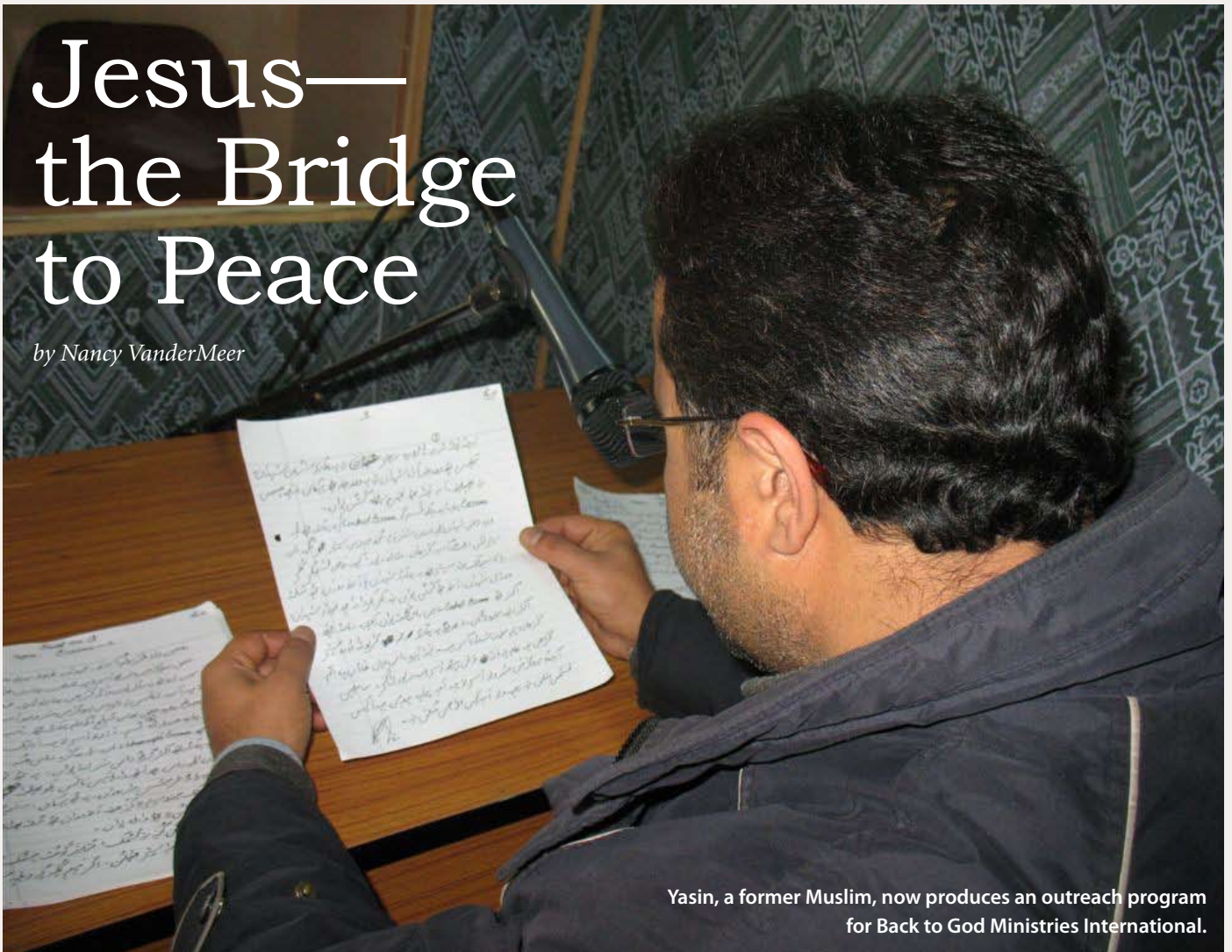
Above all, we need to realize that parenting is not easy. Our prayers—especially for families with growing children—need to be fervent and frequent. ■



Rev. Louis Tamminga, a retired pastor in the CRC, has served on the staff of Christian Reformed Home Missions and as director of Pastor-Church Relations. He is the author of *The Elder's Handbook* (Faith Alive).

Jesus— the Bridge to Peace

by Nancy VanderMeer



Yasin, a former Muslim, now produces an outreach program for Back to God Ministries International.

Four years ago Yasin (not his real name), an educated Shia Muslim in northern India, wouldn't even speak with people from the Sunni Muslim majority. Then he met Christ through the media ministry of Good Books, BTGMI's ministry partner in India.

Today Yasin not only has fellowship with Sunni converts, he also produces the Good Books radio program in the local language of the region.

Yasin's studio is hidden because it is not safe to let the people of his community—or even his extended family—know what he is doing. For Yasin, being a Christian is a huge risk.

“Radio is a very effective way of taking God's Word to the people.”

Yet Yasin, who is an English teacher, finds every opportunity to share the Christian faith. “In English literature you have a lot of Bible verses,” he notes. “Whether you teach John Milton or John Keats, or a modern writer like T.S. Eliot, you may find a biblical reference.

“My students ask where the references are from and I show them the passages are from the Bible. So the students inquire

about the Bible. They ask, ‘What is the Bible? What is it all about?’ This is a very good way to introduce them to the Word of God.”

Yasin reports that these conversations have produced great results, saying, “I have personally seen the effects.”

Yasin also uses the Good Books radio program to share the Bible. “In this region we have no proper medical help, so we

prepare health scripts to help people understand different diseases and common remedies for them. With the health issues, I weave in biblical teaching when possible to bring the words of God to the people so God's Word can be felt in their hearts.

"Radio is a very effective way of taking God's Word to the people," he says. "Families here listen to the radio while they work, since radio doesn't need your eyes. Families, children



as well as adults, put on the radio while they do needlework—carpet weaving, shawl making—or perhaps woodworking. Once they become regular listeners to

Yasin's family lives with risk because of his faith.

one of the programs, they are willing to listen to our other programs as well."

The area where Yasin lives is full of turbulence and violence. "But I believe that the Prince of Peace will use people like me to restore peace to this valley," he testifies.



Nancy Vander Meer is a staff writer for Back to God Ministries International.

Reaching Muslims for Christ

Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) has been carrying out ministry to Muslims around the world for more than 50 years.

"I see a growing commitment to serve our Muslim neighbors with the gospel," notes BTGMI director Rev. Bob Heerspink. "The work of our indigenous media teams has taught us a great deal about what effective ministry among Muslims looks like."

"Muslims highly respect Jesus as a great prophet, so we always try to focus on Christ," explains BTGMI Arabic ministry leader. "When Christ is lifted up, he attracts people to himself."

Islam is more than a religion; it is a culture that affects every area of life. For Muslims, accepting Jesus often means alienation from employers, friends, and even family.

Contrary to what people in the West often believe, there is no such thing as a "typical Muslim." BTGMI's Arabic team—as well as ministry teams in Africa, Indonesia, India, and other places worldwide—use a variety of approaches to bring biblical truth to issues that engage the minds and hearts of Muslim listeners.



"Our approach is that we try to be friendly, respectful, and to speak in terms that Muslims understand," notes the Arabic ministry leader. "We are finding this method to be more and more appealing to a growing number of Muslims who have questions. Without speaking against Muslims, we speak biblical truth."

In Arabic-speaking regions, BTGMI does a lot of listening, caring, and praying, the ministry leader explains. Media mission teams develop programs that are honest and transparent. Through radio, the Internet, and text messaging, it is possible to privately disciple Muslims, answer questions, and nurture their faith.

BTGMI provides discipleship materials for former Muslims.



On BTGMI's Arabic website, people can download Bible passages, the Heidelberg Catechism, and other teaching resources. Converts learn to express their faith in ways that will attract others to the Christian faith. »

» BTGMI partners with Good Books Ministries for media outreach in northern India and the Himalayan region, where Muslims are ethnically very different from those living in other parts of the world. Broadcasts in Hindi and four local languages reach many people.

“There is open resistance to anything connected with the spread of the gospel,” the ministry leader in India explains. “Some team members were threatened when gunmen entered the office. But the Lord intervened and no harm was done.

“People in this region are fed up with the turmoil and violence. They are looking for an alternative and seem to be more open to the gospel. Our strategy is to talk of peace, love, and harmony, which can only be found in Christ.

“Media is crucial to our ministry because, in the absence of a personal encounter, we are able to reach anyone. Radio waves can reach anywhere, crossing political and geographical boundaries.”

Ministry in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, poses several challenges. This archipelago country is comprised of more than 12,000 islands

For Muslims, following Jesus often means alienation from employers, friends, and even family.



Rev. Untung meets with Muslim families in remote areas of Indonesia.

and 700 different tribes and cultures. Many Indonesians negatively associate Christianity with three centuries of Dutch colonialism.

Indonesian people who convert from Islam to the Christian faith are often persecuted and exiled from their families and communities. Still, the message of peace through Christ is breaking through.

Indonesian ministry leader Rev. Untung Ongkowidjaya shares the story of Muhajir, a Muslim from Central Java.

Muhajir works for an Indonesian Christian family and notices that their faith is different, so full of love. He hears the Indonesian-language children’s program *Drama Kiddy* when the family listens to the radio.

He wrote to Untung that he wants to be a Christian, but is frightened and has been threatened by his family. “Pray that someday

Muhajir will be bold to declare his faith in Jesus,” asks Untung. Pray also that Muhajir’s family will come to know Christ as Savior.

Quick facts about Muslim ministry

- BTGMI carries out media ministry in 60 countries where the majority population is Muslim.
- Radio broadcasts and websites are effective ways of reaching Muslims. One-on-one discipleship is carried on very carefully through text messaging, Bible study by correspondence, and, in some places, listener communities.
- Partnerships are important to BTGMI outreach. Key ministry partners in Muslim ministry include Words of Hope (the media ministry of the Reformed Church in America), MERF (Middle East Reformed Fellowship), the Indonesian Christian Church, and Good Books Ministries.
- The Reformed faith, which proclaims the whole gospel for all of life, resonates with Muslim converts, whose former religion also encompassed their whole lives.

The family for whom Muhajir works is part of the 142 listener communities in Indonesia. These listener communities provide powerful reinforcement to media outreach through BTGMI radio, television, and print ministry.

Rev. Paul Mpindi, whose radio programs and discipleship ministry reach thousands of French-speaking people in Africa, notes that media-based ministry



is also effective among African Muslims.

“Our ministry has a way of reaching out to Muslims without endangering them,” he says. “Through radio and our Bible study correspondence course, Muslims do become Christians. But they do so privately. They write to tell us and ask that we continue to teach them. ‘We have accepted Christ, but we are alone,’ they write.

“In many of these regions Christians cannot gather, so they worship in secret. They tell us our radio ministry is important for learning more about the gospel.”

