

# BANNER

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**Cover:** Pastor John Van Sloten of New Hope Church in Calgary, Alberta, has written a new book that can change how and where readers hear God's voice.

PHOTO BY NOAH FALLS

Look at this mess! When are you going to take the trash out? I am not cleaning up your junk...



# Cursed Blessings

**THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A LAZY SPRAWL ON A RECLINING DECK CHAIR** on a sunny August afternoon, a tall glass of lemonade in one hand and the book of Proverbs in the other.

Save for another day the rigors of plodding through the book of Lamentations or the heady doctrines of St. Paul. Proverbs allows you to read only a verse or two of its practical, experience-sculpted wisdom. Then you can close the book and dream of how its keen observations help you glimpse the way our Creator holds us and our world in such a steady, meaningful embrace.

Want an example? How about this: "If anyone loudly blesses a neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse" (Prov. 27:14, TNIV).

God created night owls and morning glories. Why?

I'll tell you why—I don't know. He just did.

Here's the thing. There's this morning glory, you see. Up at the crack of dawn and on top of the world. If he felt any better he'd get taxed double on it. Heartily and LOUDLY he greets his neighbor: "SHALOM ELEHEYNU, YAKOV!"

Pity his night-owl neighbor! He dragged his weary carcass out of the sack and hasn't "thawed out" yet because Starbucks won't be invented for two millennia.

"Schlomo, don't shout."

"GORGEOUS DAY, ISN'T IT? MAKES YOU WANT TO SING AT THE TOP OF YOUR LUNGS!"

"Schlomo, simmer down. Even my hair hurts, and the neighbors will throw shoes from their bedroom windows. . . ."

Still today millions of morning-glory spouses, parents, and friends, in all innocence, inflict such untold suffering. The bedroom door slams open, "GOOD MORNING, SLEEPYHEAD. TIME TO GET UP! IT'S A BEEEYOOTIFUL DAY . . . YAKKETY, YAKKETY. . . ."

Night Owl experiences the words "RISE AND SHINE," spoken in blessing, as a particularly painful *curse*. So Night Owl naturally responds in kind. A chagrined Morning Glory slinks off, appalled by such unexpected, unmerited rudeness.

Let's kick it up a notch. The proverb observes that a blessing given in the wrong way or at the wrong time can come across as a curse. So can any form of good news—it can connect as anything but.

Try adding to this starter list of good news gone bad:

- really boring preaching;
- personal testimonies with folks themselves, not God, at the center;
- teaching the Canons of Dort to third-graders;
- lecturing teens with that furiously wagging, self-righteous finger;
- high-pressure evangelism;
- "reassurance" that a catastrophic event "was God's will, dear";
- ignoring your neighbors except to sneak an annual Easter service invitation into their mail slot.

If we don't keep a keen eye out for how God has wired us, then we can easily communicate what is good in a way that comes out very, very bad.

With any well-intended message, monitor carefully how what you say will be received and perceived by the person to whom you're talking. Remember that it's the road to which all *curses* lead that's paved with your good intentions. So be sure to tune your words carefully to their receiver. He or she will quietly bless you for it. ■



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

Any form of good news given in the wrong way can connect as anything but.

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## Safe as Eggs

**W** **E ALL BEGIN** as tiny, fragile eggs. I wasn't thinking about that as our family cruised home from summer vacation along the multilane Highway 401 in Ontario, our minivan like a mobile nest. My wife was driving while I slept in the passenger seat. Our two small children were snuggled in their car seats behind us.

Suddenly my wife gasped, and my eyes jerked open as she cried, "We've lost the stroller!" Seconds later I was sprinting down the shoulder of the highway against traffic. Though we had packed our double stroller in our zip-up roof bag, it had somehow launched itself out, opening to its full size in midair, and landed in the passing lane. I dodged traffic to get it off the road and pushed the scraped but otherwise perfectly functioning stroller back to our vehicle.

The zippers on our roof bag must have somehow joggled open. That had never happened before, and I recall no alerts in the instructions when we purchased the bag. I put the stroller back inside and secured the two zippers with a paper clip so they wouldn't budge. Then, quite shaken, we sat in the van with wide eyes.

That the 401 was not strewn with the wreckage of multiple vehicles was miraculous to us. What had saved us from becoming orphan- and widow-makers was probably a matter of seconds and centimeters.

Yikes. We sat there, struck numb by what carnage we might have wrought upon our fellow human beings. Such horrible things do happen. Why were we spared the mess and hurt this time?

The question still rings without settling. What's clear is that when we fly

along in steel-framed cubes and tubes, we have the illusion that we inhabit a solid, almost impenetrable shell, safe from all harm. This incident served as a red-flag reminder that one unsuspecting moment can crack that shell wide open. Our technology can fail us. We make mistakes.

With a shiver, I remember previous motor vehicle accidents that violently made this point to me. God's grace has preserved me through a number of disasters, which is not to say God's grace spared me injury and harm. All of life is a gift, but not all of life is painless.

My wife and I still mull over that double stroller, itself an image of vulnerability. A year later it bears some nasty scratches, and the fabric is torn in places. Still, it carries our children safely across varied terrain. Sometimes, when the luxury of silence is afforded us, we hear the stroller speaking to us of weighty things.

God's grace can preserve us, but it can also, more important perhaps, transform us. Near misses are often less transformative than prolonged trials. Nevertheless, we remain most grateful for having been spared, and that thankfulness seeps down deep within us.

We've also taken preventative action. A new roof box. Hard-shell. ■



**Peter Schuurman** teaches world religions at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, and is part of the preaching team

at New Life Christian Reformed Church in Guelph, Ontario. He and his wife have two children and another on the way.



PHOTO BY ITZHAR SHAHNAZ

Whenever we give our deep trust to something that is not God, we [begin] to base our lives upon that false foundation.

—DEBORAH SMITH DOUGLAS



# A Gluten-Free Communion

**Celiac disease is the most common genetic autoimmune disease in the world.**

“**THE BODY OF CHRIST**, given for you,” the elder says quietly, offering the communion bread to Rob.

Rob shakes his head, “No thanks.”

Momentarily surprised, the elder tries once again to pass the plate.

Afterward, the people around Rob ask, “What’s up?” or comment, “I guess he forgot you couldn’t eat bread.”

Rob is not alone. He’s part of a growing number of people who cannot tolerate gluten and must remove all wheat, barley, rye, and common oats from their diet.

Celiac disease is the most common genetic autoimmune disease in the world, affecting an estimated 1 percent of the population. In Canada an estimated 1 in 133 people have it; while about 3 million in the U.S. do, though thousands go undiagnosed.

For those with celiac disease, partaking in communion can be especially uncomfortable and awkward. Some let the plate pass by; others take the bread and hide it in a pocket or purse to dispose of later.

So much of our social contact with family and friends centers on food, with the unintended result that people with allergies and sensitivities feel left out. Many times this is unavoidable; however,

I would hope that with a bit of effort we can make sure everyone feels welcome at the Lord’s Supper.

Now that there’s a growing awareness of the gluten-free diet and celiac disease, I’d like to suggest that churches take another look at how they offer communion. Our church includes at least four people who cannot partake of bread that contains gluten, so now we offer an alternative.

At first we used homemade rice bread cut into cubes and placed in small plastic communion cups covered with plastic wrap. My son and I now bake gluten-free, dairy-free wafers and place them in specially marked individual containers. Each communion plate of bread includes two of these containers. Before beginning the Lord’s Supper, our pastor mentions that the alternative is available.

Gluten-free bread can be purchased at most health-food stores and is becoming more common in grocery stores. However, I do not recommend using gluten-free bread unless it is freshly made, since it dries out incredibly quickly and becomes unpalatable. It’s often best to purchase or make your own gluten-free wafers. If you purchase wafers, read the ingredient list to ensure that they are 100 percent gluten-free, since some are not.

Many people with celiac disease or food allergies do not wish to draw attention to themselves but certainly appreciate being able to share in the Lord’s Supper with their brothers and sisters in Christ.

For more information on celiac disease, see [www.celiac.ca/](http://www.celiac.ca/) or [www.csaceliacs.org/](http://www.csaceliacs.org/). ■



**Caroline Booy** is a member of Covenant Christian Reformed Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her husband and a son have celiac disease.



## Youth-Friendly Churches

Kudos to Rev. Pereboom and Anita Plat Kuiken for sharing their experience and assessment of youths in our congregations and community (Shaping a Youth-Friendly Church, June 2010). The five “traits” mirror my experiences as youth elder and catechism teacher.

The challenge becomes how we respond to this call. My hope and prayer [is that] those on whom God has placed concern for attracting youths will take up the call of action based on the suggested responses.

Even a small role or action, done together with Christ’s Spirit, will turn into grand blessings!

—Nick Kinkel  
Jarvis, Ontario

As a parent of three teenagers, I was excited to read the article about youth-friendly churches. I liked the article, but I feel you missed out on a huge step.

Our teens love challenges, and they need a place where they can find these challenges and experience and grow from them in a safe environment. But with the whole safe church movement (to which I am not opposed) our teens were left behind. No longer can they teach Sunday school, lead clubs, or be VBS leaders because they have to be an adult professional member [to hold those positions].



# LETTERS

It's funny, because my oldest was at one time qualified to use a defibrillator, but even though she was a confessing member, she wasn't allowed to teach Sunday school because she wasn't an adult. She could help save your earthly life, but not your spiritual life.

Let teens play, let them develop good bonds with fellow church members, but let's challenge them while still holding their hands so that they feel nurtured, excited, and most of all, included in something that is amazing—God's church.

—Lisa Posthuma  
Edmonton, Alberta

## Doctrinal Nitpicking?

When I read your editorial on the efforts to make a shared version of the doctrinal standards between the RCA and the CRC (June 2010), a question arises. It concerns the dropping of the words “only begotten” from Q&A 23 and 33 of the Heidelberg Catechism and the Apostles' Creed.

If we as Reformed churches cannot even agree on the smallest things, then I'm afraid we're going to waste a lot of time “nitpicking” instead of pooling our resources to witness to God's love for a world that is in rebellion and chaos.

—Jake Groeneweg  
Abbotsford, British Columbia

## Mental Illness

I just read the article about the conference in Ontario on mental illness (“Helping Churches Deal with Mental Illness in Ontario,” June 2010). Earlier I re-read the article in the May 2009 issue “Understanding Mental Illness.” My congregation in Montreal is well aware of this issue. For my part, I've never treated my illness as a secret.

I want to say to hurting and resentful family members of depressed people that if you only knew how miserable your close

one feels, you would not suspect them of having chosen this illness to aggravate you.

And don't be ashamed of them; mental illness is NOT a character weakness. On the contrary, illnesses like schizophrenia are believed to be transmitted genetically.

Do you control your genetic baggage? No?

Neither do we.

—Michele Gyselinck  
Montreal, Quebec

## Muslim and Christian Roommates

I found myself saddened after reading the news article “Muslim, Christian Roommates Find Common Ground at Calvin College” (June 2010).

It is nice to hear that these two young ladies have established a solid friendship despite their differences. Likewise, it was encouraging to hear that the experience had a positive impact on Katelyn Fuller's faith.

However, it was disappointing to hear that Anika Farhan's experience at Calvin College made her Muslim faith stronger. I pray that through her future experience at Calvin, and the friends she has there, that Anika will turn from the teachings of Islam to the truth of Jesus Christ.

—Wes Gunst  
Mattawan, Mich.

## Avatar's God

In Wayne Brouwer's review of *Avatar* (May 2010) he writes that his friend enjoyed the film because “it told the truth about meaning, existence, life, and God.”

I truly hope that Mr. Brouwer set his friend straight! This movie reeks of paganism and pantheism. There is nothing about the God of the Na'vi that is remotely close to the God of the Bible.

First, Avatar's god, Ai'wa, is the universe. The God of the bible is not the

universe; he created the universe and is transcendent of his creation.

Second, Ai'wa is weak. She is unable to save Grace from death due to time constraints. The God of the Bible is omnipotent. He created all things and has authority over all things.

Third, Ai'wa is not a personal God. The God of the Bible calls us his children, answers prayer, and sent his Son to die for us to save us from sin.

Am I saying don't watch this movie? No. Watch it. Watch it with your kids. Discuss what the movie teaches and tell them why it is not biblical.

—Verla Neifert  
Otley, Iowa

## Corrections

*The Banner* apologizes for using the long-outdated and misleading term “mission compound” in the June news story “Rehoboth Land Sold to Benefit Schools, Churches.” Rehoboth long ago became a Christian school campus owned and operated by parents in the local community.

*The Banner* also apologizes for an editing error in “Chinese Pastor at Home in Iowa” that changed Rev. Wen-Yau Hsieh's former occupation from that of software architect to corporate lawyer. We have nothing against software architects.

Finally, in “Four Decades of Faith at the University of Toronto” (May), campus pastor Brian Walsh leads a team of two full-time and four part-time staff members, not the reverse. Again, we apologize for the error.

# NEWS

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## Ontario Youths Challenged to 'Make It Count'

**O**n the May holiday weekend, 875 teens and their leaders converged on Sir Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, for four days of challenge and excitement at the annual All-Ontario Youth Convention. This year's theme was "One Life: Make It Count."

Marnel Muller, 17, of Trinity Christian Reformed Church in Goderich, Ontario, said that Phil Cann, the main speaker, challenged listeners to consider what they were willing to sacrifice their relationship with God for. Cann contrasted the consumer lifestyle promoted by reality shows, such as one that follows brides-to-be as they shop for outrageously expensive wedding dresses, with alternative choices Christians can make.

"These shows are completely ridiculous. Imagine how much better off people would be if they



Above: An art den allowed teens to express themselves in many media.

Below: A teen takes advantage of the convention's skate park.

had given the money for that dress to a clean-water project instead," said Muller, who along with others helped raise \$2,000 for water projects in countries served by the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.

Throughout the extended weekend the teens had opportunities for thoughtful reflection in small group discussions. Tyler DeWeerd, 17, of Bethel CRC in Listowel, Ontario, said his small group did not shy away from challenging topics such as pornography. "We heard crazy stats. Our small group leader, Brad Baker, was amazing," said DeWeerd.

The convention offered sports tournaments, a skateboard park, a prayer sanctuary, an art den, and, on one night, a dance.

Kristen Woudstra, 16, from Bethel CRC in Waterdown, Ontario, said the highlight was the amazing energy of so many Christians together. "You don't want to go home. It's a great place," said Muller.

For more on the convention, see [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).

—Sophie Vandenberg

## Arizona Churches Silent on Controversial Law

**F**aced with a steady stream of people illegally crossing into the state, Arizona legislators passed the so-called "Your papers, please" law confronting illegal immigration, igniting responses ranging from outrage to "It's about time."

None of the Christian Reformed churches in Arizona contacted by *The Banner* early this summer had taken an official stand on the legislation, though at least two church councils had discussed either the new law or the recent report about undocumented workers adopted by Synod 2010, the annual leadership meeting of the CRC.

Rev. Randy Raak of Hope Community CRC in Flagstaff noted that throughout history people

have been willing to trade freedom for security. He said that while there's concern within his church that the law may go "too far," there's also recognition of the need for a secure border.

"I lived in Arizona for almost 12 years," said Rev. Esteban Lugo, director of the CRC's Race Relations ministry. "While I don't think the passing of this law does what needs to be done, something needs to be done concerning this problem of the border," he said. "It's an issue of social justice. The church is not to be silent on these matters."

—Larry Edsall





Church members help clean up after the fire.

## Alberta Churches Help Fire Victims

After a massive fire tore through a dairy farm owned by the Luymes family in central Alberta, members of four Christian Reformed churches turned out to clean up the property and get the family back on their feet.

The fire destroyed five buildings, including Rob and Kate's mobile home, and killed 30 calves and other animals. No one was home at the time.

August and Harriet Luymes, members of Bethel CRC in Lacombe, and their son Rob, his wife, Kate, and their two young children, members of Woodynook CRC in Blackfalds, were overwhelmed by the response of their church family and neighbors.

"It's beyond words," said Kate. "Even before we got home there was a basement full of diapers and clothes, people calling about sending furniture."

Nearly 100 church members showed up to help with the cleanup.

"We are so thankful for our church community and those involved in helping us," Rob said. "Even though we lost just about everything we owned in the fire, through Christ and his church we realized we have everything we could ever need."

—Rachel deKoning Kraay

### IN MEMORIAM



**Rev. Lubbert Van Dellen**  
1915-2010

Rev. Lubbert William Van Dellen, 95, a personable pastor, lover of music, history buff, and helper of those in need, passed away peacefully March 11.

Van Dellen served in the U.S. Army in Germany, France, and the Netherlands, after which he attended Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Mich.

He was ordained into ministry in the Reformed Church in America, and subsequently transferred to the Christian Reformed Church. He served congregations in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ontario, Indiana, and Illinois. He retired in 1981.

Van Dellen saw believers primarily as covenant partners. Known for warm hospitality, the Van Dellen parsonage was a haven of help and sympathy. Van Dellen's kindly humor and understanding is remembered by many.

He was predeceased by his first wife, Evelyn, and is survived by his wife Charmain, three children and their spouses, 11 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

—Louis M. Tamminga



**Christina Mandang**

## Delegate Killed After Ecumenical Gathering

Christina Mandang, an Indonesian church musician and delegate to the Uniting General Council meeting in June, died after being struck by a car in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The accident happened after the closing day of council meetings that marked the merger of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches (see "A Poignant Moment," July 2010).

Mandang, 38, was returning to the Calvin College campus following dinner when she stepped into the street to avoid a water sprinkler and was hit by a passing car. She died later in a hospital from her injuries.

Mandang helped lead daily worship services for the ecumenical meeting. Both an organist and pianist, she was also a lecturer in church music and worship at the Reformed Seminary in Jakarta.

WCRC general secretary Rev. Setri Nyomi was at the hospital through the night with several Indonesians who were with Mandang at the time of the accident. "We feel deep sadness at this loss," Nyomi said. "Christina Mandang's gifts touched us all. She played organ at all the services. The joy with which she did that touched each of us."

—Charley Honey

For more on the life and ministry of Rev. Van Dellen, please visit [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org). In addition to being posted online, information on recently deceased ministers is available each year in the front of the Christian Reformed Church's annual Yearbook.

# NEWS

## CRC PEOPLE

For more information on all of these stories, please see the August *Banner* news online at [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).



NATHAN GIANCOLA

Coach  
Wayne Harris

## Redeemer University Coach Honored

**W**ayne Harris, men's volleyball coach at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, was recently named the Ontario College Athletic Association's Men's Volleyball Coach of the Year. Harris took the team to a fourth-place national ranking this past year, its highest ever.

—Sophie Vandenberg

## Seattle Artist Wins National Contest

**M**andy Faber, 18, recently won the Congressional District Art Contest in her area with this collage of her great-grandmother. Faber is a member of First Christian Reformed Church, Seattle, Wash. Her art will hang in the tunnel connecting the U.S. House of Representatives to the Capitol building for a year.

—Heidi Wicker



## Still SWIMming After 30 Years



**M**ore than 30 years after they first met on a six-week SWIM (Summer Workshop in Missions) trip to Burbank, Ill., in June 1980, these Christian Reformed women from West Michigan still gather every month. Pictured here, ready to leave for Burbank, they are (l-r) Deb Weaver (Haak), Betty Dyke (Koning), Corrie Bouwman (Vander Sluis), Karen Geurink (Vriesman), Deb Groenhof (Kennedy), and Lori De Boer (Wierenga).

—Gayla R. Postma



LORI SCHIPPER

## Michigan Teens Win Quiz Bowl

**F**rom left, Eric Webb, Mike Timmerman, Henry Holland, and James Karsten were part of a 12-member team from Kalamazoo (Mich.) Christian High School that won its third consecutive Michigan Quiz Bowl championship.

—Henry Huisjen





DEB KAMP

## Chicagoans Team Up for CRWRC's Free a Family

Members of eight Chicago-area Christian Reformed churches joined "Team Free a Family" in Chicago's Soldier Field 10-Miler, raising \$12,620 for the Free a Family program of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC).

—Ruth Moblard DeYoung



Ashley Carlisle

## Rehoboth Student Named Tribal Agriculture Ambassador

Ashley Carlisle, 14, of First Navajo CRC, Tohatchi, N.M., has been named agriculture ambassador by the Intertribal Agriculture Council, a group that promotes conservation and development of tribal lands of Native American and Alaskan tribes.

A student at Rehoboth Christian School, Carlisle won the honor by writing an eight-page essay on "How to Manage Risk on My Reservation." She will also represent Native Women and Youth in Agriculture.

—Larry Edsall



JAN KAMP

## Chicago Girls Break State Record

From left, Justine Van Dyk, 17; Kirsten Harms, 17; Stacey Kamp, 17; and Julie Kamp, 16, pictured with coach Jim Kwasteniet, set a new state record in their division for the 3,200 meter relay, clocking in at 9 minutes, 20.4 seconds. The girls are members of Orland Park (Ill.) Christian Reformed Church.

—Ruth Moblard DeYoung

## Alberta Girls Claim Basketball Title

The girls' basketball team of Immanuel Christian School in Lethbridge, Alberta, won the provincial championship in its division for the third year in a row. Many of the girls belong to Christian Reformed churches in the Lethbridge area.

—Rachel de Koning Kraay



# NEWS

## YU Conventions Discontinued, *Live It* to Launch in 2011

**M**ainstage worship, soul-stirring speakers, hug lines—many a Christian Reformed person has fond memories from attending at least one Youth Unlimited convention.

Often known just as “Convention,” the summer event started in 1920 (for men only) and has run ever since, except during World War II, becoming co-ed in the 1950s.

Convention often attracted between 3,000-4,000 teens in the '80s and '90s. But in recent years attendance has dipped, at times well below 1,000.

So Youth Unlimited (YU), which runs the conventions, is going in a new direction.

A new biennial event called “Live It” is planned for 2011. Jeff Kruithof, YU’s executive director, said they hope to have at least 1,200 young people attend next summer.

Why the change? Today’s youths need a more participatory event, say organizers.

“Young people today are connecting faith to life differently than in my generation,” said Kruithof. “They need to experience their faith, to do it.”

At Live It, teens will choose a group by their interests—arts, sports, youth ministry, discipleship, or service projects—and will engage in the community with that group. Speakers will be matched to each group. Evenings will include large-group worship, as in the past.

Jolene DeHeer, a motivational speaker from West Michigan who has been to every Convention since 1985, agrees that today’s youths require a new approach. She said the service component of the newly branded event is on-target. “West Michigan kids have been going

to church since they were in utero,” she said. “They’ve been inundated and encompassed by grace, and they need to start putting it into action. They start to see injustice and poverty, and they want to do something about it.”

Emily Hull, youth director for Brookfield (Wis.) CRC, said her church’s youths have been attending the Convention every other year anyhow, so the new biennial format suits them well.

“The crowd at Convention seems to be dwindling. I think that youth groups are in the same boat, trying to do both service trips and go to Convention, which gets expensive,” she said. “I think [the new format] is a great idea.”

Luane Mills, youth leader for First CRC in Pella, Iowa, said it became a “hassle” every year to decide whether to go to the youth convention or do a service project: “There are always some kids who have a preference, so it will be nice to be able to do both,” she said.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Leslie Workman

## Idaho Woman Bags Huge Mountain Lion

**L**eslie Workman, a member of Grangeville (Idaho) Christian Reformed Church, took down a 200-pound mountain lion while bow hunting earlier this year. With a skull of 14.75 inches, it was just shy of the largest cat ever taken in Idaho. The world record mountain lion for archery equipment is just over 16 inches.

—Gayla R. Postma

## Using Biblical Basics to Manage Money

**K**en Johnson, a member of Covenant Christian Reformed Church in North Haledon, N.J., knows from personal experience the problems unemployment and debt can create in a family. He has been laid off five times in his banking and financial career.

During his first layoff, mortgage payments and credit card debt were burdensome. Once he got another job, he resolved to get his financial life in order and to serve others in a coaching ministry he calls New Hope Financial Fitness.

Johnson teaches four biblical principles: spend less than you earn (Heb. 13:5); avoid debt (Prov. 22:7); maintain liquidity (Prov. 21:20); and set long-term goals (Prov. 16:3).

In his ministry, Johnson meets with people to discuss their concerns, works with creditors to adjust interest rates, and helps clients develop a budget with a goal of financial peace. He believes that making good financial decisions brings balance to life and makes time for what really matters while reducing worry about money.

Bruce and Dee, participants in a small group study at Covenant CRC led by Johnson, said,

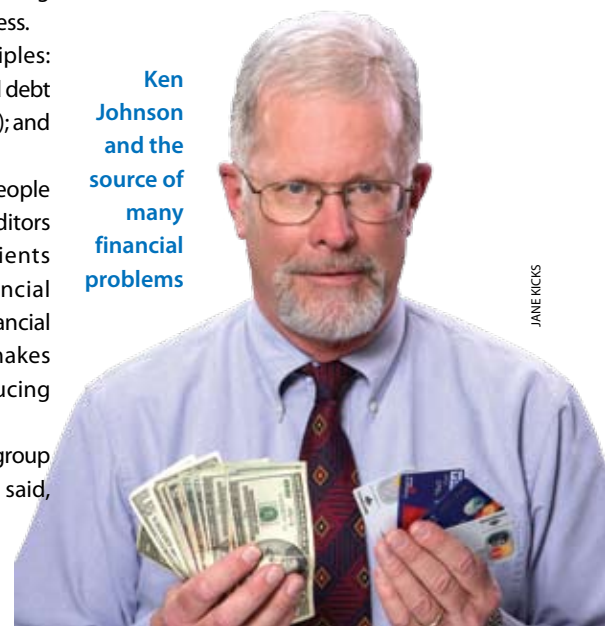
“We have had our financial ups and downs. What a difference there is in handling struggles when you respond in God’s way!”

Doug Boydston, a deacon at Covenant CRC, said the deacons often refer clients with challenging financial problems to Johnson.

“His advice enables us to provide holistic benevolent assistance, rather than just putting a Band-Aid on a bad situation,” he said.

—Calvin Hulstein

**Ken Johnson and the source of many financial problems**



JANERICKS



## Iowa Girls Help Clinch Championship



Kendra DeJong

**K**endra DeJong, 20, of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in Orange City, Iowa (left), and Katie Nieuwsma, 20, of Bethel CRC in Oskaloosa, helped Northwestern College clinch the national basketball championship in Division II of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

DeJong had the eighth best field goal percentage in the country at .576.

—Sherry Kooiker



Katie Nieuwsma

### IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Carl D. Tuyl

1925-2010

Rev. Carl Tuyl, a gifted preacher and writer, friend of many, survivor of Nazi labor camps and combat wounds, died May 5 from a pulmonary embolism following knee surgery. He was 85.

Tuyl was born in the Netherlands and spent his late teen years in a Nazi labor camp. He was subsequently wounded in combat in Indonesia. It was those experiences that planted his lifelong love of chaplaincy ministry.

Tuyl and his wife, Martje, emigrated to Canada, and Tuyl entered ordained ministry in the Christian Reformed Church after graduating from Calvin Theological Seminary. He served four congregations in Ontario before retiring in 1990.

Tuyl lived a life of vibrant joy, gratitude, and service. He will, above all, be remembered for his uplifting exuberance. He was straightforward and compassionate.

During most of his career he was a key member of the CRC Chaplaincy Committee.

Upon his retirement, the city of Toronto made him a consultant for chaplaincy services, and the provincial government appointed him executive director of the Ontario Multifaith Council.

Tuyl was predeceased by his wife in 2004. He is survived by four children and their spouses, and nine grandchildren.

—Louis M. Tamminga

## News from Spring Classis Meetings

**T**wo or three times each year, Christian Reformed churches send representatives to classis, a regional grouping of churches. Delegates at those meetings review and make decisions about their shared ministries and practice mutual accountability for their congregations' individual ministries. Here are the highlights from the most recent classis meetings:

**Welcomed into ministry** in the Christian Reformed Church were seminary graduates Sean Baker and Josh Van Til. **Released from CRC ministry** was Mark Scheffers.