“The Internet is also a good tool,” adds Mpindi. “Many Muslims write that they go to our website. Radio makes noise, and



Cell phone technology is an effective tool for communicating with seekers.

sometimes they don’t want people in their compound to know they are listening. But the Internet can be silent.

“In our outreach we present Jesus as one who forgives and loves them. People come and say they want to believe in Jesus. We lead them to faith in Christ and then offer them our Bible study by correspondence course to expose them directly to the Word of God.”

“Thanks to your support through ministry shares, gifts, and offerings, Back

to God Ministries International reaches Muslim people in India and Indonesia, Arabic- and French-speaking countries,” Heerspink notes.

“People from all over the world tell BTGMI staff members that the biblical truth proclaimed through our ministry is changing their lives.”

Note: To protect ministry leaders and their ministries, we have omitted certain names and details. ■

—Nancy Vander Meer



Myths about Muslims

In the West there are many myths about Muslims. Here are just a few:

- **All Muslims are Arab.** Of the 1.5 billion Muslims in the world, approximately one in six speaks Arabic. Although 93 percent of the Middle East is Muslim, the countries with the largest Muslim populations are Indonesia, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.
- **All Muslims think alike.** Islam is a complex religion with many denominations. Most Muslims think for themselves in the same way Western Christians do.
- **All Muslims are violent.** Muslims who practice violence make headlines. But most Muslims are neither radical nor militant. Rather than seeing Muslims as enemies to be conquered, effective ministry sees them as brothers and sisters who need Christ.

Remember that generalizations are misleading. In order to share Jesus’ love with a Muslim neighbor or coworker, pray for an opportunity to relate on a personal level. A growing friendship builds trust and opens opportunities to share Jesus, the bridge to peace.

Reformed and Reforming

Each year on October 31, we remember the courage of persons like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and others who led the Protestant Reformation and worked faithfully to reform the church. These were people who responded to the call of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit with courage and action that changed the world.

As we reflect on Reformation Day, I hope that we will not only remember Luther and the other 16th-century reformers, but that we will also consider the way in which God continues to use men and women to transform the world. You and I stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.

Reformation Day is a time when we recall men and women who, against all odds, worked to build churches and communities in keeping with their calling from God. It is about those who gave up family and friends and traveled to uncharted places so that others could hear the good news of grace. It is about martyrs torn apart and burned at the stake for refusing to renounce the truth of God's Word.

In addition to the reformers who have shaped the church and world, we each have heroes of faith who have shaped us personally. In my own life there have been many people who have molded and formed me. Certainly my parents were instrumental in forming my life and making me the person I am

Reformation Day is a time when we recall men and women who worked to build churches and communities in keeping with their calling from God.



GRACE THROUGH EVERY GENERATION, BY CHRIS OVERVOORDE

today. There were teachers, professors, youth leaders, preachers, friends, colleagues, authors, and speakers. It is fitting that we take time to thank God for each of the people who had an impact on our lives.

One of the beautiful things about the Reformed faith is that it is not simply about reforming the past—it is about preparing the future. Today, all across the world, including in North America, there is a new interest in Reformed theology. People are discovering and rediscovering both the power and the

comfort that flows from understanding that our God reigns over all creation. Our world—every square centimeter—belongs to God. Together God's covenant people are called to care for his world not simply because it is prudent and wise, but because it is our Father's world. He has appointed us as caretakers over all he has created.

The gospel of the Reformation is not dry, dusty theology hidden in the basements of musty libraries. It is the good news of comfort and joy. It is a transforming power that lifts desperate sinners into the arms of a loving God. It is a biblical understanding that compels us to engage, redeem, and inform culture so that it might become well, whole, and Christlike.

The church of the Reformation is a church that continues to transform and be transformed, to reform and be reformed, as it responds to God's call. If we are faithful to the Word and attentive to the Holy Spirit, we too will be reformers. It is my hope and prayer that what we do and say, teach and preach, live and breathe, will shape the world and transform lives.

As we celebrate Reformation Day, I hope that we will do more than remember those who have gone before us. I hope that we will also commit to being people of the Reformation. May the church of 2010 and beyond continue to impact the world with a message of hope and grace. ■



Rev. Jerry Dykstra is executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Special Forces Chaplain: "Liberate the Oppressed"

Rev. Peter Hofman graduated about a year ago from the U.S. Army's Ranger School, making him one of the first Christian Reformed chaplains to complete the grueling training and become a member of the Special Forces.

As a result, Hofman can wear the Ranger insignia on his uniform, placing him in a unique position with those he serves.

"Peter Hofman has done one previous tour to Iraq and was recently deployed on short notice with a Special Forces group to Afghanistan," said Rev. Ron Klimp, director of the CRC's Chaplaincy and Care Ministry. "We have had several other chaplains deployed with Special Forces groups, but having the Ranger insignia on his uniform may make him a bit more trusted by the young men in this group."

Besides holding services on Sunday, Hofman hosts a Bible study every Thurs-



COURTESY OF PETER HOFMAN

Rev. Peter Hofman (right), a chaplain in the U.S. Army Special Forces, stands near a stack of signs pointing directions to many cities not located in Afghanistan, where he serves.

day night. One of the initial Bible studies had an international flavor, he noted.

"There was myself, a woman from Bosnia with her Bosnian Bible, an Australian troop, a Dutch soldier with his Dutch Bible, and Peter Visser, a chaplain for the CRC equivalent in the Nether-

lands. We talked about what the gospel means and how we communicate it to our various cultures and contexts. It was fascinating. A foretaste of heaven, I would say."

Soon Hofman will visit the small Special Forces teams in remote parts of Afghanistan. "They live with the people they are trying to protect. Often they are in less-than-desirable conditions," he said. "They have to build rapport in order for the people to trust them and work with them to fight off the Taliban."

These soldiers need to be reminded of God's Good News, he said. Coincidentally, the Special Forces motto in English is "To Liberate the Oppressed," which, notes Hofman, "was Christ's same mission."

Hofman has made that mission his own: "My life is important only in so far that I carry out my mission and message, which is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." ■

—Chris Meehan,
CRC Communications

Archaeology Grant Funds Virtual Museum

Paul Christians first saw the ancient village of Umm el-Jimal in pictures, with its Roman fort, Roman gates, ancient houses, and structures that housed first churches and then mosques.

The 2003 Calvin College grad saw the images while working as a student assistant to history professor Bert de Vries, founder of Calvin's archaeology minor and, for

more than 40 years, the principal investigator of Umm el-Jimal. "It was years before I visited Umm el-Jimal as a student and met the people there," Christians said. "It felt like it was not only a beginning, but a culmination of things."

Now, through a Site Preservation Grant from the Archeological Institute of America, Christians and 2001 Calvin grad Jeff De Kock are working to preserve Umm el-Jimal. They are founders of Open Hand Studios, a nonprofit organization that

works in cultural heritage preservation. They are also partnering with de Vries to create a virtual museum and curriculum about Umm el-Jimal (ummeljimal.org).

"This allows people to visit the site when they're not there," de Vries said of the online museum, which will feature virtual tours and photographs of Umm el-Jimal—along with filmed oral histories of the people who live there now.

De Vries, Christians, and De Kock have been working on the project for four years,

including two months spent documenting the site with cameras and recorders. Crucial to understanding the ancient site, they say, are the people who live in Umm el-Jimal today.

"We think the communities themselves are best prepared to preserve their own cultures," said Christians, and de Vries agrees: "Personal relationships are really crucial to this project." ■

—Myrna Anderson,
Calvin College communications and marketing

Church Plants Spring Up in the Dominican Republic

Martin Ovil was a successful construction contractor in San Pedro, the Dominican Republic, for many years. In his spare time he served as an evangelist for the Christian Reformed Church in the Dominican Republic (CRC-DR), encouraging established churches and church plants in their outreach ministries.



But after participating in a workshop on church planting in 2008, Ovil felt God calling him to something new.

So he left San Pedro and traveled more than two hours

Members of Villa La Fe, a church plant in Bávaro, Mexico, gather for church.

away to begin planting churches in Bávaro, a tourist region on the Atlantic coast. He soon connected with former CRC-DR members, Haitian immigrants, and others who had moved to the area for tourism-related jobs.

After 16 months, two small church groups with a combined total of 50 people had developed in Bávaro, along with several home Bible studies.

As a church-growth trainer and consultant for many years with Christian Reformed World Missions, Steve Brauning knows that though Ovil's church plants are young and small, they show promise of developing into strong faith communities founded on Christ.

"As with most of the Christian Reformed Church in the Dominican Republic, these [church plants] are mostly made up of Haitian immigrants working in the DR in construction and agriculture," said Brauning.

For many immigrants struggling to fit into the

Dominican community, these churches "provide a place of culturally-appropriate worship and belonging for those who are often marginalized and oppressed due to their race and language."

Recently, Brauning attended the closing event of a summer discipleship Bible study program. Naasson Civil, a seminary student at the National Evangelical University in the Dominican Republic, had begun leading the Bible studies as a seminary assignment. But what began as a summer program emerged as a church plant with 30 to 40 worshippers.

Brauning noted, "Many of the 26 [people] who received certificates of completion [from the Bible study program] were new believers. The others who attended were friends. Some were interested in joining the studies, but most were there because they were seeking a church and got connected to this one."

—Sarah Van Stempvoort,
Christian Reformed World Missions

Drawing College Students to The Well

As pastor of The Well, a Christian Reformed Home Missions-supported church plant in Kelowna, British Columbia, Ron Vanden Brink sees his share of students. In fact, there are 30,000 of them at the nearby University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus, so it's not uncommon to see a few at Sunday worship.

But it's rare that these students actually get plugged in and stay at The Well. College lasts only a few years, and then students leave. "Many do not connect with a local church, and new Christians do not know where to go," says VandenBrink. "We want to introduce them to the church experience."

That's why The Well is helping to launch a new campus ministry at UBCO that will be tightly connected to the church. "Our dream is to have members of The Well and UBCO students work together on church and school projects," says VandenBrink. "We want the students to rub shoulders with church members. We want to build relationships."

Leading the new campus ministry will be Sam and Darcie Gutierrez, who both recently completed internships at the Home Missions-supported campus ministry at the University of Calgary in Alberta. Their challenge will be to locate a group of UBCO students who are willing to link with the new campus ministry and become leaders.

"While serving as an intern, I learned that there are many ways to impact a campus as large as this one," Sam Gutierrez says. "There is a lot of room to be creative. . . . Students are at a crucial time in their lives and making decisions that will impact them for many years to come."

—Ben VanHouten, *CRHM Communications*

Crying Out for Ministry

For months I cried to God in the words of the song “Shepherd Me, O God.” Nothing happened. I was completely lost in a dark valley. I knew I had to leave it, but didn’t know how. Finally I felt the Shepherd’s crook dislodging me from the crevice I had stumbled into when I had lost my way—his way.

Most of my adult life I have been a nurse, a wife, a mother, a nurturer, a servant. I left the dark valley and allowed myself to be nurtured for three months. I rested in green pastures without a thought to the “shoulds” and “musts,” and my soul began to be restored.

These words came to me: “Take care of my flock.” And the seed of the ministry of chaplaincy first dropped into my mind.



Barbara Schultze

“Explore it,” my husband encouraged. So did many friends, as did a chaplain. I spent a month in discernment. My cloud of witnesses grew, and they all confirmed that I was following the path laid out for me.

In January 2010, I walked into the admissions office at Calvin Theological Seminary and said, “I want to explore being a chaplain. What do you have for me?” Less than an hour later I walked out, having enrolled in the Certificate of Pastoral Care program—a new program at the seminary.

My first courses opened my eyes and heart to my spiritual gifts—and my own weaknesses. I am increasingly able to articulate my faith and to relish my relationship with God.

I spent the summer of 2010 working as a chaplain intern at Bronson Hospital in Kalamazoo, Mich. It was an incredible experience. I decided to continue my education in the Master of Arts in Pastoral Care—another new program at CTS.

CTS is changing. God replenishes the table with daily bread, and I can smell the anointing oil.

—Barbara Schultze is a student at Calvin Theological Seminary

Fighting Human Trafficking

When Nurunnahar was 16, she left her home in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and went to Malaysia to begin a new life. Having previously fled an abusive marriage, her life in a Dhaka slum was marked by stigma, rejection by family and neighbors, and few opportunities for meaningful employment.

When a neighbor said he could get Nurunnahar a job as a maid with a family in Malaysia, she took the opportunity, wanting to start fresh.

When she arrived in Malaysia, however, she learned the job had never existed. Instead, she was kidnapped by men who engaged in human trafficking, held her against her will, and told they were going to sell her as a sex worker.

Nurunnahar escaped one night and found a Bangladeshi youth who took her in. Six months later she was able to return to Dhaka.

Human trafficking is a global problem. A recent UNICEF report estimated that 1.2 million children are abducted each year and sold into a life of bondage, slavery, and sexual exploitation. In Bangladesh alone, 400 women and children are victims of trafficking each month.

The Christian Re-formed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) together with its local partner, SATHI, undertook a survey and then an anti-trafficking program in Bangladesh this past year that

reached more than 6,000 people. The survey showed there had been kidnappings, but community members weren’t aware of the magnitude of the problem and didn’t know where to turn for help.

Using a \$2,000 justice grant, CRWRC and SATHI formed anti-trafficking committees in seven slum areas. Members of these committees were educated about human trafficking, including common routes traffickers use, steps for rescuing trafficked persons, and how to protect vulnerable groups. Nurunnahar also shared her story.

More than 100 committee members, in turn, went into their neighborhoods to lead workshops for adolescents, parents of young children, and others. SATHI also trained 50 theater groups to hold awareness-raising events.

When CRWRC and SATHI conducted a follow-up survey, many more people had been made aware of human trafficking and knew where to go for help. Also, respondents reported that 16 kidnapping attempts had been thwarted because of the training.

“We praise God that our relatively small intervention was able to have such a huge impact in these communities,” said Kohima Daring, CRWRC-Bangladesh staff member.

—Kristen deRoo
VanderBerg, CWRC
Communications

Giving Thanks

Saying “thank you” is polite, right? We thank people for passing us the butter, for holding a door open, or for telling us we look nice. But when God gives us things—like food to eat, people who love us, and even his

own Son—we often forget to say “thank you”! Here are some fun ideas to make your Thanksgiving celebration, or any other occasion, a time to give God thanks.

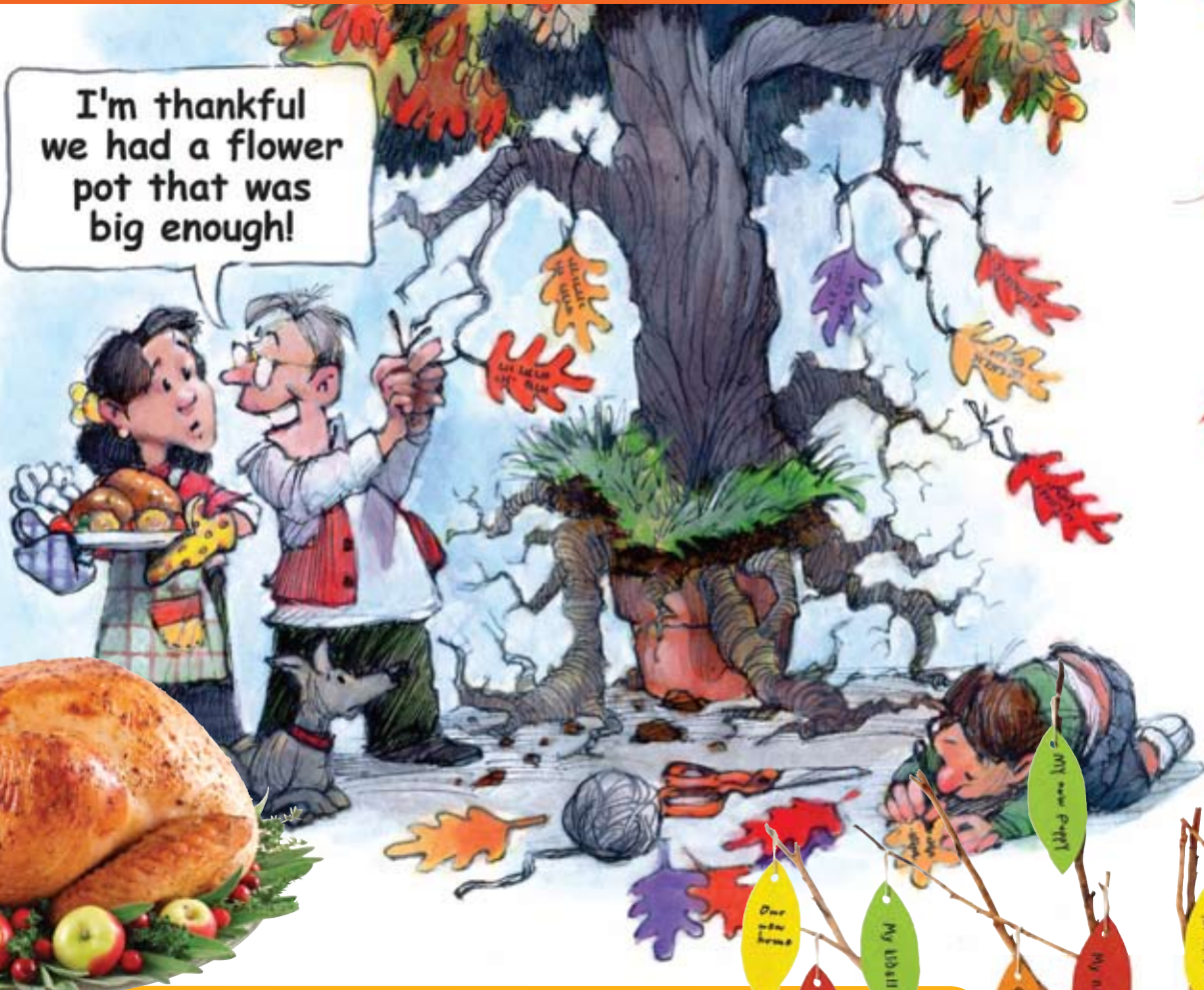


ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY

Thankful Tree

Make this fun table decoration to use at Thanksgiving dinner—or anytime!

What you need:

- flowerpot
- sand or rice
- tree branch
- construction paper
- yarn
- black marker

What you do:

Fill the flowerpot with sand or rice. Stick the tree branch in the pot. Cut out leaf shapes from construction paper—at least one per guest, and more if you want. Punch a hole at one end of each leaf. Thread a piece of yarn through each hole and knot it. When your guests arrive, ask each of them to write something they’re thankful for on a leaf and hang it on your Thankful Tree. Then read those things out loud during dinner or at prayer time.



Give

Thanks

Thanksgiving Games

Candy Corn Drop

This game is just for fun, and the taller you are, the harder it gets! All you need are some small paper cups and a few bags of candy corn. First, give each player a paper cup filled with candy corn. Have players stand in a line with an empty paper cup between their feet. Holding a candy corn to their chin, they have to try to drop it into the cup by their feet. The person who drops the most corns into his or her cup in one minute wins!

Thankful Words

Give everybody at your table a pencil and a piece of paper. Challenge them to see how many words they can make out of the letters in the words "Thanksgiving Day." Words have to be longer than two letters, and no people names are allowed. Don't forget that plurals count as separate words, like "hat" and "hats." There are WAY more possibilities than you think!

I'm Thankful

This is a fun memory game for groups. The more people who play, the more challenging it is! Start with the youngest person in your group. That person says something they're thankful for, like "I'm thankful for mashed potatoes." The next person repeats what the first person says, and adds something of their own: "I am thankful for mashed potatoes and a warm bed." The next person repeats those two things and adds another: "I'm thankful for mashed potatoes, a warm bed, and my cat." Keep going until everyone has had a chance to add something or until someone messes up.



Sandy Swartzentruber works for Faith Alive. She's thankful for her family, good books, and pumpkin pie (no ice cream).



The Bowl Game

Write each of the following things on a separate slip of paper and put them in a bowl. Ask everyone around your table to take one, read the category on it, and tell one thing in that category that they're thankful for and why.

- A favorite food
- One of your five senses
- A person not in your family
- A time when God took care of you
- A good book
- Your favorite smell
- A favorite teacher
- A sport or hobby you enjoy
- Your favorite place
- A favorite Bible verse
- Your favorite day of the year
- A favorite toy
- Your best family memory
- A time when you helped someone
- Something a parent taught you
- A good friend
- Work you like to do
- A favorite song

Cone Cornucopias

The cornucopia (say it corn-oo-CO-pea-yah) is a traditional symbol of Thanksgiving. It's usually a horn-shaped basket filled with lots of different fruits and vegetables, and it reminds us of the many good things God gives us. Here's how to make a cornucopia that's good to eat and (mostly) good for you, too!

What you need:

- Raisins, dried cranberries, and other dried fruit
- Nuts or sunflower seeds
- Cheerios or other cereal
- Mini chocolate chips
- Mini pretzels
- One sugar cone (pointed ice cream cone) per person

What you do:

In a big bowl, mix everything except the sugar cones. Scoop some of the mixture into a cone and enjoy! Then thank God for the people all over the world who grow food for you and your family to eat.