Classis Grand Rapids East will begin **delegating deacons to classis** in September 2010. Classis Grand Rapids South discussed the **proposed covenant for office-bearers**. Classis Toronto received training on **leadership in multicultural, multifaith settings**.

Classis Grand Rapids East noted that classis **ministry share income is paid in full**, and Classis Georgetown noted that **ministry share income is way down**. Classis Holland approved **liability coverage** for the Safe Church Team.

Classis Grand Rapids East sent a request to Synod 2010, requesting appointment of a study committee to review the **biblical**

**teachings regarding homosexual orientation and practice** in light of current biblical and theological study of the issues. [This overture was received too late for Synod 2010 to consider.]

More details and additional news from the classis meetings is available in this month's online *Banner* at [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).

—Banner News Correspondents

## Sharing the Harvest in Illinois



**From left, Chuck Swiney, Barb Leo, Paul Zylstra, Sharon Iwema, and Bruno Brouwer show off the tiny plants that provided big harvests for hungry families.**

tomato, pepper, and cucumber plants to nurture all summer and bring back the harvest when it was ready. Other members bought their own plants, while others donated purchased produce.

Both churches partner with Share the Harvest, a program involving many churches and community garden groups who grow produce for food pantries and soup kitchens on Chicago's south side. Last year Share the Harvest partners helped feed more than 300 families each week.

Grace Community Church also planted two raised gardens on the church property. Joan Schutt, a member of Grace, said the gardens were good conversation starters with the church's neighbors, some of whom volunteered to keep the veggies watered during the week.

—Ruth Moblard DeYoung

**T**he plants didn't look like much when distributed in May, but they ended up providing fresh produce for hundreds of struggling local families.

Gardeners from Calvin Christian Reformed Church and Grace Community CRC, both in Oak Lawn, Ill., took home



**Above: Rev. Al Schaap and John Botwright remove graffiti from a community park. Left: Fleetwood CRC member Evert Dykstra sets up a neighborhood bike clinic in the church parking lot.**



KEVIN VANDERLEEK

## West Coast Churches Leave the Building

The congregations of Gateway Christian Reformed Church in Merced, Calif., and Fleetwood CRC in Surrey, British Columbia, have left the building, at least for a time.

Both congregations abandoned their typical Sunday-morning service, instead taking their service to the streets.

In Merced, the Gateway congregation leaves the building on the fifth Sunday of the month.

"We took into account various things that needed to be done in the community and the abilities that were among our people," said Connie Barrett, who coordinates the service Sunday.

Gateway members have painted over graffiti in city parks, cleaned

out backyards, prepped material for a jail ministry, and more. "The key was that the projects were all to be for people not already part of this church," said Rev. Al Schaap. More than 90 percent of the congregation participates.

Farther up the coast, in Surrey, Fleetwood members left their pews on Sunday, June 6, to focus on caring for people and creation.

About 300 members participated in activities ranging from prayer at the church to removing invasive plant species from local parks.

"We liked the image the day presented—the church that has left the building," said Rev. Tom Bomhof.

Sean Engbers, a member of Fleetwood, did yard work for the local SPCA with his family. "It was a great thing to do collectively. For the first time in my life, I was part of a church that was doing what we talk about every Sunday. It was our favorite church day ever."

—Heidi Wicker and Jenny de Groot

## New Jersey Teens Serve in Ghana

Nine teens and five youth leaders took the trip of a lifetime to northern Ghana in the spring to help at King's Village, a Christian international development work, which provides sanitation, healthcare, education, and business development.

The teens are from the combined youth group of three New Jersey Christian Reformed churches: Cedar Hill, Faith Community, and Midland Park.

They furnished a library by building shelves and cataloging books. And they constructed two



KEELSEY SPOELSTRA

mud huts and painted a mural for a Christian school, which shows an underwater ocean scene to teach children about fish and plants.

Their sanitation projects included building a latrine in a neighboring village and installing 30 simple, inexpensive water filters.

Alyssa Cestaro, 17, called the trip a life-changing experience. "I took away more from the people

## Ontario Church's Creation Care Takes Root

New trees are taking root in a Newmarket, Ontario, park, thanks to members of Bethel Christian Reformed Church. The tree-planting project is part of the congregation's renewed commitment to creation care.

On this year's 40th anniversary of Earth Day, Bethel CRC joined 50,000 other people viewing an internet broadcast hosted by *BlessedEarth.org*. The event served as a springboard to hands-on creation-care projects by the congregation.

"Some of our youth are passionate about creation care and social justice," said youth and family ministry director Jason Postma. He hopes that their passion continues to fuel environmental stewardship projects



NATALIE DUSHNEY

**Jason Postma plants a tree in Woodspring Environmental Park in Newmarket, Ontario.**

that engage both young and old in the congregation.

The church also hosted an intergenerational road and river cleanup. Postma notes that creation care is a particularly good fit for the Bethel congregation with its many landscapers, gardeners, and farmers. "Young and old are working side by side and good momentum is building," he said.

—Sophie Vandenberg





**Eric Martin, a youth leader from New Jersey, reads a story to children in northern Ghana.**

than anything I could ever do for them," she said.

Allison Dykstra, 18, was nervous about going, but, she said, "When I saw the smiles on all the people's faces, I realized that people are beautiful all over the world."

—Calvin Hulstein

## Faithgirlz Tour Reaches Pre-teens

**W**hen First Christian Reformed Church of Barrie, Ontario, decided to host a conference about the issues facing pre-teen girls, the response was overwhelming. More than 500 mothers and daughters came; some drove five hours to attend.

The conference tackled issues of body image, girl politics, and relationships. "Today's young girls are facing ever-growing pressures from society, friends, and themselves to grow up fast. Add in changing hormones and, well, you



CHERYL JONES

get the idea," said event organizer Kristin Klein.

Klein learned about the "Beauty of Believing" Faithgirlz Tour at a GEMS counselor conference and helped bring it to Barrie.

As a mother of a pre-teen girl, Klein realized that it pinpointed the issues that girls her daughter's age were dealing with.

"It was phenomenal," said Klein.

—Sophie Vandenberg



**Brenda Goodreau helps a child core an apple.**

MARIANNE VANDERSPEK

## Southern Ontario Church Puts Learning on the Menu

**W**hat is a peeler? How do you make food at home from scratch?

Those are just some of the things that 40 kids ages 7 to 13 are learning at the Dresden (Ontario) Christian Reformed Church.

Once a month, the Let's Cook program runs after school, promoting good nutrition and healthy eating, and imparting invaluable life skills.

Designed and managed by Brenda Goodreau, a member of the congregation, the program has been running for six years with the help of church and community volunteers.

Last year, Let's Cook nearly ended when the public funds it was receiving were no longer available. However, when the possibility of closing the program was made public in the local newspaper, individuals and groups stepped in to keep it going and free for children.

"God, once again, surprised us with his provision!" said Goodreau.

—Raquel Flores Lunshof

## Pro Bono with a Purpose in Philadelphia

**P**eter Hileman, a successful trial lawyer in Doylestown, Pa., joined forces with Pam Ramos and others to form a free legal clinic in inner-city Philadelphia.

The clinic is located at the Ayuda Community Center, a ministry of Spirit and Truth Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, where both Hileman and Ramos are members.

Clients come to the clinic with legal problems, including domestic, immigration, housing, and criminal issues. Attorneys provide legal advice as well as some of the funding for the clinic. If a client needs further representation, the attorney may take the case or refer the client to someone who will help on a *pro bono* or reduced fee basis.

Hileman says, "We try to minister to the whole person. We offer to pray with our clients, and if they are willing, we share the gospel with them."

Ramos organizes the clinic's services and promotes them in the neighborhood.

Liz Lopez, a client who needed legal help for her sons, is grateful for the clinic. She says, "God's attorney angels have been such a blessing, giving peace to my soul and a voice to the oppressed for the greater good of our community."

—Calvin Hulstein



**(l-r): Peter Hileman, attorney; Liz Lopez, a client; Pam Ramos, clinic coordinator; and Herb McDuffy, also an attorney, at the free legal clinic at Ayuda Community Center in Philadelphia.**

NICK LOPEZ

## Car Repair for New Jersey People in Need

Several years ago, Kevin Roukema attended a “Discover Your Gifts” workshop at New Life Ministries Christian Reformed Church in North Haledon, N.J. Being mechanically gifted, he said, “It became clear to me how God set me up to do my auto repair ministry and put my faith in action.”

Roukema now gives two Saturdays a month to this work. For people who can afford it, he charges for parts and labor and that helps fund services for those who can’t afford it. For people who can pay something, he provides free labor, and for those who can’t afford anything, parts and labor are free. The funds are

administered by the church treasurer.

Roukema uses his employer’s facility and tools and his son, Brett, helps with the repairs from time to time.

Emily Wilson, the Executive Director of New Hope Ministries in Haledon, said that Roukema has helped

many of their clients in difficult times.

“One of the families he assisted had no way of getting to work without a vehicle so

in having their car repaired at a low cost by someone they could trust enabled them to keep their jobs!”

—Calvin Hulstein



Kevin Roukema repairs cars as a ministry to those in need.

PETER COOPER

## California Taggers Find Legal Outlet



Taggers in Delhi, Calif., practice their craft legally.

Battling graffiti and taggers seems like a hopeless task in many areas, but Rev. Zeke Nelson is taking a different approach.

Nelson is pastor of Church of the Cross/Iglesia de la Cruz, a Christian Reformed Church plant in Delhi, Calif.

He has helped create a

legal wall for taggers to practice their art. “This is an outreach to young taggers. Gangbangers and taggers are different. Gang tagging is marking territory; tagging is to get a reputation,” Nelson said.

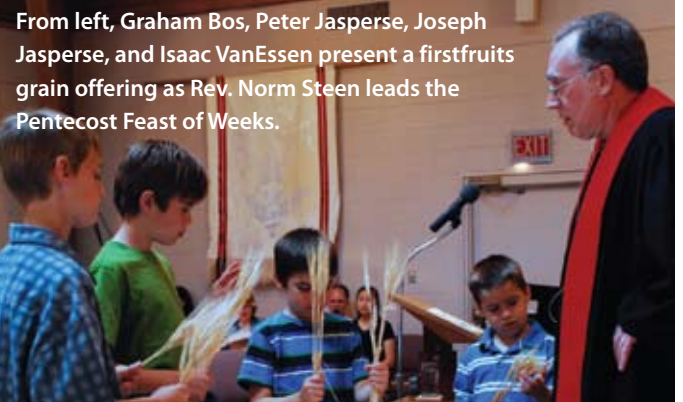
Rui Machado leads this project. He was an illegal tagger, but since he came to faith in Christ, he has found legal ways to practice the art form and has a passion for reaching out to young guys who are involved in tagging.

“For a lot of kids, it is something to belong to. They have broken homes, no confidence, and they’re disappointed about the way life is going. This is a way to have another life,” said Machado.

Every other weekend, taggers are allowed to paint on a wall at a local business. Brenda Saavedra, owner of the Curves business that offered the space, said, “It doesn’t always look like people’s idea of art, so I had to ask myself, ‘Do I care more about what people will think or about what God wants to do?’ I care about what God wants to do.”

As he has opportunity, Machado shares his faith with these young artists and invites them to the youth group at Church of the Cross.

—Heidi Wicker



From left, Graham Bos, Peter Jasperse, Joseph Jasperse, and Isaac VanEssen present a firstfruits grain offering as Rev. Norm Steen leads the Pentecost Feast of Weeks.

MICHAEL NIEMEC

## Old Festivals Get New Life in Washington, D.C.

“It often seems like we’re out of balance in our Scripture reading and heavily favor the New Testament and Psalms,” says Katie Roelofs, minister of music and worship for the Washington, D.C., Christian Reformed Church.

“The Old Testament, however, is important for our worship practices today. Reading about Israel’s worship practices helps us understand the context of God’s mighty acts, points to the promise and fulfillment between the Old and New Testaments, and illustrates how God has been faithful throughout history,” she explains.

So this year the congregation is observing the Jewish festivals pre-

scribed in the Old Testament. They have celebrated Purim (the celebration of deliverance from Haman’s plot to kill the Jews), Passover (the celebration of the deliverance from Egypt), and Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks or Ingathering).

This fall they will celebrate Rosh Hashanah (the Feast of Trumpets), Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), and Sukkoth (the Feast of Booths).

For more information on celebrating the festivals, see [www.reformedworship.org](http://www.reformedworship.org) and search for “Jewish Festivals.”

—Calvin Hulstein



# FAQs

## Calling

**Q** I just switched my major from art to biology because my parents tell me I need to study something that will prepare me for the “real world.” They think an art degree is useless. What do you think?

**A** First, let me commend you for listening to your parents’ advice. Your attentive ear says a lot about the type of person you are.

But let’s talk for a minute about sound career decision making. It typically rests on two cornerstones: researching yourself (essentially asking, Who am I and how has God gifted me?) and researching the world of work.

To help with the self-assessment, a difficult task for most of us, I would suggest picking up a copy of Richard Bolles’s book *What Color Is Your Parachute?* This book is updated yearly and includes a number of assessments that will help you explore your values, skills, and passions. If you have access to a career counselor at your college or university, that’s an even better resource for helping you consider who you are before deciding where you might be called.

Researching career options is equally important. For a simple listing of the type of work you can do with a given major, you could check [www.calvin.edu/admin/career/majors](http://www.calvin.edu/admin/career/majors) or take a look at [www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org). But it’s important to go beyond the information on those sites and find out what a given career really entails. I would suggest you shadow someone in a field that interests you or conduct an informational interview with a person doing the work you’ve envisioned for yourself.

**My parents tell me I need to study something that will prepare me for the “real world.”**

Researching careers might lead you to some surprises. What if, for instance, you could combine both art and biology and work as a medical illustrator? Or what if you could make a living doing art by combining your studies with a number of business courses to help you learn to market your work?

I wish you all the best as you continue your studies. Ultimately God is the one who directs our paths, and he is faithful to his promise to lead and guide us.

—Bonnie Speyers

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

## Church

**Q** In light of Heidelberg Q&A 80 and the Form of Subscription, what do you think of CRC officebearers receiving communion in a Roman Catholic worship service?