After Your Pastor Leaves

PASTOR GEORGE JUST RETIRED after a long-term ministry at Bethel; he was dearly loved and will be sorely missed. Pastor Cynthia's ministry at Hope Church ended badly, both for her and for the church, which has a history of troubled ministries. First Church has been without a pastor for a long time; many members blame the extended vacancy on the previous pastor, whom they believe bad-mouthed their congregation to his colleagues.

And so it goes. Pastors come and pastors go. When pastors leave, churches grieve—whether the previous pastor's ministry went well or poorly.

Some churches face a pastoral vacancy as though they are a marching band “marking time,” moving their feet but not going forward. They begin the search process for a new pastor with a touch of cynicism, wondering if they will ever find the “right” match. Other churches see their pastoral vacancy as a time to save some money, maybe replace the carpeting in the sanctuary or repave the parking lot—whatever project has been put on hold.

For several years now, the Christian Reformed Church's Office of Pastor-Church Relations has offered a more intentional transition process for “vacant” churches. More specifically, it offers churches one of nine (so far) Specialized Transition Ministers (STMs), who have been trained in guiding a church through the process of finding a new pastor.

Covenant CRC in Winnipeg, Manitoba, took advantage of that guidance in their recently completed transition process. This is their story.

When Covenant's previous pastor left, at his recommendation the church council contracted with an STM who would spend nine months with the church helping the congregation resolve some of the significant issues of the past, discover their strengths and areas for growth, and determine a course for the future.

Covenant is a merged church—a product of the joining of the original Christian Reformed church in Winnipeg with its 100-year history and a second-generation immigrant church that was started in the early 1960s.

The relatively large merged congregation built a beautiful new building in 1996, and many men and women from both congregations worked side by side to complete construction. That appeared to unify the two churches, but more likely the project masked the differences in the personality of each church.



As those differences began to find expression over time, the membership began to polarize around certain issues. The first pastor who served the newly merged church came in 1999 and left in 2008.

The Past

To begin the transition process and assist the Specialized Transition Minister, Covenant's council appointed a Transition Team, made up of people from a cross-section of the membership who knew the congregation well and were respected by the membership. The STM served as their coach.

The transition process is composed of three phases that focus on the past, the present, and the future. The process itself began with a storytelling event, where members were invited to write down significant memories of their involvement in the church. Using newsprint hung on the walls of the fellowship hall, divided into decades, about 100 people wrote their history.

This first phase, focusing on the past, serves to bring church members into the transition process by involving them in a nonthreatening way in telling a story that is uniquely theirs.

“The transition process has revived a sense of vision within the congregation.”

The Present

The second phase attempts to discover the church's current strengths and areas for growth. Covenant did this in two segments. First, they conducted a survey asking 40 questions about the church's life (they used the “SurveyMonkey” tool at surveymonkey.com).

From the results of that survey, the Transition Team isolated 11 issues around which the membership had the widest range of opinions. The team then designed three discussion opportunities for members to explore those issues face to face; about 125 people participated.

The discussions gave members a forum in which they could talk and listen to each other, and one of the things they learned was how diverse their opinions are.

The Future

The third phase is the future-oriented phase. Covenant's Transition Team took the 11 issues from the second phase, put those issues together into five topics, and designed discussion groups to look at how the church might do things in the future. About 135 people participated in these groups. The process concluded with the Specialized Transition Minister writing a final report with recommendations coming out of those discussion groups that will set the church's direction for the future.

“I think we are in a much better position to begin the calling process now than we were nine months ago,” said Rob Booy, a member of Covenant's Transition Team

“The transition process has revived a sense of vision within the congregation,” said team member Teresa Doornbos. “The process itself is thorough, thought-provoking, and well worth the time and effort involved. The discussions got people involved in the church again. People are feeling like they are part of an exciting change. . . . People are learning to listen to other people's opinions and are backing off of their own agendas. We are repositioning our path from our own wants towards God's desires for us.”

What Makes It Work

This is only one church's story; no two transition stories are the same. Each STM is a unique person, and each church is in

a unique situation with its own challenges. Each will have a different experience.

The following factors, however, contribute to the genius of Specialized Transition Ministry:

- The STM is not a consultant, but rather serves as the temporary resident pastor, doing what pastors typically do—preaching, teaching, visiting, performing weddings and funerals, and so on. He (currently all are male) “lives with” the congregation.
- The STM is not eligible to be called as the next pastor; this gives him greater freedom to be both more creative and more confrontational than a permanent pastor might be.
- The process is designed to give a voice to everyone in the church, and it provides opportunities for members to listen to each other.
- The process engages people early on, in nonthreatening ways, by inviting them to tell their stories (not a factual history, but a history of memories).
- Through a survey and in discussion groups, the members themselves discover and articulate the church's strengths and growth areas as they experience them.
- The future direction for the church gets developed at the grassroots level, and members “buy into” it because they helped design it. Peter Scazzero writes, “In emotionally healthy churches, people . . . understand that leadership in the kingdom of God is from the bottom up, not a grasping, controlling, or lording over others” (*The Emotionally Healthy Church*, p.110).
- The STM program helps a church go into the calling process with a clearer understanding of where they believe God wants them to go and of the kind of pastor who will lead them there.

If you think this transition process would be helpful for your church, please contact the CRC's Pastor-Church Relations office at 616-224-0764 or its director, Rev. Norm Thomasma, at nthomasma@crcna.org. ■



Rev. Peter Hogeterp is a Specialized Transition Minister. He is a member of First CRC, Chatham, Ontario, and currently lives in Belle River, Ontario, with his wife, Marianna.

A Guide to Gifts Worth Giving



Resource-full Giving

Three programs dominate the computer Bible study scene: Logos, the bulky resource library that provides many commentaries and books about the Bible; Accordance, the slick Mac-based analysis program that is designed to incorporate users into a community of Bible readers and scholars; and BibleWorks, the fastest tool for focused Bible investigation.

BibleWorks 8 is a pricey investment, especially in comparison to the entry versions of the other two. But BibleWorks has fewer add-on modules, because it is not intending to be a growing library of secondary study aids. Instead, it seeks to provide up front the best resources for textual analysis and study.

A three-paneled window opens when BibleWorks is activated: a “search” panel on the left, a “browse” panel in the center, and an “analysis” panel on the right. The idea is to use the left panel to find words or phrases or related themes throughout the biblical text (you set which version or versions to explore). Results pop up in the center panel, where you can compare passages and versions. Passing the cursor over any word in the center panel

immediately tosses up whatever analysis information you have set BibleWorks to provide. Right-clicking on the information holds it there and allows for copying and other manipulation.

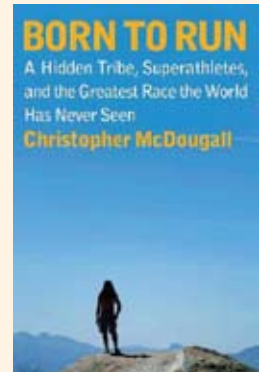
BibleWorks is lightning fast. It also contains very clear Greek and Hebrew fonts, along with a host of other alphabets from which to choose. Compared to Accordance’s polished graphics, BibleWorks’ home frame seems oddly dated yet eminently practical. Its buttons quickly enable all of the most logical and wanted textual study functions. And while Logos encourages users to build massive electronic libraries (by way of expensive add-on modules) that will not likely be used often or extensively, BibleWorks sticks to the text, with tools derived from generations of solid biblical research. Its resource library is more than adequate and contains the right basic volumes.

BibleWorks would make a great gift for any pastor, Bible teacher, or serious student of Scripture. It complements a seminary education, but neither college nor graduate school is needed to use and benefit from it. (www.bibleworks.com) ■



Wayne Brouwer teaches at Hope College and Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Mich.

Three programs dominate the computer Bible study scene.



Born to Run

by Christopher McDougall
reviewed by Lloyd Rang

The fastest long-distance runners are from a secretive indigenous Mexican tribe called the Tarahumara. They’re so secretive, in fact, that they seldom race outsiders. When they do, they race in thin sandals and win easily. This may sound like an elaborate fiction, but it’s not. Christopher McDougall lived among them, learned their ways, and witnessed a race between this tribe and the best ultramarathoners in the world. You might disagree with some of his conclusions about how people came to love running, but you can’t help but be affected by his enthusiasm. (Knopf)



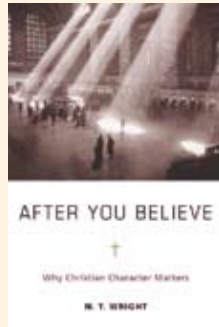
In Feast or Fallow

by **Sandra McCracken**
reviewed by **Allison Backous**

Sandra McCracken's latest album, *In Feast or Fallow*, redefines the hymnbook. More than a catchy rewrite of traditional songs, McCracken has combined old hymns with her own. She has created an album whose lyrics are achingly beautiful psalms of despair and hope. Her title song, like all the others, catches in your throat: "When my soul is downcast, and my voice has no song/For mercy, for comfort, I wait on the Lord." Nuanced and true, this is a must-have album. (Towhee Records)

After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters

by **N. T. Wright**
reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**



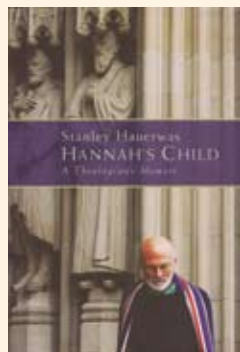
In a profound yet clearly understandable manner, N. T. Wright's challenging book answers two basic questions: "What am I here for now? What happens after you believe?" Beginning with the foundation of God's saving grace, Wright shows that "God's future is arriving in the present, in the person and work of Jesus, and you can practice, right now, the habits of life which will find their goal in that coming future." (HarperOne)



New Tracks, Night Falling

by **Jeanne Murray Walker**
reviewed by **Allison Backous**

For Jeanne Murray Walker, poetry is puzzling but necessary. In good poems, she says, "you can hear a human voice talking to you." *New Tracks, Night Falling* is full of Walker's voice, picking a path that leads the reader to mystery. Walker traces her responses to 9/11, readings from Genesis, and near-collisions on the highway in order to confront her confusion with the world. She searches out tracks that lead her, and us, to "places that are holy." (Eerdmans)



Hannah's Child

by **Stanley Hauerwas**
reviewed by **Brian Bork**

Stanley Hauerwas says we can't understand the "what" of Christianity without knowing the "how" of being a Christian. In his humble and adventurous account, we learn how Hauerwas is a Christian, and how that has shaped his character in and out of the academy. It's a life of influential scholarship, provocative ideas, and warm friendships—a shining example of what it looks like to live truthfully into the great story God has laid before us all. (Eerdmans)



Hellhound on His Trail

by **Hampton Sides**
reviewed by **Jim Romahn**

On April 4, 1968, James Earl Ray shot and killed Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, Tenn. Though he died a violent death, King led a movement of nonviolence to draw national attention to the evils of racism. Many books have been written about the movement, King, and his assassination, but none are as thoroughly researched and detailed, day by day, even minute by minute, as this excellent account by accomplished investigative author

Hampton Sides. (Doubleday)

Check thebanner.org for links to find out more about these titles.

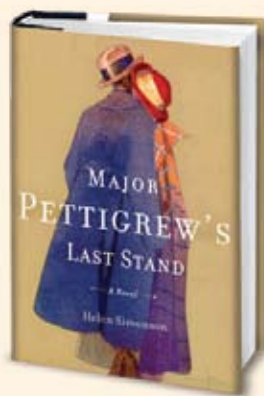




Leave Your Sleep

by **Natalie Merchant**
reviewed by **Otto Selles**

In an age of iTunes downloads and “American Idol” crooners, this double CD, complete with an 80-page booklet, is a wonder. Merchant (former lead singer of 10,000 Maniacs) comes back from a seven-year maternity leave to offer 26 songs based on poems ranging from Mother Goose to e.e. cummings. Each song is set to a different musical style, including Irish folk, Native American chant, bluegrass, R&B, jazz, klezmer, and orchestral music. In collaboration with more than 100 first-rate musicians (Wynton Marsalis on jazz trumpet, for example), Merchant has produced an album for adults with an eclectic taste in music who are kids at heart. (Nonesuch)



Major Pettigrew's Last Stand

by **Helen Simonson**
reviewed by **Sandy Swartzentruber**

In the very proper English town of Edgcombe St. Mary, retired Army major Ernest Pettigrew has problems. They include his social-climbing son, Roger; a valuable matched pair of Churchill shotguns; and the Major's growing affection for Mrs. Ali, a Pakistani widow. Helen Simonson's delightfully flawed characters struggle with rigid social conventions, their own prejudices, and their conflicting desires in ways that either make you want to cheer for them or slap them upside the head. You'll be inextricably hooked from the opening scene of this quirky but old-fashioned novel. (Random House)



Out of My Mind

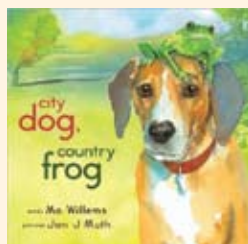
by **Sharon Draper**
reviewed by **Kathryn Hoffman**

Melody is a smart, funny fifth grader who has cerebral palsy. Her disability inhibits her speech, but she hopes her new Medi-Talker will help her gain acceptance. Told from Melody's perspective, the novel highlights the discrepancy between who Melody is and how she is perceived. The novel has few “warm fuzzies,” but Melody is supported by people who see her as a person, not a “disabled person.” Melody challenges her audience by asking, “We all have disabilities. What's yours?” Ages 9-12. (Atheneum)

City Dog, Country Frog

by **Mo Willems**
reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**

City Dog and Country Frog are as different as two creatures can be. However, throughout the span of a year, they share their games and friendship with each other. In the winter, City Dog sadly realizes that he can't find Country Frog, but the following spring a surprising friendship emerges to offer renewed hope and joy. Relationships, seasons, transitions, and losses are the subtle subject matter of this book, winsomely illustrated by Jon J. Muth. Ages 3-6. (Hyperion)



Red Sings from Treetops

by **Joyce Sidman**
reviewed by **Sandy Swartzentruber**

If you're one of those people always on the lookout for unique picture books with text to match, then snap this one up for the kids in your life—or just for yourself. Sidman's poetic words and Pamela Zagarenski's vibrant collage-and-paint illustrations make this book a real treat. Walk through the seasons, taking note of the colors, sounds, and smells that characterize them: “Fall smells purple: old leaves, crushed berries, squishy plums with worms in them. Purple: the smell of all things mixed together.” Ages 4-8. (Houghton Mifflin)



How to Train Your Dragon

reviewed by **Ron VandenBurg**

Set in the mythical world of husky Vikings fighting with fire-breathing dragons, *How to Train Your Dragon* demonstrates that first impressions are not always accurate. The story centers around a young teen named Hiccup who wants to prove that he has what it takes to be a fighter. Instead, he bonds with an injured dragon and shows that young people can change the world. Some action sequences might be frightening for young children. (DreamWorks)



» *continued from p. 19*

about their holiday to-do lists, have skipped the office Christmas party?

A holiday feast, if celebrated in the right spirit, is more than a pleasing array of special dishes. It's a symbol of grace, designed to center our attention on our blessings, our community, our shared history, and God's place at the center of it all. In that sense, every meal we share with others is an opportunity for communion, healing, and reconciliation, as well as nourishment.

Is it any wonder our adversary, the devil, tries to corrupt our holiday feasts? He has many tools at his disposal, including commercialism (idolatry and lust) and consumerism (gluttony), as well as over-busyness (sloth), holiday depression (acedia), and all kinds of interpersonal strife (pride and anger).

If those influences go unchecked, we can end up being depleted rather than nourished by our feasts. And isn't it a shame to sit down to an expensive meal, only to leave the table hungry?

When my estranged sister came to my house, she came without any apologies or acknowledgement of a debt to me.

Too Broken to Break Bread?

God knew his people needed "appointed feasts" as reminders of his covenant promises and past deliverances as much as they needed to come together to be filled and reassured of God's presence.

For Christians, the sacrament of communion is a similarly symbolic yet physically significant observance, designed for the health and sustenance of the believer. God invites us: Come to the Lord's Supper, partake, be filled. It's hard to see why anyone would refuse.

But when caught up in our own pain, our own disappointments, our own forgetfulness of God's power, we may tend to avoid or push away from the Lord's Table—to refuse to eat, so to speak.

Or because of broken relationships or hidden conflicts, we may feel unworthy

or unwilling to come to the table, to sit beside others who are likely to be there. Whatever the reason, it is not uncommon even for people of faith to decline God's invitation to dine when nourishment at his Table is what we need most.

Scripture repeatedly shows Jesus' concern for the nourishment of his followers. In compassion he always addresses the physical hunger of those who travel with him or who have traveled far to encounter him. But with his words and his presence—his very body and blood—he addresses their spiritual hunger as well. After fortifying them in those ways, he challenges those who say they love him to show it by feeding others.

A good friend of mine worked for a time in a restaurant. She often voiced frustration about what she thought of as the lowliness of her position. By way of encouragement I tried to point out the honor I saw in feeding people, in bringing them something that conferred strength, comfort, nutrients for growth.

Of course, it was easier to look at things that way before I found myself in

the position of serving someone I didn't really want to serve.

When my estranged sister came to my house, she came without any apologies or acknowledgement of a debt to me. She and her children installed themselves in my guest room, asked a few things for their comfort, and proceeded to enjoy their weekend as if there were no issues to prevent it. And, as it turned out, she brought a few pantry items and volunteered to cook, if she might use my kitchen, to make some of our mother's favorite dishes.

Although I'd spent a great deal on groceries and pre-prepared food, I let my middle sister do her thing. Meanwhile, we both ignored whatever was unsaid between us and focused on giving our mother (as well as our less-emotionally-stunted siblings) a happy weekend.

In retrospect, I suppose the food Jan cooked was as close as she could come to a peace offering. I didn't think much of it, as such; but then, all our offerings are imperfect compared to the Lamb of God, himself.

Ultimately, I enjoyed myself. It had been too long since we'd come together. We children hadn't gathered like this, really, since our father's funeral, and now we were under one roof, celebrating a holiday with our frail mother, whose childlike happiness made it impossible not to smile back. I served some, was served some, and as I hosted, I felt the Lord's presence among us.

At first grudgingly, then gratefully, I dined with my family. And when the table was cleared, it shone for me once again. ■

God on the Menu

Author Leslie Leyland Fields has edited a wonderful collection of essays called *The Spirit of Food: 34 Authors on Fasting and Feasting Toward God*. In her introduction, she explains in an eloquent way part of what I tried to convey to my friend who worked in food service, a truth that I understand fairly well when I'm not actively resisting it.

"Food is nothing less than sacrament," Fields writes. "All food is given by God and is given as a means to sustain not just our bodies, but also our minds and our spirits. In all of its aspects—growth, harvest, preparation, and presentation—food is given as a primary means of drawing us into right relationship toward God, toward his creation and his people. Even its intentional absence, through fasting, pulls us toward a deeper dependence on God and one another."

If we find ourselves resisting our own nourishment, or the opportunity to nourish others, it may be that our best remedy is to seek out a place at the Lord's Table. Jesus invites us to approach and be filled, but also to be healed, unburdened, and reminded of who he is and what that means for our lives. He provides the bread and wine that satisfy, and it is only what he offers that makes our poor offerings palatable at all.

—Jennifer Parker

Adopt the Belhar

I AM A CONVERT TO THE BELHAR CONFESSION.

Initially I thought it to be a good statement in response to the apartheid experience that had plagued the people of South Africa. I also thought the Christian Reformed Church could endorse it as a “confession for them,” and perhaps for Reformed believers elsewhere whose experience was similar to that of the church in South Africa.

I have come to believe that my initial view was naïve and wrong.

The question is no longer, or even primarily, whether the Belhar Confession is good for South Africa. It is whether the CRC should adopt the Belhar as a confession for ourselves.

To answer that question we must take into account whether we believe the Belhar is biblically appropriate and applicable to the Reformed community in North America. That discussion has been under way for some time—first in our Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, more recently at several synods of the CRC, and presently in classes (regional groups of churches) and many congregational discussion groups.

I am a convert to understanding that the Belhar speaks to important biblical themes and principles: unity, reconciliation, and justice. We already accept these biblical themes and principles, but they are not clearly expressed in our historic confessions of the 16th and 17th centuries (the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort). The Belhar is much more explicit.

I am a convert to the conviction that the Belhar can and should be adopted by the CRC in 2012. After careful study, that is the recommendation of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, and that is the encouragement of the Reformed ecumenical organizations of which the CRC is a part. It is my own conviction because we have learned much about our own lack of unity as the people of God, our own need for reconciliation on many levels, and our own participation in matters of injustice, including racism.

Adopting the Belhar Confession would be a powerful testimony that we can offer to future generations of CRC members, to the world in which we live, and to present members of the CRC who struggle with—or are victims of—the very issues the Belhar addresses. The CRC can and should adopt the Belhar as a statement of faith because it expresses what we believe clearly and concisely.

It expresses
what we believe
clearly and concisely.

Some have suggested that we endorse the Belhar as a parallel statement to our Contemporary Testimony, but that, in my judgment, is inadequate—for the primary reason that the Belhar has been proposed as a confession and not as a statement of conviction of just one denomination. Our Contemporary Testimony is just that—our testimony—while a confession by its very nature expresses and affirms important truths we share with other churches.