**A** Some members of a congregation I served asked that I be deposed because I invited the congregation to participate in a community ecumenical service held in a Roman Catholic church. For them, participation in this service apparently meant agreement with everything that was said, done, and displayed. If we follow that logic, none of us would be able to attend an ecumenical service or the funeral of a friend from another church.

Our denomination’s form for the Lord’s Supper invites all “who are truly sorry for their sins, who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior, and who desire to live in obedience to him to come with gladness to the table of the Lord” (*Psalter Hymnal*, 1987, p. 975). Thus Lutherans, Catholics, and other Christians partake with us not because they accept our interpretation of how Christ is present in the

sacrament but because they acknowledge Christ as Savior and Lord. The same is true when we participate in communion in other denominations.

Question and Answer 80, with its reference to the Catholic Mass as a “condemnable idolatry,” was not in the original text of the Heidelberg Catechism. If we used the same principles that we use when determining what is authoritative in Scripture, we would have deleted the entire segment or moved it to a footnote. Even though synod did not do that, it did bracket the last three paragraphs of the answer and added a footnote indicating that those paragraphs “do not accurately reflect the official teaching and practice of today’s Roman Catholic Church and are no longer confessionally binding on members of the CRC” (*Acts of Synod 2006*, p. 711).

—George Vander Weit

*George Vander Weit is a retired pastor in the Christian Reformed Church.* ■





# The Case for Christian Education

Does the commitment of the past hold up today?

**H**ISTORICALLY, when members of the Christian Reformed Church moved to a new location, they built churches, then schools. In communities all over North America from Ancaster, Ontario, to Bellflower, California, school bells arose alongside steeples. Families who gathered for worship on Sunday saw each other all week long at the local Christian school.

Is that just a quaint historical oddity—the pattern of an immigrant community trying to carve out little colonies in the intimidating “new world”? Or is there a more integral connection between Reformed faith and Christian education? If the latter is true, wouldn’t Christian education be as important today as it was in the 1880s or the 1950s?

Each generation needs to re-own the rationale for Christian education, to ask ourselves “Why *did* we do this?” and “Should we *keep* doing this?” If the answers of a past generation don’t stand up today, then perhaps we need to rethink our support for Christian schooling.

### Why Christian Schools?

So why Christian schools? Why did earlier generations commit to Christian education, investing in schools in often sacrificial ways? Their rationale was biblical, comprehensive, and radical.

Stemming from the conviction that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 111:10), the Reformed tradition—and the CRC in particular—has long recognized that Christ’s lordship extends over every sphere of life, including education. There is no sphere of life that is “neutral”; rather, our practices and

institutions are always and ultimately shaped and informed by faith commitments. So while an institution might claim to be “secular,” as if it were *not* religious, Reformed thinkers from Abraham Kuyper to Nicholas Wolterstorff have seen through such claims: what pretends to be neutral or secular in fact masks some other faith commitment.

The vision of Christian education is *radical* because it stems from the conviction that any and every education is *rooted* (Latin: *radix*) in some worldview, some constellation of ultimate beliefs. Therefore, it’s important that the education and formation of Christians be rooted in Christ (Col. 2:7)—rooted in and nourished by a Christian worldview across the curriculum.

The commitment to Christian schooling grows out of a sense that to confess “Jesus is Lord” has a radical impact on how

we see every aspect of God's good creation. The curriculum of Christian schools should enable children to learn about everything—from algebra to zygotes—through the lens of Christian faith.

### What It's Not

That said, it might be helpful to point out what Christian education is *not*.

First, Christian education is not meant to be merely "safe" education. The impetus for Christian schooling is not a protectionist concern, driven by fear, to sequester children from the big, bad world. Christian schools are not meant to be moral bubbles or holy huddles where children are encouraged to stick their heads in the sand.

Rather, Christian schools are called to be like Aslan in the Chronicles of Narnia: not safe, but *good*. Instead of antiseptic moral bubbles, Christian schools are moral incubators that help students not only to see the glories of God's creation but also to discern and understand the brokenness of this fallen world.

While the Christian classroom makes room for appreciating the stunning complexity of cell biology and the rich diversity of world cultures, it's also a place to understand the systemic injustices behind racism and the macroeconomics of poverty. Christian schools are not places for preserving a naive innocence; they are laboratories to form children who see that our broken world is full of widows, orphans, and strangers we are called to love and welcome.

In short, Christian schools are not a withdrawal from the world; they are a lens and microscope through which to see the world in all its broken beauty.

Second, Christian schools are not just about Bible classes. The curriculum of a Christian school is not the curriculum of a public school *plus* religion courses. While Christian education does deepen students' knowledge of God's Word, it's not Bible class that makes a school Christian.

Rather, the Reformed vision of Christian education emphasizes that the entire curriculum is shaped and nourished by

faith in Christ, "for by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:16-17). Christian schools are not just extensions of Sunday school focused on learning religion; they are Christ-rooted educational institutions focused on religious learning.

Third, Christian education is not a merely "private" education. Christian schools are not meant to be elite enclaves

for the wealthy. To the extent that Christian schools become pious renditions of "prep schools," they fail to appreciate the radical, biblical calling of Christian education. In *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony*, this is expressed in the confession that

In education we seek to acknowledge the Lord by promoting schools and teaching in which the light of his Word shines in all learning, where students, of whatever ability, are treated as persons who bear God's image and have a place in his plan.

This brings us back to a crucial feature of this vision of Christian education: while the decision about schooling rests with families, the project of Christian education involves an entire community.

### It Takes a Village

Christian schooling takes a village—to nourish the vision, to form Christian teachers, and to help share the costs and risks.

Christian Reformed communities have long understood a commitment to Christian schools as an expression of the promises we make at baptism—to be the "village" that supports the formation and

education of our children. In a tangible expression of "kingdom economics" (see Acts 4:32-36), the entire community shares the burden of Christian schooling. Older generations support younger generations through giving to the Christian education fund, grateful for the generations before them that did the same. Only such a gift-giving economy can make it possible for Christian education to be a blessing for all in the community.

Let's be honest: Christian schooling is a high-investment, labor-intensive venture. It requires sacrifices and hard

choices. And it's increasingly countercultural to pursue such a vision.

But when it's carried out in the best spirit of the Reformed tradition—when Christian education is an intentional, intensive, formative curriculum bent on shaping young people as agents and ambassadors of God's coming kingdom—the investment proves to be wise stewardship.

So it turns out that Christian education is not just a 19th-century hangover. It bubbles up from the very nature of the church as a covenant community. It's an expression of the core convictions of the Reformed tradition. And we might need it now more than ever. ■

**WEB Q'S** Talk About It. You'll find discussion questions for this article and the one on p. 38 at [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).

## Christian schools are not just about Bible classes.



James K.A. Smith teaches philosophy at Calvin College and is the author of *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Baker Academic, 2009). He is a member of Neland Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.



## Hearing God in Unlikely Places

by Sandy Swartzentruber



John Van Sloten looks like a regular guy: gray-ing sandy hair, glasses, ready smile. But the way this 48-year-old pastor looks at the world puts him in the company of true visionaries.

On any given Sunday at New Hope Church in Calgary, Alberta, you might find Van Sloten preaching a sermon on rock music, movies, fine art, hockey, or architecture. He's done sermon series on superheroes, the human senses, and children's books. Why? Because he fervently believes that every square inch of this world is God's and that God can and does speak through it all.

In *The Day Metallica Came to Church: Searching for the Everywhere God in Everything*, just released by Faith Alive, Van Sloten asserts that we can hear

God in the most unlikely places if we'll only listen. But he didn't always feel that way.

Seventeen years ago Van Sloten was what he describes as "a nasty, arrogant deal maker"—a real estate developer who defined himself by his net worth and was known for bullying architects and contractors. "All I ever thought about was the next deal, the next car, the next house. . . . So much of my life had become a lie. I felt like a fake. Everything was so twisted, incongruent, and disintegrated that I didn't know who I was anymore."

Then one day in a parking lot a pastor friend asked a simple question that changed John's life forever: "So how are you doing, John?"

That question opened the floodgates as Van Sloten poured

out a confession he'd had no intention of making. As he did, he met a forgiving God he hadn't previously known. That was the beginning of what he calls his "recalibration."

### Recognizing God Everywhere

After that parking-lot experience and a lot of soul searching, Van Sloten felt led by God to pursue church ministry. At New Hope Church, organized in 2004, that ministry looks a bit different from what you might expect to find at the average Christian Reformed church.

For example, on one memorable Sunday morning, the church's band opened the service in a local gym with four tunes from the heavy metal band Metallica. Almost 200 visitors flocked to church that morning because a local rock station had promoted the

“I found myself thinking, ‘Hey, I’m not just *allowed* to look for divine truth in this world, I’m *obliged* to!’”

service at no cost to the congregation. And in a move that stunned Van Sloten, Metallica's band members sent a crew to videotape the service so they could watch it themselves.



Van Sloten preached a message on anger and forgiveness, illustrated by Metallica's lyrics and the lives of the band members. He reflects, "I realized that Metallica was, in many cases, angry about the same things that angered the Hebrew prophets and that angered Jesus. They ruthlessly exposed wrongdoing. They lamented the mess our world was in. They exposed the meaninglessness of so much of contemporary life."

Metallica fans, and the rock world in general, couldn't believe that a church was taking seriously the music they loved. The story was widely reported; rock stations all over North America called to interview Van Sloten, and a piece about the unconventional service ran on *Rollingstone.com*.

Van Sloten writes, "The experience was so alive and so real for our church community it made me wonder . . . If God is this active in the lives of a few heavy metal rockers, where else is he moving? If recognizing God's presence in this one unconventional place has this

much power in terms of catching the world's ear, then what would it mean to recognize God in *all* the places his Spirit is at work?"

Van Sloten's book *The Day Metallica Came to Church* chronicles his journey to that realization and shows God at work through art, sports, film, music, imagination, literature, and more.

Author Shane Claiborne calls the book "an artistic and playful reminder that, though the Church is God's primary instrument for changing the world, that doesn't mean God is limited to religious stuff. . . . Just as the Scripture says the rocks can cry out, John Van Sloten reminds us that so can rock stars."

**Claiming Truth**

While some have accused Van Sloten of pandering to popular culture, the roots of his

interest grow in a Reformed understanding of God and God's world.

He writes, "Having grown up in the Reformed church tradition meant I also had sixteenth-century theologian John Calvin whispering in my ear. In my mind, it was Calvin who first gave me permission to explore the truth found in so-called secular culture."

The words of Calvin that so impressed Van Sloten were these: "If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Westminster, pp. 273-274).

Van Sloten writes, "By not claiming truth as God's—'wherever it shall appear'—we disrespect God, demean him. We make God into something less than God—a God made in our own image who is way too small. With this biblical and theological background, I found myself thinking, 'Hey, I'm not just *allowed* to look for divine truth in this world, I'm *obliged* to!'"



Over the years, Van Sloten has taken heat for following this sense of obligation. Some people are offended that a preacher would bring popular culture into church. But there's evidence that many more are hungry for the integrated exploration of the Bible and creation that this pastor and New Hope provide. While Sunday-morning attendance averages 150 each week, more than 200,000 people downloaded Van Sloten's sermon podcasts last year.

Van Sloten's message that those of us who have "ears to hear" should be listening for God everywhere has struck a reverberating chord that is changing the way people view God's work in our world. ■



John Van Sloten's new book *The Day Metallica Came to Church* is the first in Faith Alive's new "Square Inch" imprint (see p. 24). For more information or to order, visit [www.metallicaatchurch.org](http://www.metallicaatchurch.org) or call 1-800-333-8300.



**Sandy Swartzentruber** is assistant editor/staff writer for Faith Alive.



## Dwell and We Faith Nurture for Today's Church

In the summer of 2011, Faith Alive will roll out two innovative new Sunday school curricula, and the buzz is already starting to build as plans begin to take shape. *Dwell*, for kindergarten through middle school, and *We*, an intergenerational event-based program, can be used together or separately. Either way, the goal is for kids and adults to find their place in God's big story as they grow in faith.

### Dwell Gives Kids Room to Breathe

Instant messages, fast food, competition, hi-speed connec-

tions, and split-second visuals are all part of a school-age child's daily life.

What if church wasn't more of the same, but less? What if your church's children's ministry program was a place where kids could breathe . . . imagine . . . create . . . be still . . . and know God?

Faith Alive is designing a novel new curriculum called *Dwell*, to be released in the summer of 2011, which will offer kids and their leaders less noise and more time to experience God.

In each session they'll gather to worship and listen,



enter the Bible story by hearing it, "live into" the story by retelling it and wondering about it, and "live out of" the story as they find their own place in it and learn how it applies to their daily living.

Leader guides will include teaching tips that tell not only how to approach the story, but how this approach fits into a Reformed understanding of Scripture. In recognition of the busy lives people lead, leader materials will be easier to use than ever before.

Stay tuned for more information on the *Dwell* curriculum as it develops!

### We: People of All Ages Growing Together

If your church is moving away from traditional Sunday school, or if you're eager to add intergenerational faith nurture to your existing ministry, look for the *We* program coming in the summer of 2011!

This exciting new alternative will offer complete plans for monthly events to help people of all ages build community, grow in faith together,

and experience the Bible as God's "big story" into which all our life stories fit.

Curriculum editor Ruth Vander Hart observes, "Within the past few years, many educators have begun to question the 'silo' approach to faith nurture: sending each age group off to a separate room. The *We* program will bring all people in the church together to have fun and to learn from and with each other."

Each year, 10 intergenerational events will take the entire congregation, ages 2 and up, through the story of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. The two-hour events will include food, fun, and activities everyone can do together, such as service projects, a community art experience, or a prayer walk through the neighborhood.

All participants will also be encouraged to continue to dig into Scripture, talk together, and "do" together at home with home resources filled with discussion questions, activities, and prayer suggestions. ■

## New Imprint Bridges Faith and Culture



No matter how you feel about the culture you live in, avoiding it isn't an option. Turn on the TV, and culture floods your senses. Choose an outfit, and you're making a cultural statement. Everything we hear, see, and touch is shaped by our culture. So it's crucial that our faith engages that culture too.