Confessions are ecumenical expressions of articles of the faith we together hold dear. It is time for the CRC to speak confessionally to the issues of unity, reconciliation, and justice—in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world—because sin knows no boundaries and, thanks be to God, neither does God’s concern for all those who have suffered the pain of alienation and injustice. Thus we can embrace the Belhar as a statement of faith we share with Reformed believers around the world. ■ **WEB Q’S**

Is the Belhar Confession merely a political statement expressed in theological language? Does it meet the standard of the historic confessions? See the author’s responses to these questions, along with additional questions for discussion, at the end of this article online at www.thebanner.org. The text of the Belhar, along with links to resources for studying it, can be found at crcna.org under Resources. Click on Synod Resources and look under Documents.



Rev. Peter Borgdorff is executive director-emeritus of the CRCNA and has been designated by the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee to promote the study of the Belhar in the churches prior to the proposal to Synod 2012 for its adoption as a fourth confession.

Advertising Information

Deadlines: December issue is 11/1/10; January 2011 issue is 12/6/10. Visit www.thebanner.org for complete details.

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

To Advertise: Place your classified ad online at www.TheBanner.org/classifieds. If you are unable to submit your ad online you may continue to email it to classifieds@TheBanner.org or fax it to 616-224-0834. If you have questions, call 616-224-0725.

Publication of advertisements implies neither endorsement nor approval by *The Banner*, Faith Alive Christian Resources, or the Christian Reformed Church. We reserve the right to refuse or edit any ad for appropriateness.

Denominational and Classical Announcements

Eligible for Call

We are pleased to announce that **Joseph J. Kim** and **Matthew D. VandenHeuvel** have now completed their academic requirements and are eligible for call as candidates for the ministry of the Word.

Rev. Gerard L. Dykstra, executive director

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

Rev. Gerard L. Dykstra, executive director

We are pleased to announce that **Brian D. Tebben** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word.

Rev. Gerard L. Dykstra, executive director

We are pleased to announce that **Michael L. Bentley** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word.

Rev. Gerard L. Dykstra, executive director

Admitted into the Ministry

CANDIDATE AARON GREYDANUS sustained his examination by Classis Zeeland on September 23, with the concurrence of Synodical Deputies from Classis Holland, Georgetown and Grandville. Aaron will be ordained as the next pastor of the Drenthe CRC on October 10, 2010.

Rev. Ronald J. Meyer, Stated Clerk, Classis Zeeland

CANDIDATE BRIAN TEBBEN was examined by Classis Yellowstone on Friday, September 17, 2010 for the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Christian Reformed Church. He successfully sustained his

examination, and his ordination was held on October 24, 2010 at 1st CRC of Salt Lake City, UT. May our loving heavenly Father continue to embrace and equip Brian for a lifelong journey of service within the Church.

Del VanDenBerg, Stated Clerk, Classis Yellowstone

CANDIDATE MARK HOFMAN was examined by Classis Yellowstone on Friday, September 17, 2010 for the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Christian Reformed Church. He successfully sustained his examination, and his ordination was held on September 26, 2010 at Bethel CRC of Manhattan, MT. May our loving heavenly Father continue to embrace and equip Mark for a lifelong journey of service within the Church.

Del VanDenBerg, Stated Clerk, Classis Yellowstone

CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY

QUALIFYING PERSONS who wish to be candidates in 2011 for ordained CRC ministry should request application procedures by December 15, 2010. For further information, please email Karlene Werner at kaw5@calvinseminary.edu or write her at Calvin Theological Seminary, 3233 Burton Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

General

CLASSIS IAKOTA in session Sept. 21, 2010, with the concurrence of the Synodical Deputies from Classes Northcentral Iowa, Heartland, and Minnkota: 1. approved the examination of Candidate Joshua Benton who will serve as pastor of both the CRC and the Grace Reformed Churches of Corsica, SD; 2. accepted the resignation of Rev. Steve Rhoda from the ministry in the CRCNA via Art. 14b of the C. O.; Rev. Rhoda has been accepted into the ministry of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; 3. approved the position of Dean of the Chapel at Dordt College as being consistent with the calling of a minister of the Word in the CRCNA according to Art. 12c of the C. O. Rev. Aaron Baart has been called to fill this position; and 4. approved the request of the Lakeview CRC of Valentine, NE that their pastor, Rev. Thomas Vander Ziel, be granted early retirement effective Feb. 1, 2011 due to his wife's medical condition.

H. Henry Meeter Center

Continuing Education for Pastors

The H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies is pleased to offer the Emo F.J. Van Halsema Fellowship for pastors from within the Reformed tradition.

This research fellowship is awarded annually. It comes with a stipend of up to \$1,250 and the use of an office at the Meeter Center. The Center possesses books, rare books, articles, and electronic resources to be used for research or sermon preparation. The deadline for application for the 2010 award is **January 1, 2011**.

For further information and applications, please visit <http://www.calvin.edu/meeter> or contact

H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies
 Hekman Library
 1855 Knollcrest Circle SE
 Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4402
 1-616-526-7081 / fax: 1-616-526-6470
meeter@calvin.edu

CALVIN
College

Executive Director

GENEVA Camp & Retreat Center, located near Holland, Michigan is seeking candidates for its Executive Director position.

The Executive Director will provide overall vision and empowering leadership for the operations, promotion and fundraising of the Geneva Camp & Retreat Center.

Candidates should be a devoted follower of Jesus Christ; have experience in organizational leadership; possess excellent communication skills; and be passionate about the value of camping and retreat ministry.

A job description is available at www.campgeneva.org. To apply, please submit a letter of interest and a resume with references by December 15, 2010, to:

Dr. Bill Boersma, Chair
 at billb@christmemorial.org
 ATTN: GENEVA Search Committee



CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY


~ is seeking a ~

Director of Admissions

to lead the seminary's recruitment and enrollment department. Communicating the vision and program of CTS and supporting prospective students as they discern their call to ministry are at the heart of this position.

For a position description and to apply, visit

www.calvinseminary.edu



CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
3233 Burton St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Congregational Announcements

Retirement

BETHEL CRC of Oskaloosa, IA announces the retirement of Pastor Marvin Leese and his wife Martha from faithful service of ministry in the CRC. Pastor Leese will preach his farewell sermon in a service of celebration on November 14, 2010 followed by a Fellowship Luncheon in the Leese's honor. Anyone who has been a part of Pastor Leese's ministry is welcome to attend the worship service and the luncheon following. For more information, please contact the church office at bethelcr@mahaska.org.

Church's 100th Anniversary

NORTH BLENDON CRC Hudsonville MI will be celebrating 100 years on Nov 30 2010. Pastors Paul Hoekstra and Jack VanMarion will be preaching on Nov 28 and pastors Marvin VanDonselaar and Ron Meyer will be preaching on Dec 5. Nov 30 will be a night of celebration for community. All friends and past members are invited to attend any of the services. More information can be found on the church website www.nbcrc.org or by calling the church at 616-895-6434 and speaking to our pastor Aaron Vriesman.

THE SANBORN CRC of Sanborn, IA will celebrate its 100th anniversary on July 8, 9, and 10, 2011. Former members and friends are invited to attend. Information available on the church website www.sanborncrc.com or by contacting Jerry and Carol Buteyn jcbuteyn@mtcnet.net or (712-729-3262)

Church's 60th Anniversary

60TH ANNIVERSARY Ladner Christian Reformed Church will celebrate her 60th Anniversary on Thanksgiving Weekend! The occasion will be marked with celebrative worship acknowledging God's faithfulness through the years. Address: 4594 54A Street, Delta, BC. Tel. #604-946-7033. Email: ladnercrrc@telus.net

Church Positions Announcements

BC CHURCH SEEKS PASTOR The Bridge Community Church (CRC) located in beautiful Langley, British Columbia, has initiated a search for a full-time pastor with strengths in challenging and relevant preaching, mentoring and leadership. Our comprehensive profile will introduce you to this interesting progressive church. Please check us out at www.bridgelangley.org/applicants

CORNERSTONE CRC of Chilliwack, BC is seeking a Senior Pastor to lead our staff and congregation. Contact search@cornerstonecra.ca (www.cornerstonecra.ca)

SENIOR PASTOR: Covenant Christian Reformed Church of North Haledon, New Jersey is continuing to search for qualified pastoral candidates. For more information please visit www.covcra.org and contact Mark Reitsma at mreitsma@optonline.net Interested applicants should forward a CD or DVD of a recent sermon to Mark as soon as possible!

FIRST CRC IN RIPON, CA is seeking a full-time Director of Youth Ministries who will be responsible for the junior high and high school ministries of our church. Those interested in learning more or would like to receive a job description please contact the church office at office@riponfirstcra.org or 209-599-3225.

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES The CRC of Williamsburg, Ontario, is seeking a full time director to develop and co-ordinate a program for youth and young adults, ages 14-29, focusing on equipping them to be faithful disciples of Christ. For more information or to submit a resume, please e-mail: mtgkids3@gmail.com.

YOUTH PASTOR New Life Community Church of Wendell, Idaho is seeking a full time Youth Pastor. We are a rural congregation bringing together the youth of our church and the community in a positive Christian atmosphere. A detailed job description may be viewed at www.nlccwendell.org. Send resumes/questions to 800 West Main St., Wendell, ID 83355 or nlccsearchteam@gmail.com. Ph: 208-536-6223

Church's 25th Anniversary

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH of Victoria, B. C. is celebrating its 25th Anniversary! An evening of celebration and praise is planned for Sunday, November 21st at the church. There will be a dinner with a short program to follow. We look forward to celebrating with our current and former pastors and members. For more information and to RSVP, please call the office at 250-479-3227 or e-mail ccc victoria@shaw.ca

Announcements

COMING TO FLORIDA THIS WINTER? Visit us at our Central Florida CRC-RCA Ministry We are located in the Winter Haven/Orlando area. Services November - April. Enjoy our warm hospitality! Check us out at our website www.lakealfredministry.org Or email jemoes@peoplepc.com Or call 616-784-7014 or 863-294-3453 (Florida)

MESA & APACHE JCT. WINTER VISITORS: Worship with us at Maranatha CRC Dec. 6 through April 11, 10:00 A. M. at 6159 E. University Dr., Mesa, AZ. Rev. Gary Hutt, Pastor. Info: 480-668-0478

CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY PRESS Announcing the re-launch of CLP, co-founded by former Banner editor Lester DeKoster: <http://www.clpress.com>

PASTORS - ARE YOU ON FACEBOOK? For CRC pastors there is an unofficial but worthwhile online group that you are welcome to join. Questions? E-mail wboelkins@comcast.net.