With the publication of *The Day Metallica Came to Church*, Faith Alive is pleased to announce the debut of a new imprint called Square Inch. Books published under this imprint will help to bridge the gap between faith and culture. The name comes from the inspiring words of Abraham Kuyper: "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

Mark Rice, director of Faith Alive, observes, "In a world where Christianity is often viewed as a way of thought, rather than a way of life, Square Inch books bring the best Reformed thinking to bear on what it means to live *today*—in this time and in this place."

# New Hymnal Will Serve CRC and RCA

The Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America are working together on an unprecedented project: a joint hymnal for use by both denominations.

*Lift Up Your Hearts: Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs* is currently scheduled to be published by Faith Alive in 2013. Edited by Faith Alive's music and worship editor Joyce Berger, the hymnal is based in the work of an 80-person advisory committee and a 13-person editorial committee, both with CRC and RCA representation.

Here are answers to a few of the most frequently asked questions about this new hymnal. For more in-depth information, see <http://www.crcna.org/pages/hymnal.cfm>.

**Q. Now that so many churches project music on screens, aren't hymnals "dead"?**

No, they're not. Before we began this process we did a survey of churches in the CRC and RCA and found that there are still a significant number of churches that use hymnals and will continue to do so. Also, many churches that rely primarily on modern presentation technologies anticipate keeping a hymnbook in the pew as a supplemental worship resource.

**Q. Why a bi-denominational hymnal?**

The synods of the CRC and RCA have encouraged their churches to find ways in which to work collaboratively. As denominational siblings it makes sense for us to work together wherever possible. In fact, Faith Alive Christian Resources is the resource provider for both the CRC and RCA.

**Q. Why publish this hymnal now?**

The useful life of a hymnal is usually about 20 years, and both the *Psalter Hymnal* (used by the CRC) and *Rejoice in the Lord* (used by the RCA) are more than 20 years old. In addition, our world is very different today than it was 20 years ago. The words we use for worship need to express the new realities that form the backdrop of our worship.

**Q. Why a new hymnal? There are several recently published hymnals. Why not recommend one of them?**

There are many good hymnals available, but none come from an explicitly Reformed perspective with our denominational DNA. For example, there are theological differences in baptism sections as well as in songs dealing with the end times and heaven. Many hymnals also lack a global perspective.

**Q. What color will the new hymnal be?**

That hasn't been decided yet, so wait and see! ■

## New Releases from Faith Alive

To order or learn more about these titles, visit [www.FaithAliveResources.org](http://www.FaithAliveResources.org) or call 1-800-333-8300.

**Shaped by God**

*Twelve Essentials for Nurturing Faith in Children, Youth, and Adults*  
edited by Robert J. Keeley

Faith formation doesn't just happen—it's a Spirit-led lifelong process of shaping and reshaping. In this accessible anthology, 12 experts share their perspectives on faith formation at home, in worship, in education, in intergenerational contexts, in people with developmental disabilities, and more.

**Global Songs for Worship**

This new collection includes 57 worship songs from all over the world, including Egypt, Russia, Indonesia, China, and Sierra Leone. It provides lyrics in their original language as well as English translations. Helpful notes offer performance tips and suggestions for using these songs in worship. For easy learning, selected songs are available on a companion audio CD.

**Infuse**

*Infuse*, a new Bible-study series, helps small groups that include people with little or no Bible background discover where faith and life meet. The engaging study guide format provides helpful background info, historical insights, additional research ideas, and five daily at-home readings. Group leader tips are available online. Available now are studies on Esther, Jonah, and Matthew. Look for other titles coming soon!





## Prosperity vs. Passion

**A**s I write, we have just celebrated Canada Day and Independence Day. These holidays remind us of the incredible blessing it is to live in our respective homelands. In his goodness and grace, God has put us in places where we can serve and worship in freedom and joy.

Each week as we gather in our churches, we do so without fear or intimidation. We can speak freely and openly about our Lord and share with others the good news of Jesus Christ. Only our own inhibitions and fears prevent us from proclaiming the love of God and making disciples.

You would think that under such circumstances the message of salvation in Christ would spread like wildfire across North America. Yet that is not the case. Like the church of Laodicea, many North American churches have become lukewarm. The passion is gone, the intensity has diminished, and we have been lulled into a sense of well-being and comfort that has drained us of the urgency to drive forward.

This became clear to me when I attended the recent Uniting General Council meetings, where representatives from more than 100 Reformed churches around the world gathered to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Many delegates came from the global South, including Africa, South and Central America, and parts of Asia. These areas of the world are bubbling with Christianity; it is truly amazing to see what God is doing.

Being with Christians from around the world also reminded me that I live with my feet in two different worlds. I live with one foot firmly planted in North America and its culture of unprecedented wealth and freedom. As an American, I pledge allegiance to the United States. (If I lived just a few hundred kilometers to the east, I would pledge allegiance to Canada.) But I know very well that my true allegiance is to a kingdom that is not of this world. While I render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, I render to God what belongs to God and his kingdom.

When I think about the church in North America—and specifically the Christian Reformed Church in North America—

“Against unbelievable odds, God is bringing about his kingdom.”



I cannot help but wonder if the church is shaping our culture or if the culture is shaping our churches. Jesus called us to be salt and light in a decaying and darkened world. Paul tells us that we must not get caught up in our own culture, which is all too often focused on earthly things; rather, we should remember that our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:10ff).

As I encountered members of churches from around the world at the Uniting General Council and listened to their stories, I was struck by the challenges my brothers and sisters face each day. The freedoms I take for granted are only a dream for those who live with persecution and are ostracized for their faith and witness. For them, each day brings another battle between the powers of this world and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Yet in the midst of this, the church is growing. People are coming to Christ and lives are being transformed by the power of the gospel. Against unbelievable odds, God is bringing about his kingdom.

As people who live every day in a culture dedicated to materialism and hedonism, what does God expect from us? Where would God have us serve? These are not easy questions, but Jesus has never asked easy questions of his followers. His loving invitation is an invitation to sacrifice and service. I suppose the only question remaining is this: How will the Christian Reformed Church respond to Jesus' call? ■



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

## Kids Study Bible by Correspondence

**E**leven-year-old Darryn Pasqua from Rocky Face, Ga., loves sports, science, building forts, and exploring. He describes himself as “a tall, medium-strength guy who knows the Bible and is always looking to better himself.”

“I wanted to learn more about God and his plan for my life,” Darryn told Barb Brouwer, producer of the children’s program *Kids Corner*. So he enrolled in the Bible correspondence program offered at [www.KidsCorner.net](http://www.KidsCorner.net).

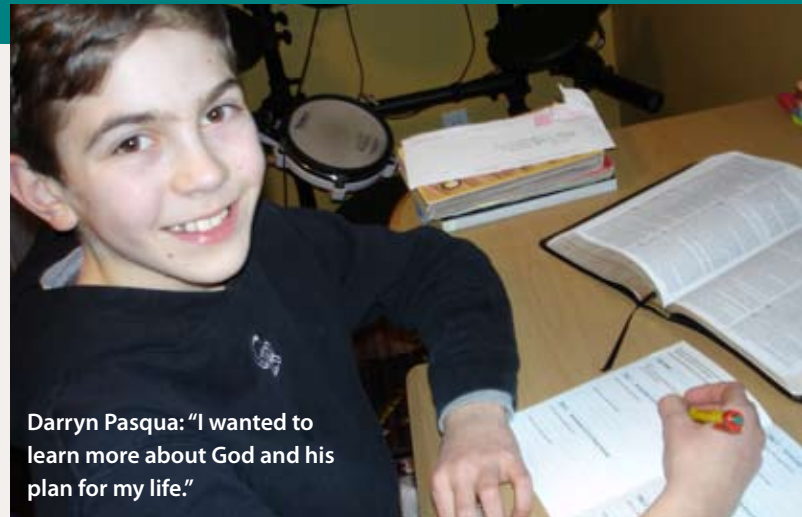
“The purpose of the *Kids Corner* Bible study is to introduce children to God’s story,” explains Brouwer. “As they learn about God’s story of creation, fall, redemption, and

restoration, it’s our prayer that the children will begin to discern God’s story in their lives.”

ReFrame Media—the English outreach of Back to God Ministries International—produces *Kids Corner*, a 30-minute audio drama and music program whose purpose is to ignite interest in the Bible and to disciple children as lifelong followers of Jesus.

Darryn discovered the correspondence lessons when he went to the *Kids Corner* website to download the free item offered each month.

“It’s wonderful to have extra studies based on their favorite characters,” notes Paula Pasqua, Darryn’s mom. “That motivates Darryn. He handled all of the work on his own. I only checked it over for



Darryn Pasqua: “I wanted to learn more about God and his plan for my life.”

thoughtfulness and complete answers.”

Darryn said the hardest part was being diligent to mail in the lessons, but he stuck with it. He wrote, “I learned that Jesus came to earth humble, not proud. I liked the feeling that I was learning what God wanted.”

Darryn participates in local baseball and basketball leagues,

plays piano, and is a percussionist in his school band. “I like to be challenged to learn new things about Christ,” he says. “When I finished all the [*Kids Corner*] lessons, it felt like I took a step in my spiritual growth.”

Since the children’s Bible study program was revised in 2008, 266 children have enrolled. Those who finish all the lessons receive a certificate of completion and a *Kids Corner* music CD. The *Kids Corner* audio drama is aired on more than 400 outlets worldwide and on the Internet. In addition to the Bible correspondence course, the website provides stories, devotionals, and activities as well as parent resources and discussion guides.

If the children in your life would like a fun and challenging way to grow in faith, check out the correspondence course at [www.KidsCorner.net](http://www.KidsCorner.net) or contact Barb Brouwer at [bbrouwer@crcna.org](mailto:bbrouwer@crcna.org) or 1-800-879-6555. ■

—Nancy Vander Meer, *Back to God Ministries International*

## Ministry Cluster Takes Root in Missouri

**A** dynamic and growing group of Christian Reformed Home Missions-sponsored churches and leaders has taken root in and around Kansas City, Mo.

The ministry cluster—a group of pastors and leaders who gather to pray, share resources, and develop a vision for their community—started several years ago when church planter Kevin Schutte planted Pathway Community Church in the upscale Kansas City suburb of Olathe.

Two years ago Kurt Rietema, who worked for a time as an intern at Pathway, started another church plant, which uses Christian community-development principles in the poor, ethnically diverse, urban Kansas City neighborhood of Argentine.

More recently Ryan Pelton arrived and is planting New City Church, also in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Another Christian Reformed pastor, Andrew Vanden Akker, will soon join Pelton, New City Church, and the cluster. Schutte says he believes that it will not be long before a fourth ministry will start alongside these three.

Home Missions’ West Central U.S. regional team leader Jerry Holleman says other clusters are taking shape in the region, including one in Denver, Colo., and another in Texas.

“We want to encourage cluster leaders to develop and expand increasing numbers of clusters,” Holleman says. “These clusters can share what they have learned and experienced, and new clusters can develop that are focused on mission.” ■

—Ben Van Houten, *Christian Reformed Home Missions*





Calvin students are creating online atlases for developing nations.

## Students Create National Atlases

Geography students at Calvin College have created online national atlases for Eritrea, Thailand, and Nepal, with more on the way. The project benefits the Calvin students but also has the potential to benefit students in the countries for which the atlases are produced.

“Many students in developing nations do not have a comprehensive resource to study the geographical dimensions and spatial relationships of their country, and if [a national atlas] is available, it is often not current [nor] freely available online for public consumption,” explained geography professor Jason VanHorn. “This project is not intended to replace a true national atlas, but acts as a service to provide a simple one to those who do not have the resources available to produce one.”

VanHorn noted that his students started with Thailand because it ranks higher in the Human Development Index and thus more data has been produced on the country. That enabled the students to work through a series of methodological challenges before tackling the next atlas.

To create the online atlases, each Calvin student in Geography 261 completes a small number of maps using a standard mapping atlas template, then the maps are put together and posted online to form a complex atlas. VanHorn said the

Calvin classes have thus far highlighted countries that have not been previously represented this way online.

A national atlas usually has general reference and thematic maps at the sub-national level, often several hundred. Themes cover not only physical geography, but also population density, monthly income per household, number of students attending school, and religious distribution. The Calvin atlases also

include such information as the geographic distribution of dentists in a country, where registered vehicles are located, and crime statistics.

Students who have been involved in Calvin’s Geographic Information Systems courses and the atlas project say it’s been a satisfying way to apply classroom learning.

Andrew Quackenbush, a 2010 graduate from Naperville, Ill., with degrees in geography and international development, said it felt good to be part of something that will make a difference for years to come.

“We’ve already had several emails from Eritreans, thanking us for doing this project,” VanHorn added.

The atlas project continues this upcoming school year, with students creating maps for Niger and Ethiopia. For more information, see the National Atlas for Developing Countries at <http://gis.calvin.edu/atlas/index.html>. ■

—Matt Kucinski, Calvin College

## The Gospel Crossing Cultures

All ministry today is crosscultural, whether in local neighborhoods or around the world, note organizers of Calvin Theological Seminary’s special emphasis on missions in the coming academic year.

The seminary will focus on missions through a new “Gospel Crossing Cultures” series, a missionary-in-residence program, and special courses and conferences on global Christianity, world religions, and church planting.

This fall the seminary and several ministries of the Christian Reformed Church will host a series of presentations and discussions about the mission of the church in the second decade of the 21st century.

“The Gospel Crossing Cultures: Equipping the Church for Outreach” series will explore how practices of Christian discipleship—such as worship, preaching, and integrated word-and-deed ministries—can communicate the gospel effectively. Co-sponsors include Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Back to God Ministries International, and the Nagel Institute for World Christianity at Calvin College.

Continuing education events will include a conference on Christianity and Islam with Australian Mark Durie and Iranian-born Daniel Shayesta on Oct. 1- 2, and a conference on “Islam Beyond the Headlines” on Oct. 7.

For more information, see [www.calvinseminary.edu/registrar/offerings/2010\\_2011/](http://www.calvinseminary.edu/registrar/offerings/2010_2011/). ■

—Kathy Smith is director of continuing education for the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship and Calvin Theological Seminary.

## Haiti CRC Dedicates New Church

Under a dark, smoky sky, drums beat loudly and voodoo worshipers sang rhythmic songs. But in the light of day, the drums were silent as members of the Christian Reformed Church of Haiti in Belladere filed along a dirt path and entered their new building, the Temple de Belladere.

Once inside, they began to praise God. Choirs sang and people prayed for a woman who wanted to become a Christian.

"I love this church. It makes me feel good about my relationship with God," said Mariette Pigne, a young woman who is active in the Belladere church.

SON-BEAM International, a nondenominational min-



Led by Pastor Leonard Pistais, members of Temple de Belladere file into the new building.

istry based in Jamestown, Mich., had drawn up plans for the new building and donated funds to help make it happen. Although the new building was shaken by the devastating earthquake that hit Haiti on Jan 12, it sustained no serious damage.

During the service, several ministers walked the aisles, praying fervently to rid the new structure of any evil spirits that might be lurking

and to dedicate it as a sacred space for worship. People prayed along with the pastors, imploring God to take up residence in this simple building.

Christian Reformed World Missions missionary Zach Segaar-King attended the dedication service and was invited to preach. He spoke of how the Jews in the Old Testament were banished from their temple in Jerusa-

lem and sent into exile for worshiping other gods. But God allowed them back and gave them the chance of a new beginning.

Rev. Luis Pellecer, director of Latin American ministries for World Missions, attended the service and was moved by the piety and perseverance of the people. "This church has many good and positive things to share," Pellecer said. "I'm very impressed."

The Belladere church is one of a handful of CRC of Haiti congregations spread out near the border with the Dominican Republic. ■

—Chris Meehan, CRC  
Communications

*This story is part of a special series about how the Christian Reformed Church in North America is working with the people of Haiti in the wake of the January earthquake.*

## Comforting Haiti's Grieving

Junior's sister was killed in the Jan. 12 Haiti earthquake. Since her death, Junior has had a hard time focusing and often turns to rum to help him fall asleep. Although he attends church, he says he feels like he's just going through the motions.

The grief and pain Junior feels is mirrored in the lives of thousands of other Haitians. Seeing peoples' struggles to rebuild their homes and lives, *Sous Espwa* (Source of Hope), the Haitian ministry of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, began a new training program to help church leaders guide people through the grieving process.

Zach Segaar-King and Jennifer LeMahieu, missionaries

serving with Christian Reformed World Missions, and three other local partners had organized a Timothy Leadership Training (TLT) session on pastoral care last fall. Since the earthquake, the need for pastoral care has been greater than ever.

In response, Segaar-King worked with David Carter, a school psychologist and World Missions volunteer, to create a "Pastoral Care for Earthquake Survivors" workshop. The workshop built on the earlier TLT session by providing information on the grief process and training on how to help people through it.

One hundred Haitians gathered in April for the two-day workshop. Twenty of them



Zach Segaar-King leads a Timothy Leadership Training session.

had participated in the earlier training session; the rest were other pastors and church leaders, many of whom were struggling with personal loss themselves.

A group of young men who had been in the fall workshop shared how the earlier training they received had spurred their actions after the earthquake.

"They decided that one of the best ways to 'care for the sheep' after the earthquake »



» would be to organize and staff a food and shelter distribution point at their church for the surrounding community,” says Segaar-King. “They volunteered daily for over a month to organize daily distributions, and over 10,000 people in the community received aid.”

Glimpses of triumph in the midst of tragedy emerged as the April workshop progressed. After Junior told of his struggles, the group stood by him, assuring him that his feelings were normal and that God will give him the strength to make it through.

“Another really encouraging moment was the presence of Monica Petit-Homme and Edouarnis Estevil,” says Segaar-King. “Caleb Petit-Homme was a member of the TLT coordination team and a promising TLT trainer who was killed in the earthquake. Monica, his sister, and Edouarnis, his best friend, are carrying on his legacy by using the Pastoral Care for Earthquake Survivors material to assist others who have lost loved ones.”

Segaar-King says he hopes that the materials will provide a way for Haitian church leaders to reach out to suffering people in their communities. “With so many people having lost loved ones, homes, and jobs, the church has an unprecedented opportunity to share the love of God and Jesus Christ for those in the greatest need of it.

“We hope that the people of Haiti will be rebuilt not only physically through homes, roads, and infrastructure, but that they will be rebuilt emotionally and spiritually to be the people God has called them to be.” ■

—Sarah Van Stempvoort, *Christian Reformed World Missions*

## Zambian Volunteers Save Lives

In Zambia, volunteers spend several days each month teaching their neighbors how to improve their farms and grow more crops.

“Our goal is food security for Zambian farmers . . . to use volunteers to do the training,” said Justin Kadyeni of the Reformed Church of Zambia, which provides leadership for the program as a partner of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.

Kadyeni and his four colleagues work with approximately 70 volunteers, training them to use compost and green manures, to plant new crop varieties, and to improve spacing of crops and irrigation. The volunteers then return to their home areas to teach the techniques to others. The program will reach 384 communities and nearly 10,500 people this year.

Chosen by their community’s leadership, volunteers must be Christian, literate so they can train others, and willing to sign a contract



Justin Kadyeni of the Reformed Church of Zambia (left) and CRWRC’s Zakka Chomock (right) speak with two agriculture volunteers of the food-security program in Zambia.

to work with the program as volunteers for three years. Many stay longer. In exchange they receive training and mentorship from the RCZ, a bicycle for traveling to local communities, and notebooks and other resource material. ■

—Kristen deRoo VanderBerg, *CRWRC Communications*

## Salvadorans Bring Change from Inside Out

Pastor Pedro Landaverde lived in a comfortable neighborhood in El Salvador and led a church of well-off members. But a training program with Seeds of New Creation convinced him to make a drastic change.

He and his family left their community and moved into a neighborhood known for violence and gangs. There Landaverde applied Seeds leadership training and resources integrating spiritual outreach with social responsibility.

Founded in 2001 as a non-profit agency to bring churches, communities, and agencies together, Seeds of New Creation was begun by

Christian Reformed World Missions, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, and Back to God Ministries International. Today, Seeds is Salvadoran-owned, with support provided by CRWM and BTGMI.

Following El Salvador’s lengthy civil war that finally ended in the early 1990s, Landaverde has become one of many Salvadoran Christians engaged in transformational ministry that envisions lives and society changed from the inside out.

“Local churches that used to be very inward looking . . . have caught a vision, gained new eyes to see their broader community/neighborhood and initiated responsible

responses like medical and psychological attention and after-school programs,” says Ruth Padilla DeBorst, a CRWM missionary involved in Seeds’ initial start-up who continues to accompany Seeds.

“In a country in which even churches aligned behind ideological lines during the civil war, and suspicion and mistrust still govern relationships, Seeds’ Ministry Center has become a ‘white flag’ zone in which pastors and leaders from very different camps are coming together and setting aside their differences for the sake of God’s kingdom and God’s justice,” says Padilla DeBorst. ■

—Sarah Van Stempvoort

## Baby Blues

**I** **KNEW IT WAS COMING.** Ten days after the birth of my second child, I remember standing in my kitchen with our 3-year-old and new baby, my husband blissfully off to work. I couldn't decide what we should have for lunch. The indecision left me sobbing. The lunch issue turned out to be minor compared to the guilt I experienced over having a wonderful family, including a healthy baby boy, but still standing in a puddle of tears. I had the "baby blues."

At the time I was a midwife and knowledgeable about postpartum depression. I knew the blues were coming and why, but I felt completely unprepared for the depth and intensity of my sadness. I felt listless; some days I didn't even have the energy to shower. I turned down opportunities to see or chat with friends.

We quickly fell out of a routine. I felt like I would be a failure if I accepted meal offers from our church family. And I began to feel disconnected from them, as I had not attended church since my son's birth. Many days our home wouldn't have passed any sort of cleanliness inspection, and we ate sandwiches all too often. My husband felt at a complete loss as to how to help me.

It was a challenging time for us.

It was easy to blame it all on hormone changes, because they certainly played a huge role. But other factors came into play as well. Having my son during a midwinter month meant we didn't get outside much. Our families lived in other states and weren't able to help with childcare and household duties. Job obligations also contributed to the pressures I placed on myself. And our son not only didn't live up to my hopes of sleeping through the night by four weeks, he had episodes of inexplicable crying throughout the day. Exhaustion certainly contributed to my blues.

During my third pregnancy I determined to minimize as much as possible the difficulties I'd faced before. I was quite surprised by how little attention the baby blues received in the media. Since I found little information available, I began talking to friends and coworkers about their transitions to motherhood. My informal research led me to conclude that most moms experience some degree of feeling sad and overwhelmed after the birth of a baby. (More serious depression that persists for longer than 8 to 10 weeks requires professional help.)

While I was still pregnant, I planned and prepared meals for after the baby's birth. I stocked our pantry with healthy and not-so-healthy snacks. I made sure to plan for a routine that included daily rest for everyone.

Once our daughter arrived, my priority became taking care of both her and myself. I did not refuse any offers of food. (One friend didn't feel confident in preparing us a meal, so she delivered bags of wonderful fresh vegetables she'd chopped.)



I felt completely unprepared for the depth and intensity of my sadness.

After spending the first week resting, I began to slowly resume activities. I stuck to our daily routine with fixed mealtimes rather than relying on a minute-by-minute plan. Rest remained a priority, but we also made sure to get outside for at least a short time every day and work in some form of exercise, whether a short walk or some gentle stretches.

I stayed more connected with family and friends by email and attended church within a few weeks. I'd planned our routine to include a quiet devotional time, but after a multitude of interruptions I learned that I can talk to God no matter what I'm doing—and that God can talk to me while I'm reading a child's devotional book or praying with my children.

Though I still experienced plummeting hormones, interrupted sleep, and a crying baby, the changes I'd introduced helped to make this time better than what I'd experienced previously. The times of sadness and tears were shorter and less frequent, and my baby blues were more quickly replaced with enjoyment of our new blessing. ■



**Heather Peters** is a retired midwife and the mother of six children. She is also a foster parent. She attends Beckwith Hills CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.





# DEMANDING DISCIPLESHIP

ARE YOU A FAN  
OR A FOLLOWER  
OF JESUS?

**J**ESUS HAD MANY FANS during his earthly ministry. Some were dazzled by his amazing miracles. Others were entertained by his captivating parables. Still others were impressed by how cleverly he refuted the challenges of the Pharisees and other religious leaders. A few hoped for a free meal. More hoped for a revolutionary leader who would overthrow Rome. It's hardly surprising, then, that Luke 14:25-35 opens with the statement, "Large crowds were traveling with Jesus."

Jesus continues to have many fans today. The church is full of people who see Jesus as a solution to their troubled

marriages, a fix for their financial failures, or a cure for their health problems.

Jesus, however, does not want fans. He wants followers. Fans sit passively on the sidelines, content to cheer Jesus on, but followers proactively pursue becoming Jesus' disciple—becoming like their master in every way.

To be a disciple of Jesus is no easy matter. Rather, discipleship is demanding: Jesus demands that his followers make him the absolute top priority in their lives. We see this clearly in Luke 14:25-35. Three times Jesus makes a demand, then says unequivocally that if anyone cannot meet that demand, such a person "cannot be my disciple" (vv. 26-27, 33).

What's more, Jesus introduces those three demands with a reference to "anyone" (vv. 26-27) and "any of you" (v. 33). The discipleship that Jesus demands, therefore, is not limited to a select few—to ministers and other church leaders, to a few holier-than-thou types. No, Jesus' demands are for everyone who desires to be his disciple.

### 1. Love Me More Than Your Family

Jesus' initial demand is, at first blush, surprising and shocking: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even life itself—such a person cannot be my disciple" (v. 26, TNIV).

# Grace is free, but it costs us everything.

Christians understandably hesitate to take this demand literally: Are we really to *hate* our family members? And what about dear old Mom and Dad—the ones who gave us life, changed our dirty diapers, clothed and fed us for years, faithfully attended all our sporting events and school recitals, and supported us financially until we were old enough to take care of ourselves—*these* are the people we are to hate?!

That this is *not* what Jesus means is clear elsewhere in Luke from Jesus' general affirmation to "Love your neighbor as yourself" (10:27) and his specific command to "Honor your father and mother" (18:20). Thus, we should not take his language of "hate" literally but instead understand it as a Jewish way of saying "love less."

For example, we read in the Old Testament that Jacob "loved Rachel more than Leah . . . and Leah was hated" (Gen. 29:30-31, KJV). The reference to "loved more" in the first verse is restated in the second as "hated." Another example occurs in Malachi 1:2-3, cited by Paul in Romans 9:13, in which God says: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (KJV). God did not actually "hate" Esau but rather "loved him less" than Jacob (see also Deut. 21:15-17; Judg. 14:16; Prov. 13:24; Isa. 60:15; Luke 16:13).

Many Bible translators fear that modern readers will not understand this Jewish way of speaking, so they've replaced the word "hate" with words that capture its real meaning. The New Century Version, for example, translates Jesus' first demand in Luke 14:26 this way: "If anyone comes to me but *loves* his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters—or even life—*more than me*, he cannot be my follower."

Understanding "hate" as "love less" does not diminish the difficulty of Jesus' first demand for discipleship, however. In a Palestinian first-century context, family members would reject any relative who followed Jesus. Such a person would be seen as a traitor to the Jewish faith and one who brought shame to their family. The situation would be like that today in many Muslim countries where, if someone becomes a Christian, their family members

want nothing more to do with that person, sometimes even seeking to kill their relative. Our commitment to Jesus must be so intense that we love him more than we love even our closest family members.

## 2. Love Me More Than Your Own Life

Although we are shocked initially at the first of Jesus' demands for discipleship, the hearers of that day would have been more stunned by his second: "And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple" (v. 27, TNIV). That's because they understood all too well what Jesus meant.

For contemporary Christians the cross is a symbol of life: it reminds us of Christ's death by which we gain eternal life. In fact, the cross is such a positive symbol that we frequently wear it as a piece of jewelry or sing stirring hymns about it. For the people of Jesus' day, however, the cross meant only death. The Romans used the horrific practice of crucifixion to ensure that victims would not only die as slowly and painfully as possible, but that they would hang publicly like an ancient billboard, advertising the gruesome consequences of challenging Roman power.