Birthdays

95th Birthday



MARGARET EMMELKAMP 6151 Shady Rest St, Churchill MT 59741 celebrates her 95th birthday on Nov. 9. Her family thanks God for His faithfulness to her and her Christian example to them.

90th Birthday

FRED HOLTROP of 2380 Aurora Pond Dr. #306, Wyoming, MI 49519 will celebrate his 90th birthday on November 11 DV. Children: Ron & Jan Holtrop, Nancy & Jack Emelander, Beth & Roger Spoelma, 6 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild. Thanks be to God for Dad's Christian example.



GERTRUDE KOEDAM 1515 14th Ave. Rock Valley, Iowa 51247. Wife of belated Wm. Koedam will celebrate her 90th birthday Nov. 30. She has 6 children, 20 grandchildren & 29 great-grandchildren. We thank God daily for her life and example of her faith in her Savior Jesus Christ.

Anniversaries

70th Anniversary

BEUTE Bob and Marge of 725 Baldwin St., Jenison, MI 49428 celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary on Nov. 1. Congratulations!

67th Anniversary

VAN ENS John and Sylvia (Vanderhoven) 2415 Rector Avenue, Orlando, Florida 32818 celebrate their 67th Wedding Anniversary on January 11, 2011. Children Jillian, Shanthi, Lauren, Eliza; Grandchildren Jeremy, Haley, Joshua, Darius, Brianna, Douglas Jr; great grandsons Joshua and Jaylen. Psalm 103.

60th Anniversary

BOVEN Kerwin and Evelyn (De Haan) will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Nov. 10. We give thanks for their Christ-like example. With love: Sandy & Al, Keith & Pam, Bonnie & Steve, Greg & Ruth, Mike & Lori, Beth & Scott, 15 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren. To God be the glory!

DOLE Henry & Alberta (Maat), 3282 Liberty Ave, Alameda, CA 94501, will celebrate their 60th anniversary on Nov. 15. Children: Rod & Kathie, Norman & Valerie, Warren & Carrie, Brad & Jeannie, 8 grandchildren; 1 great-grandchild. Give thanks to God!

POSTHUMA Roger and Lois will be celebrating 60 wonderful years of marriage on November 30, 2010. Please join their children Ronald, Richard, Randall and Lynae, their spouses, grandchildren and great-grandchildren in thanking God for this blessed union.

VOORTMAN Rev. Sy and Martina (Bykerk) 69 Grand Village Ct., Grandville, MI 49418. Due to God's grace and kind providence we will be observing our 60th wedding anniversary on Nov. 22. An open house will be held on Sat., Nov. 27, 2-4 pm at Bethel URC, 2025 Baldwin St. Jenison, MI. Join us (along with 4 daughters and spouses, 15 grandchildren and spouses and 10 great children) then and there.

55th Anniversary

DEBOER Marvin and Merrie Lou (Boss) De Boer, 2708 Olivia, Grand Rapids, MI, 49504, celebrate their 55th anniversary on November 25. Their children and grandchildren praise God for their godly example.

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50th Anniversary

DEWEERD Vern & Linda (Ploeg), 2110 Stickley Dr SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 will celebrate their 50th anniversary on Nov. 4. Children: Kevin & Tammy DeWeerd, Pam & Mark Bouwer, Barb & Tim Mustert, Steve & Amy DeWeerd. 11 grandchildren.

ROSKAM Gary and Janet (Klynsma) 8621 Willow Run Dr. Jenison, MI 49428 celebrating 50th wedding anniversary on Nov. 4, 2010. Children: Rich and Carol Roskam, Nancy and Mark Hill, Ron and Luda Roskam, Kevin and Char Roskam. 7 Grandchildren

45th Anniversary

MOLL Lynn and Gloria (Kingma) of Willard Ohio celebrated 45 years of God's providence and grace in their marriage on October 7th. Children: Tim & Nancy, Amy & Nate deVries, Sandie & Bryan Posthumus and 7 grandchildren.

Obituaries

BRANDT Luren J., age 70, died Friday, July 16 at home in Imlay City, MI. He was a lifelong member of the Imlay City CRC. He is survived by his wife, Elaine, his children, Lucinda (John) Jacobson, Gregory (Julie) Brandt and 4 grandchildren.

BRANDT Robert C., age 78, died Thurs., Aug. 19 at Brian's House Hospice in Davison, MI. He was a lifelong member of the Imlay City CRC. He is survived by his wife, Kathleen, his children, Karin (Dennis) King, Dennis (Crystal, now deceased) Brandt, Curtis (Theresa) Brandt; 6 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

BUIKEMA, Robert C., received his heavenly reward on August 5, 2010 at the age of 90. Beloved husband of Anne (DeVries). Loving father of Robert Jr. (Linda), Kathleen (Gary) Ritsema, David (Ruth) and Howard (Sharon). Dear grandfather of 14 and great-grandfather of 6. Fond brother of Alice Blankenstein, Jenny Dryfhout. Preceded in death by twin Ralph, Stella Sturwold, Grace Stob, Ralphina Overzet, Jeanette Dousema, Henrietta Rusthoven and Marie Evenhouse. Dearest Uncle of many nieces and nephews. He was a quiet man of great faith who loved unconditionally. We will miss him.

DE KOEKKOEK, Johanna Frances; age 86, September 8, 2010; 9901 NE 202nd ST., Bothell, WA 98011; She was preceded in death by her husband, Theodore (Ted) De Koekkoek. Johanna is survived by her three brothers; Neal, Ben and Peter Vanderwerff, her six children; Thea (Ladd) Beversluis, Jim (Pat) De Koekkoek, John (Char) De Koekkoek, Don (Marcia) De Koekkoek, Frances (Wayne) Warner and Deb (Rick) Lopez; her 26 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren. See Website: <http://www.pafs.net/>

DUISTERMARS Arlene, age 86, passed away on Sun., Aug. 15, 2010 in Sacramento, CA. She was the beloved wife of Rev. Orwin Duistermars who predeceased her in March, 2007. She left 3 sons: Allen of Grand Rapids, MI; Rick (Marilyn) of Portland, Oregon; and Dean (Mary) Duistermars of Holland, MI; and 1 daughter, Linda (Tom) De Kleer of Wilton, CA. She had 9 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren. Also surviving is her brother, Duane Van Pelt of Los Alamitos, CA. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to 11009 Cecata Dr., Wilton, CA 95693 or 685 Concord Dr., Holland, MI 49423.

HOEKSTRA, Alvin, 73, Kenosha, WI received his heavenly perfection on June 16, 2010. He is survived by his wife of almost 49 years, Virginia (Engbers); their four children: Ryan (Kim), Rachelle (Mike) Apol, Roderick, and Renee; four grandchildren: Brandon & Elayne Apol, Nia & Ryley Hoekstra; and 4 sisters. Alvin was preceded in death by his brother, Corwin, and granddaughter, Ravyn Hoekstra. Alvin's constant comfort during his final days was that he belonged body and soul, in life and in death, to his faithful Savior. His family continues to find peace in this knowledge.

HOLLANDER H. Joyce (Steigenga), age 85; Sept 15, 2010, Ripon, CA. She was predeceased by her husband George, daughters Caren and Sallie Jo, sister Ethel DeJong and brother Joseph Steigenga. She is survived by her children: David (Barbara) Hollander, Connie (J. George) Aupperlee, Barbara (David) Veneman, Alex (Patty) Hollander, and Timothy (Cathy) Hollander; 17 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; sister Rachel (William)Vogel; and sister-in-law Alice Steigenga.

HOOGEBOOM Marvin S.; aged 93; joined his wife Margie H. in their Heavenly Home on Tuesday, September 14, 2010. Mr. Hoogboom is survived by his three children and their families: Mary (Alvin) Youngsma of MA, Karen (Jack) Ward of NC, and Robert (Debra) Hoogboom of MI; 7 grandchildren; 7 great grandchildren.

HUIZENGA Anna, Age 94, Crete, IL, 9/11/10. Preceded in death by her husband, William, grandson, James and granddaughter-in-law, Brenda. Survived by sons William (Karen), Robert (Leanne), John

(Janet) and Owen (Sandy). 13 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

HULST Martin age 95; September 10, 2010; 2000 - 32nd St. SE #228, Grand Rapids, MI 49508. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Eleanor; his sons, their wives, and grandchildren, Earl and Adriann (Steve, Kristin), Gord and Carole (Mike, Sheri and Mike Burgess, Tim, Matthew) and Fred and Marcia (Carrie and Kevin Kok, Ryan and Jen, Kim and Ryan Burgess); 15 great grandchildren; sisters-in-law: Joan Borst and Catherine Brinks.

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(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Publication Title: The Banner; 2. Publication No. 0041-300; 3. Filing Date: Oct. 1, 2010; 4. Issue Frequency: Monthly; 5. No. of Issues Published Annually: 12; 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$24.00; 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, Kent, MI 49560-0001; 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, Kent, MI 49560-0001; 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, Kent, MI 49560-0001; Editor: Rev. Robert DeMoor, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, Kent, MI 49560-0001; Managing Editor: Joyce Kane, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, Kent, MI 49560-0001. 10. Owner: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, Kent, MI 49560-0001; 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None; 12. For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during preceding 12 months.

13. Publication Name: The Banner; 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: September 2010.

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total No. Copies (Net Press Run).....	98,086	96,510
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation		
(1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	65,980	65,359
(2) Paid In-County Subscriptions	0	0
(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution	28,275	28,082
(4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	77	3
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation	94,332	93,444
d. Free Distribution by Mail		
(1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541.....	33	33
(2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541	0	0
(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS.....	0	0
(4) Free Distribution Outside the Mail	6	5
e. Total Free Distribution.....	39	38
f. Total Distribution	94,371	93,482
g. Copies Not Distributed	3,716	3,028
h. Total	98,087	96,510
i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	99.96%	99.96%

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete.

Jane E. Hilbrand, Operations Manager

KAMSTRA William "Bill", age 90, of Sheldon, IA passed away on August 31, 2010, in Sheldon IA. Bill's priority in life was his faith, family and farm. His life was lived as a testimony to his faith in God, through his words and actions. Those left to cherish his memories are his wife of 69 years: Marie Kamstra of Sheldon, IA; his children: Tim (Barb) Kamstra of Sheldon, IA, Theodore (Janice) Kamstra of Sioux Falls, SD, Nancy (Robert) Lawler of Sheldon, IA; 9 grandchildren; 7 great-grandchildren; 2 sisters-in-law: Eleanor Kamstra of Lantana, FL, Arvilla Kamstra of Sheldon, IA; one brother-in-law: Harold Stevens of Irvine, CA. Online Expressions of Sympathy can be sent to www.andringafuneralhome.com

LUBBERS Wilma (VanderBie) was called home on Aug. 27, 2010. Her family gives thanks for her years of faithful service and generosity. Wilma was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Bill. She is lovingly remembered by her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

NOBLE Beth (Ritsema) 75, Sept. 19, 2010, of 4623 Golden Spike Ct., Jacksonville, FL 32257. She is survived by Wayne, her husband of 48 years; her children, their spouses and (grandchildren): Karen & Ed Neutel (Zachary & Rachel), Laura & Dave Schutt (Brady & Jenna), Ryan & Kim Noble (Cameron); and her siblings and their spouses: Marve & Jane Ritsema, John & Pat Ritsema and Luanne Ritsema.