Many people today complain about their boring job, ongoing car troubles, or some other mundane problem, then state naively, "I guess that's the cross I have to bear." But there's nothing mundane about this second demand for discipleship.

To bear our cross means that we follow Jesus even in his suffering. To bear our cross means that we are willing to endure the persecution that will surely come to those who follow Jesus. To bear our cross means that we love Jesus even more than our own lives.

## 3. Love Me More Than Your Possessions

Jesus' third demand in Luke 14 concerns our possessions: "Those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples" (v. 33, TNIV).

After the difficult requirements of hating family members and bearing one's cross, this third demand can seem anticlimactic. But we shouldn't underestimate the danger to discipleship that our possessions play.

Too often we seek true joy in life not by following Jesus but by following our culture's consumer mentality that equates possessions with happiness. Later in Luke we see the danger that our material goods play when a rich man who wanted to obtain eternal life left Jesus "very sad" (18:23) because it was too difficult for the man to part with his possessions. True disciples, however, willingly renounce all material goods, recognizing that such temporary possessions pale in value compared to the eternal blessings that come from following Jesus.

## What About Grace?

We should not hear Jesus' demands for discipleship as requirements by which believers earn their salvation. Rather, we need to recognize two things. First, Luke is writing not to unbelievers about how to get saved but to believers about how to be faithful. Second, the grace by which we sinners are saved may be free, but it is by no means without cost to those who receive it.

Suppose I have a lifelong dream to sail solo around the world. Right now that would be impossible to fulfill because I do not have enough money for the kind of boat, equipment, support team, and free time required to complete such a feat. But suppose a rich donor gets so excited about my plan that he pays for everything I need. On the one hand, the trip would be free. On the other hand, the trip would cost me a great deal: hard work, months alone at sea, separation from my wife and family, and possibly even my life, given the dangers of such a trip.

So it is with grace. On one hand, it costs me nothing: it is a free and undeserved gift. On the other hand, grace costs me everything: it requires that I become a disciple of Jesus—loving him more than my family, my life, and my possessions.

What about you? Are you merely a fan or a follower of Jesus? ■



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# Living with the Stars

One starry night, God took a man named Abraham outside and said to him, "Look up at the stars—can you count them?" The sky was covered with stars. No way could Abraham count them all! Then God promised Abraham that someday he would have more descendants than he could count. Abraham believed God, and God's promise came true. But

Abraham never imagined that some of his descendants might one day be **LIVING** up by those stars!

On a starry night, if you look up in the sky you might see something that looks like a star, but it's not. It's not an airplane or a helicopter, either. It's the International Space Station, and people are living there right now!



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY, PHOTOS OF R2, SPACE SHUTTLE AND THE ASTRONAUT BY NASA

## Space Station Life

- There isn't much **gravity** on the space station, so things float if they're not tied down. Astronauts hook their sleeping bags to the wall so they won't float all over the space station.
- The space station **orbits** the Earth 15 times every 24 hours, so the astronauts get to see 15 sunrises and 15 sunsets every day!
- It's really **noisy** on the space station—kind of like living in a big vacuum cleaner. But astronauts get used to it.
- There aren't any washing machines on board, so astronauts wear **disposable clothes** that they change every three days.
- **Tastebuds** don't work very well after you've been in space for a long time, so astronauts like to eat spicy food.

## The International Space Station

The International Space Station (ISS for short) is a research lab in space. It orbits (goes around) the Earth 250 miles (400 kilometers) up in the sky.

Astronauts do lots of experiments on the ISS, like growing plants and crystals in space, testing how being in space for a long time affects people's bodies, and much more.

The space station was built piece by piece starting in 1998. The space shuttle brings the new pieces, or modules, up from Earth so the astronauts can install them. It took more than 10 years to build the space station! Here are some fun facts about this fantastic floating laboratory:

**How long is it?** It's 361 feet long (110 meters)—about as long as a U.S. football field including the end zones!

**How much does it weigh?** Almost a million pounds (453.6 metric tons)—or as much as about 500 Volkswagen Beetles!

**Who owns it?** Canada, Japan, Russia, the United States, and the European Space Agency work on the ISS together.

**How long will it be in space?** The space station is a machine, so it won't last forever. But it will probably be in orbit at least until the year 2020, and maybe longer. Since the U.S. plans to stop its space shuttle program later this year, U.S. astronauts will have to hitch a ride on Russia's Soyuz spacecraft to get to the space station.







## Meet an Astronaut

Tracy Caldwell Dyson has been a U.S. astronaut since 1999. Since then, she's traveled millions of miles in space. Right now she's living on board the space station until she goes back to Earth in September. According to her profile on Wikipedia, she's a Christian, so it's really true that there's a descendent of Abraham on the space station right now!

Tracy was picked to be an astronaut because she has lots of skills: she studied chemistry and other sciences for many years, she's a good athlete, and she has lots of experience with tools because she used to work as an electrician for her father's company. When she's on Earth, Tracy likes to play sports, hike, and fix cars. She knows American Sign Language, and she also speaks Russian, which helps her talk to Russian cosmonauts on the space station.



## Robots in Space!

In September, the International Space Station will look even more like something out of *Star Wars*. NASA (the National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is sending a robot, or "robonaut," to live there!

The robot is called "R2" for short, and from the waist up he looks pretty much like a human being. He's going to the space station because NASA wants to find out how well robots can operate in space, and if they could someday do the jobs that are dangerous for humans.

R2 can use the same tools that astronauts use, but he can't work outside the space station because the cold temperatures would damage him. But maybe someday R2 will be able to take his first spacewalk!

Look at this mess! When are you going to take the trash out? I am not cleaning up your junk...

Chill R2, the garbage man doesn't come until September!



## Taking Out the Trash

On the International Space Station, taking out the garbage is a WAY bigger job than taking out the trash at your house, and there aren't any garbage trucks to haul the trash away. So what do the astronauts do with all their junk? Everything they can't recycle is either put on a shuttle and sent back to Earth or put on a spaceship that completely burns up when it enters Earth's atmosphere.

## Put Your Face in Space!

Want to launch your face into space? You can! NASA is sending photos of anyone who wants to participate up into space on its last two space shuttle missions in September and November. Just visit [www.faceinspace.nasa.gov](http://www.faceinspace.nasa.gov) and follow the instructions. (You need to be 13 to upload your own photo, but if you're younger, try a family photo with a parent's help!)



Sandy Swartzentruber works for Faith Alive and is a member of Church of the Servant CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich. She would love to go to space but isn't good at sleeping while floating.



## Our Global God

**A CHRISTIAN RIP VAN WINKLE** who fell asleep midway through the 20th century and woke up today “would not recognize the shifted shape of world Christianity.” So says author and renowned Notre Dame church historian Mark Noll. What once was a faith concentrated in the global North and West appears now to be a majority situated in the global South and East.

Philip Jenkins’s much-discussed 2002 book *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford University Press) perhaps most notably kicked off what has become a cottage industry for researchers examining this emerging global church. Within the past year three important books have been released that offer a paean to world Christianity, but with choruses that, while echoing common themes, offer differing and sometimes disagreeing insights.

Soong-Chan Rah, a professor at North Park Seminary, provides a blunt, prophetic book that takes the (white) North American church to task in *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (InterVarsity Press). “Racism is America’s original and most deeply rooted sin,” he says. Writing in an accessible style, Rah says the “next evangelicalism” should give up power and follow the lead of immigrants who hold the map to a changing cultural context.

Noll’s contribution is *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (InterVarsity Press). Noll looks back to the 19th century, when America appropriated and transformed inherited European Christian traditions, in order to look forward to how the new “shift” in energy and influence is transforming the global

The shape of world Christianity has shifted.



church scene today and tomorrow. America’s shadow looms large in his interpretive forecast.

Robert Wuthnow, the prolific Princeton sociologist, in his new book *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches* (University of California Press), almost celebrates the dominance of American churches on the world scene. Countering the popular notion that the locus of Christianity has shifted, Wuthnow builds a heavily documented case against what he describes as the “global Christianity paradigm.” The globalization of the American church, in fact, leads it to an even more significant role in emerging world Christianity.

Our global God is on the move; read these chroniclers to catch a glimpse of the Spirit’s work. ■



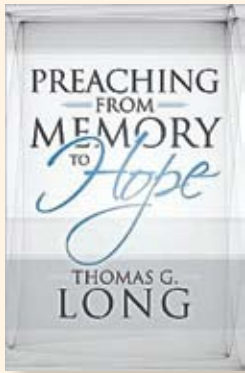
**Robert N. Hosack** is executive editor at Baker Publishing Group and is a member of Church of the Servant CRC, Grand Rapids, Mich.



### Under the Radar

reviewed by **Ron VandenBurg**

Reframe Media’s “Under the Radar” showcases the new music of “undiscovered or under-appreciated” Christian artists. It’s a one-hour nationally syndicated radio program that is also available as a podcast download. In each episode, together with songs, stories, and artist interviews, host Dave Trout brings spiritual insights and a complete “picture” to each song. By getting air time on “Under the Radar,” Christian independent artists can introduce themselves to a wider audience. If you like what you hear, you can go to iTunes and download it to your player. ([radar-radio.net](http://radar-radio.net))



## Preaching from Memory to Hope

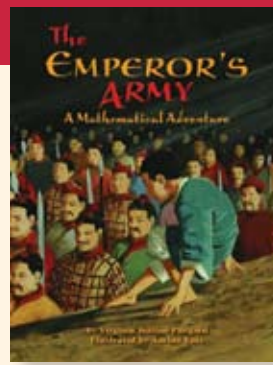
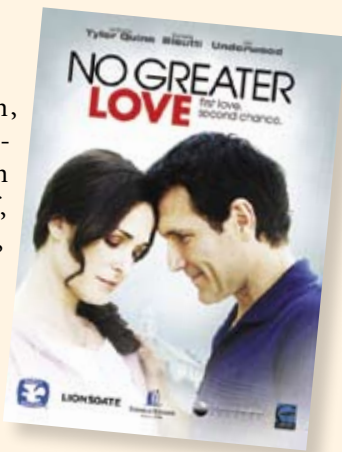
by **Thomas G. Long**  
reviewed by **Wayne Brouwer**

We all make judgments about preaching. In this book, Long gives helpful reflections about both preaching well and listening well. He believes narrative preaching can be made better without becoming mere religious-entertainment-by-way-of-storytelling, and he provides a meaningful guideline: 1) interpret my story 2) in light of the biblical story 3) as it illumines the eschatological story of what God is drawing us toward. Long also shows how much of our desire for relevant preaching undermines the true hope of biblical engagement. Great book. (Westminster John Knox)

## No Greater Love

reviewed by **Ron DeBoer**

After the birth of her son, Heather falls into a deep depression and one day vanishes from the lives of her husband, Jeff, and their child. Ten years later, Jeff, on the verge of proposing to his new fiancé, unexpectedly finds Heather, now volunteering for a church's vacation Bible school. Although the plotline contains plausibility gaps that help move the story, *No Greater Love* is a film about forgiveness and grace that the whole family can watch together. (Lionsgate)



## The Emperor's Army: A Mathematical Adventure

by **Virginia Walton Pilegard**  
reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**

During the rule of China's first emperor, a scholar and his son flee to a cave when their lives and those of other artists are threatened. While there, the boy studies math. Sent on an errand, he discovers a pit for the excavation of clay and a prison camp where artists create life-size clay statues of soldiers. Later the boy's mathematical knowledge leads to the discovery of a terracotta army complete with weapons, which are used to rebel against the despotic dynasty. Based on the 1974 discovery of China's terracotta army, this exquisitely illustrated picture book effectively blends the disciplines of history and mathematics. Ages 4-8. (Pelican)

## THE LOWDOWN



**Hungry for More:** Fans of *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins eagerly await the third installment of the trilogy, *Mockingjay*, due out this month. In these layered, moral, and culturally relevant young adult novels, an oppressive, futuristic government forces young people to participate in a violent reality show. (Scholastic)



**Something Fishy:** The Fish, at [www.thefish.com](http://www.thefish.com), offers

opinion and commentary on pop culture from a Christian perspective—a great resource for teens and adults, including parents who want more information on popular entertainment.



**Still Singing:** *Be Still and Know* is a new CD filled with songs for Children and Worship, giving children a chance to sing worship songs anytime. (Faith Alive)



**Gotta Get It:** Gregory L. Jantz explores our desire for more than we need in his book *Gotta Have It! Freedom from Wanting Everything Right Here, Right Now.* (David C. Cook)



## Hate List

by **Jennifer Brown**  
reviewed by **Kathryn Hoffman**

Valerie penned her private hate list after her classmates began to call her "Sister Death." When her boyfriend uses the list to select his victims in a Columbine-style massacre, Valerie is shot in the leg as she shields a classmate. She is seen as both an accomplice and a victim. Now Valerie must return to school and navigate the twisted anger and gratitude of her family and peers. *Hate List* is a realistic tale of redemption, filled with sorrow, spilling over with grace. For high-school-age readers and up. (Little, Brown)

Check [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org) for links to find out more about these titles.



# Striking Fire

## I WAS NOT IN A PRAYING MOOD.

The elders had decided to make Wednesday evenings available for prayer. As a pastor, I'm supposed to be excited about prayer, right? I'm supposed to love talking to God. I should love any and every opportunity to gather with God's people and spend time in intimate conversation with Jesus, right?

Nope. I could have spent that time on Facebook or watching a sporting event. I was going to the prayer meeting, but I was not going to enjoy it. "So, Jesus, you'd better be happy I'm going because I could be doing something else," I thought.

## I'm supposed to love talking to God.

I walked slowly to church—as if getting hit by a bus would have been preferable at that point. I was not interested in getting lathered up for a conversation with Jesus. Doesn't that sound bad? (As if you've never felt like that before. Admit it—you have.)

In one of the rooms on the second floor, the prayer warriors were gathered: one elder, the associate pastor, a retired missionary couple, and me. I thought we'd cancel the meeting. Yet it was clear that the "where two or three are gathered" minimum requirement had been met, so on with the prayer.