RAZENBERG Catherine (Brouwer) age 97, Sept. 26, 2010, Fort Collins, CO. She was preceded in death by her husband of 63 years, James Razenberg. Survived by three daughters Marilyn Rodenhuis (Don deceased), Margaret (Rick) Olthoff, Ardith (Bob) Hollebeek, eight grandchildren, seven great grandchildren. Psalm 23:6 ... and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

RIENSTRA Grace (Munneke); aged 94; entered her heavenly home on August 8, 2010; Bellflower, CA; She was preceded in death by her husband, Andrew Rienstra; Survived by her children: Roland (Barbara)Rienstra,

Karen (Sam) Sybesma; grandchildren: Rhonda Beckwith, Kelli Tillema, Shelli De Vries, Rachele Bouhassoun, Ryan Rienstra, Rolynn Rienstra, Sam Sybesma; 16 great-grandchildren. She was loved dearly by her family.

TIMMERMAN Cornelis (Casey) Age 84, September 18, 2010 of 918 Bluff Creek Drive, Grand Haven, MI 49417. He is survived by his wife Jennie, 5 children, 12 grandchildren, and 6 great grandchildren

TUBERGEN Fred, age 99; Sept. 4, 2010; Sunset Manor; He will be lovingly remembered by his daughters, Faith and Bob Niewenhuis (MI), and Sheryl and Dave Wondergem (TX); grandchildren, Dave and Sue Niewenhuis (MI), Debra and Tom Vandenberg (MI), Sonya and Kent Postma (TX), Marc and Elizabeth Wondergem (TX), and Craig and Christine Wondergem (CA); 15 great grandchildren; and 1 great great grandchild. Also surviving are his two sisters, Elsie Smith (MN), and Hattie Van Heerde (SD); sister-in-law, Annetta Tubergen (CA); and many nephews, nieces and friends.



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<http://www.calvin.edu/go/facultyopenings>

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VAN ANTWERPEN Rev. Willard; aged 84; September 28, 2010; 2111 Raybrook SE, #2020, Grand Rapids, MI, 49546; He was preceded in death by his son, Willard Van Antwerpen Jr. and son-in-law, Fred Nydam. He is survived by his wife, Berdela (Vander Vennen); children: Nancy and James Mulder of Holland, MI, Laura Nydam of London, Ontario, Russell and Patricia Van Antwerpen of Hatboro, PA, Kristin and Mark Gort of Wyoming, MI; daughter-in-law, Inge van de Cruyssen and David Hamilton of Bloomington, IN; 14 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

WALSTRA Donald L, age 58, DeMotte, IN went to sing with the angels on September 18, 2010. He was preceded in death by his wife Donna and his parents, John and Tillie Walstra. He was a loving father to Trent and Kristin. He was currently serving as elder in his church, First CRC of DeMotte. He is survived by his brothers, Calvin, Glen and Richard.

Employment

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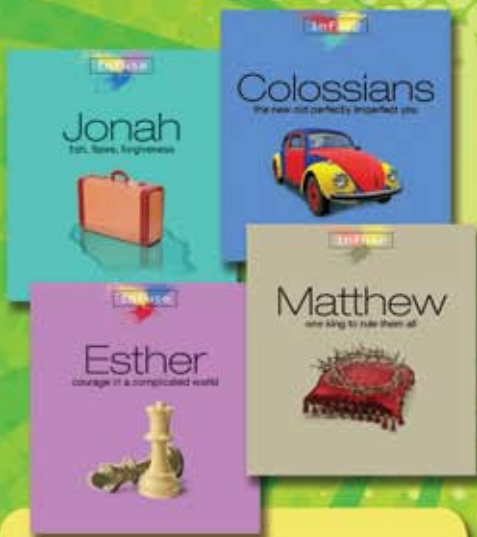
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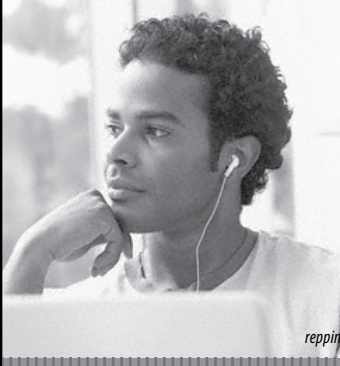
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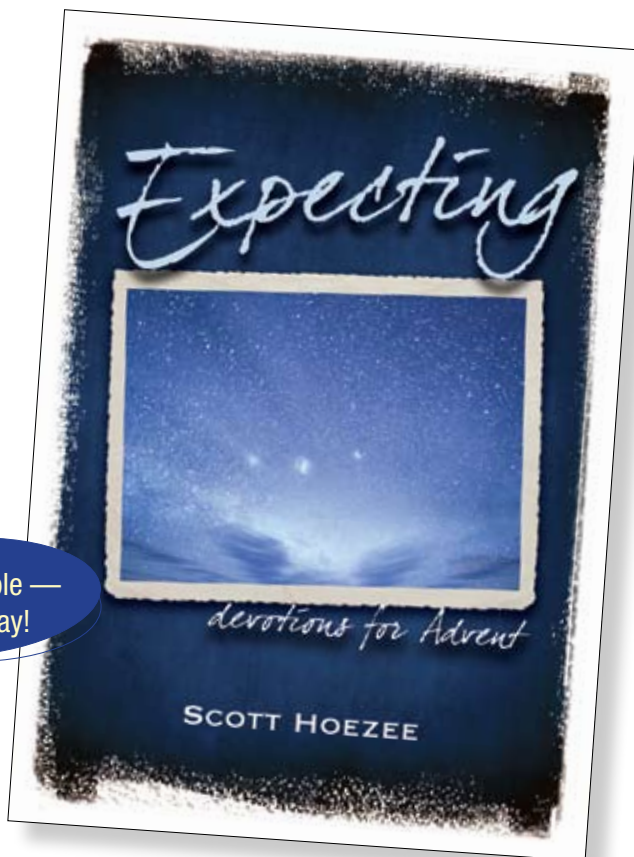
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Punch Lines

Got a funny joke or story or a photo of something related to the Reformed Christian life? Send it to *The Banner* and you might see it in print! You can email your contributions to editorial@thebanner.org or send them to 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560.

After the church service, a little boy told the pastor, "When I grow up, I'm going to give you some money."

"Well, thank you," said the pastor, "but why?"

The boy replied with concern, "Because my daddy says you're one of the poorest preachers we've ever had."

—*Nancy Magnus*

As the clerk of our church choir, I prepare the schedule of the Sundays we will sing, along with the titles of the songs to be sung. To add a little visual appeal, I include some clip art as well as an appropriate Bible verse. Imagine my surprise when Thea, our director of worship and choir pianist, called me to say, "Chuck, you made my day. I think you had better check the Bible verse written on the schedule." I had written, "Exodus 15:21: Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exhausted."

—*Chuck Lindemulder*

My friend told me that her dog, a family pet, had to be "put to sleep." Her grandson dearly loved the big Labrador, and was inconsolable. His mother put him to bed that night and soon he was back, sobbing. This hap-

pened twice. The third time he got up and with a big smile, he said, "It's all right, there are animals in heaven! The Bible says Jesus is coming back on a white horse!"

—*Ellie Bazuin*

A pastor purchased a boat and named it "Visitation." The church secretary could then honestly answer questions as to the pastor's whereabouts.

—*Simon Holleman*

An amateur photographer was invited to dinner with friends and took along a few pictures to show the hostess. She looked at the photos and commented, "These are very good! You must have a good camera." He didn't make any comment, but as he was leaving, he said, "That was a really delicious meal! You must have some very good pots."

—*John Veltkamp*

Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When little Logan received his plate, he started eating right away. "Logan, wait until we say our prayer," his mother reminded him. "I don't have to," the little boy replied. "Of course you do," his mother insisted, "we say a prayer before eating at our house."

"That's at *our* house," Logan explained, "but this is Grandma's and she knows how to cook."

—*John Pousma*

A second-grade teacher asked her class to draw a picture of the nativity. One little boy drew a very complete picture, showing the manger, several angels, some

sheep, a star, Joseph, Mary, baby Jesus, and a little fat man sitting in the corner. The teacher thought for some time and finally asked the little boy to come forward. She said, "You have a very nice picture, and I understand everything except this little fat man sitting in the corner. Who is he?"

The boy replied, "That's round John Virgin."

—*Robert Lubbers*

A lady lost her handbag in the bustle of Christmas shopping. It was found by an honest

little boy, who returned it to her. Looking in her purse she commented, "Hmm, that's funny. When I lost my bag there was a \$20 bill in it. Now there are 20 \$1 bills."

"That's right, Ma'am," the boy replied. "The last time I found a lady's purse she didn't have change for a reward."

—*Joe Stravers*



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*See that you do not
look down on one of
these little ones...
~Matthew 18:10*



*For you created my
inmost being; you knit
me together in my
mother's womb.
~Psalm 139:13*



N'Dali, Benin: Dr. Martin Luther Osse
Scripture paints a beautiful picture of a child being knit together in the mother's womb. In the rural conditions in N'Dali, Benin, however, the process of childbirth often seems anything but beautiful. The danger of childbirth increases when a mother is expecting twins or triplets, and the temptation to have an abortion is very strong. Through his Christian love and compassion, Dr. Martin Luther Osse gains trust and alleviates the anxiety of these women. Recently, Dr. Osse has delivered more than one set of triplets. The healthy births of these babies was a witness to the love and providence of God. Previously, the survival rate in such pregnancies was low. Through Dr. Osse's medical care and testimony, these women have begun to put their faith and trust in God. Before he can reach these women, however, he often enters a community by playing soccer with the children. In this way, the community becomes comfortable with him and his team.



"With children, we are sure to be welcome everywhere - everytime we go," Dr. Osse explained.

The children listen to Bible stories and the story of salvation in Christ. These little messengers then carry the Word to their parents who become interested and begin attending Bible lessons, as well. Thus, children have become the gateway by which Dr. Osse may enter numerous communities and spread God's Word.