The praying started low, raised high, struck fire, and landed on celebration. So much so that the husband of the missionary couple blurted out, "For a minute I thought I was back in Latin America! We were loud for Christian Reformed people."

Yes, we were! We were loud, blessed, and honored by the presence of God. The Holy Spirit showed me that prayer is more about what God is doing than my own pet peeves or bad attitudes. Thank you,

Holy Ghost! Jesus taught me he will show up regardless because he promised he would. I was ready to skip home.

I walked down the stairs and made my way through the fellowship room just as the women's Bible study was ending. The leader, a small woman of fireball faith and persistence, grabbed my hand and made a request. "Pastor, a dear sister needs prayer! She needs her driving record expunged in order to start driving a bus again." The woman was running after her two grandsons, who were quicker than her in energy and speed. Once she caught them, she brought them into an

impromptu circle of prayer that had formed. We joined our hands, bowed our heads, and prayed for God to intervene on her behalf. It started low, rose high, struck fire, and ended in celebration. The praying was so good that another request was made. The leader said, "Pastor, we need to pray for Belinda [not her real name] because she's mad at everyone. The alcohol has a hold on her, and we miss her at our meeting." Now children were watching us. Some stopped playing and others drew closer to the circle.

We lifted Belinda's situation to the Lord. We prayed that she would experience freedom from the alcohol and she would begin again on the road of following Jesus. We started low, rose high, struck fire, and ended with holy laughter. By this time the children were praising God along with us. Passing through the fellowship room had turned into my chance to learn from these women about discipleship.

What does this have to do with discipleship? Everything. All of these wonderful people are trying to follow Jesus—a Jesus who calls us to a life of obedience,



a Jesus who knows our motives are not pure or benevolent, yet something inside us loves him enough to get up and go to a prayer meeting or a Bible study against our stubborn wills.

Discipleship isn't a program or a tool or a technique. It's the simple gathering of struggling men and women who remind each other that if we join our hands and call on Jesus, we may start low, rise high, strike fire, and celebrate Jesus. ■



Rev. Reginald Smith is pastor of Roosevelt Park Community CRC, Grand Rapids, Mich.

# An Incongruent Life

**I DON'T HAVE** a boyfriend or a car.

I'm 23. I still live with my parents.

Most of my socks have holes in them.

I just spent \$99 on paint. Acrylics, to be exact.

I hold a temporary job. It's shift work, and this week I'm working nights.

I spent this evening sitting at a small table in a church, affixing gift cards to unsharpened pencils. The cards read: "Your work with children is *write* on. Know that you are loved and appreciated." The pencils are for Sunday school volunteers, apparently. I don't know. I don't even go to church there.

At any point this evening, I could have banged my hand on the table and shouted, "This is irrelevant! Where is tying cards to pencils for people I don't even know going to get me? I'm out of here!"

The problem with such a scene is that I would have to make the same declaration about my entire life.

Life doesn't really make sense to me right now. That is, it's not unfolding before me as a logical series of events that look something like this: find job, find man, get married, have children, save the world, retire, and golf.

But more than my lack of direction, my life is completely *incongruent*. All the many things that I like to do and have to do on any given day seem completely unrelated to each other and irrelevant to the grand and glorious calling that I simply *must* have as a child of God. I am overwhelmed with the sense that I am somehow missing the point, missing my

purpose. Unfortunately, this is one table I can't get up from and shout, "I'm out of here!"

Of course, I've got it all wrong, and surprisingly that realization comes with great relief. My purpose as a child of God is not to figure everything out or to always have an explanation or a tidy slot for every element of my life in some grand, comprehensive scheme.

By God's mercy I will wake up each morning and submit all pretense of control to the One who really is in control. I

**Life doesn't really make sense to me right now.**

will put my hand to tasks that are sometimes enjoyable and sometimes drudgery, but most often mundane. I will do things that do not make sense and that do not directly advance my career or social status or sense of accomplishment. And every day I will put myself aside so that I may both love the people around me and profoundly experience the love of God. This, all of this, is the point.

I hope I do not paint too drab a picture of Christian living. I'm convinced that God always mixes "magic" in with the mundane—the same presence of Jesus Christ in our day-to-day living that caused Moses' bush to burn and gave David his

songs in the sheep pen. I find "magic" when I do menial tasks to serve the people around me, when I see a likeness of God's eternal nature in a cloudless sky, and when I discover symbol and metaphor in an epic story.

And just like an epic story, my life will have a conclusion. It will be the coming together of all the incongruent parts. It will be something glorious. But just like a character in an epic story, I will not understand all the events and activities and people who sweep me toward that end.

This place of bewilderment is exactly where I want to be. In this place, I am ready to meet God and to follow his Spirit as it moves. In this place, I can "throw away" expensive paint on brown paper canvases. I can park my car on the side of the road and hike through broad green fields. I can serve brothers and sisters of another congregation even if I never meet them. This is a life of incongruence; this is a life of messy and indescribable beauty; this is a life of deep-seated security found only by acknowledging that I belong to God. This is life that is truly *life*. ■



**Michelle Gallagher** is a registered nurse and freelance writer. She plays in a local worship band and is a member of Community CRC in Richmond Hill, Ontario.



## The Belgic Confession: A Good Teacher

**A GOOD TEACHER MUST DO AT LEAST TWO THINGS:** show the student what is not known and make what *is* known more clear and applicable to life. The Belgic Confession does both.

What is the Belgic Confession? The Belgic is a statement and explanation of the Christian faith from the Reformed perspective written by Guido de Brès in 1561. Guido wrote the confession in the Belgium/Netherlands region during the turmoil of the Reformation when Roman Catholic kings were trying to stamp out the new movement with torture and executions. He wrote the confession to teach reforming believers, to unify the growing number of Reformers, and to show Roman Catholic leaders that the newly developing Reformed faith was biblical and consistent with the central teachings of the church through the ages.

The confession successfully taught and unified the Reformation believers, but the Roman Catholic leaders were not convinced and continued to persecute and kill Reformers. Guido stated that he and those supporting the confession would put their “backs to the stripes, tongues to knives, mouths to gags and bodies to the flames rather than deny the truth of this confession.”

His testimony was self-fulfilling. He was executed for writing the Belgic Confession.

The Belgic is an excellent teacher because it explains the key teachings of the Bible. Assuming I include background information, I can give the confession to a new believer who wants to know the central teachings of Scripture. Everything you always wanted to know about the basics of the Reformed faith are at your fingertips. And the confession is a good teacher for experienced believers. Why? Because it organizes the key doctrines of the church into a “logical” order to help us see how they fit together.

The confession consists of 37 sections or “articles.” After a statement regarding God (Article 1), the confession moves into a study of Scripture. The Christian understanding of Scripture is the opening doctrine of the Belgic because Scripture is the foundation for all the doctrines that follow. After Scripture the confession studies the doctrine of God. “God” is the next doctrine because the focus of Reformed thinking is the “sovereignty of God.” The next “logical” step after the study of God is the study of “man” (humanity), the crown of God’s creation.

It explains  
the **key teachings**  
of the Bible.

But humanity is separated from God (by sin), so the next doctrine to study is that of Jesus Christ, the “bridge” between God and humanity. The study of Christ is immediately followed by the study of salvation—how Jesus saves and reconnects us to God.

Then the confession seems to ask, “Who are these saved people, and how do they interact?” So it moves into a study of the church, including the nature of the sacraments and the believer’s relation to civil government.

The confession ends with the “last things”: the second coming of Jesus, Judgment Day, and eternity. All is clear and organized. It is, indeed, a good teacher. ■

### A Controversial Synod

Guido de Brès wrote the Belgic Confession in 1561. Several years later, in 1566, a controversial synod of Reformed leaders was called, seemingly with the sole goal of changing Article 36 on civil government. Guido wanted the church separated from the “sword” of the state. Others wanted the church to accept the state as the legal power enforcing the doctrines and demands of the church.

The legitimacy of this hastily called (or “occult”) synod has been seriously questioned. The debate over Article 36 has existed since 1566; the dispute came up again at the Synod of Dort in 1618-1619. Our newest *Psalter Hymnal* uses de Brès’ original Article 36 and includes the altered version from 1566 in a footnote.

—Information gathered from a series of Banner articles on the Belgic Confession written by Rev. Leonard Verduin, Jan. 4 through May 2, 1980, “The Career of a Creed.”



Lew Vander Meer teaches religion and sociology at Grand Rapids (Mich.) Christian High School and communication at Calvin College. He is senior pastor of New Community Church in Grand Rapids.

## Advertising Information

**Deadlines:** Sept. issue is 8/2/10. Oct. issue is 9/6/10. Visit [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org) for complete details.

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

**To Advertise:** Place your classified ad online at [www.TheBanner.org/classifieds](http://www.TheBanner.org/classifieds). If you are unable to submit your ad online you may continue to email it to [classifieds@TheBanner.org](mailto: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

### Announcement of Candidacy

**SYNOD 2010** has approved a one-year extension of candidacy for the following candidates: Joshua S. Benton, Steven G. Boersma, Micah J. Bruxvoort, Samantha L. DeJong-McCarron, Jason E. De Vries, Jeffrey A. Dephouse, Adam T. Eisenga, Chelsey L. Harmon, Mark E. Hofman, Linda A. Johnson, Lucas R. Lockard, Nathan A. McCarron, Philip Rushton, David A. Salverda, Ryan S. Schreiber, Brittney E. Stelpstra Salverda, David P. Stockdale, Brian D. Tebben, Thomas S. Vanderploeg, Brian Willats, and Anne Emile Zaki.

### Available for Call

**REV. KEVIN VRYHOF** is available for call. By August 15, 2010 he will have completed a Clinical Pastoral Education Residency at Iowa Methodist Medical Center, Des Moines, Iowa. He can be reached by email ([kjvryhof@yahoo.com](mailto:kjvryhof@yahoo.com)) or by phone ((515) 661-2077).

### Meetings of Classis

**CLASSIS GEORGETOWN** will hold its Sept. 2010 meeting at the Messiah CRC of Hudsonville, Mich. The meeting will begin at 8:30 AM. All items for the agenda must be received by Aug. 6, 2010.

Harold Postma, S. C.

**CLASSIS HOLLAND** will meet in regular session September 16, 2010 at Faith CRC, Holland, MI. Agenda items are due by August 5, 2010 and should be sent to: Rev. Tony Louwse, Stated Clerk, Fax: 616-494-6054, email: [louwse@macatawa.org](mailto:louwse@macatawa.org)

**CLASSIS OF THE HEARTLAND** will meet in regular session on Saturday, October 16, 2010, at the Christian Reformed Church in Ocheyedan, Iowa. Please note the change of date from September to October. Please forward all items for inclusion in the agenda to me by August 20, 2010.

Rev. David Heilman, Stated Clerk.

**CLASSIS ZEELAND** will meet on Thursday, September 23, 4PM, at the First CRC of Allendale. Agenda deadline is August 12.

## Congregational Announcements

**THE DRENTHÉ CRC** wishes to congratulate Pastor Jim and Brenda Busscher as they celebrate 25 Years of ordained ministry and marriage. We praise God with them for His faithfulness and wish Jim and Brenda God's continued blessings in the years to come.

**VACATIONING IN THE LUDINGTON** area this summer? Come worship with us Saturday nights at 5:30. It's casual. It's contemporary. Lakeside Chapel, 301 N. Washington, Ludington, MI 49431. Phone (231) 843-9515.

### Retirement

**RETIREMENT CELEBRATION** Covenant CRC of Woodstock, ON Canada announces the retirement of our Associate Pastor, Rev. Gerald Hogeterp, after 41 years of service. Rev. Hogeterp and his wife Jackie faithfully served churches in High River, First Chilliwack, Bethel Saskatchewan, Calvary Ottawa and Covenant Woodstock and served as missionaries with Christian Reformed World Missions in Nigeria. An evening of celebration is planned for Saturday, August 28, 2010 with dinner and a program. Rev. Hogeterp will preach his farewell sermon

in a service of celebration on August 29, 2010. For more information, please contact the church office at [woodcoveadmin@bellnet.ca](mailto:woodcoveadmin@bellnet.ca).

### Church's 50th Anniversary

**PALO ALTO CA** All friends of the Palo Alto Christian Reformed Church are invited to a weekend of praise and remembrance celebrating 50 years of service in Palo Alto. Festivities are planned for Sept. 4 and 5, 2010. For details please call Kim Fiske at 650 493-1152, email [info@pacrc.org](mailto:info@pacrc.org), or search for the church's full name on Facebook.

## Birthdays

### 95th Birthday

**JEANETTE KENBEEK** (VanderWeele) of 53 Old Mill Drive, #6, Holland, MI 49423, will celebrate her 95th birthday on August 28. Her sisters and her brother-in-laws, as well as many nieces and nephews, thank God for her health and vitality.

### 90th Birthday

**DANIEL BRATT**, Lynden, WA celebrated his 90th birthday with family on June 30, 2010. His address is: 706-D 19th St. We praise God for his faithfulness all these years.

**DORIS DEHAAN**, Royal Atrium Inn, Zeeland, MI 49464, widow of Clarence DeHaan, will celebrate her 90th birthday on Aug. 27. Congratulations and love from her children Dave & Bev, Becky & Denny Kempfers, Susan & Bob Beelen, Diane & Jim Lautenbach, MaryEllen & Todd Meulenberg, 20 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. We pray for God's continued blessings on her.



**ABRAM GUNNINK** of 679 Andover St SE, Grand Rapids MI 49509 will celebrate his 90th birthday on August 24, 2010. Husband of 63 years to Margaret (Kort) Gunnink; Father to Larry & Phylis Gunnink, Arvin & Gerda Gunnink, Roger & Irene Gunnink, Verlyn & Kathy Gunnink, Marcia & Bob Ackerman; Grandfather to 12; and Great-grandfather to 17. His life and faith is an inspiration to all.



**ALICE JELTEMA** of 2105 Raybrook SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546, will celebrate her 90th birthday on August 20, 2010 with an open house in her honor from 2-4 pm at Raybrook Estates II. Love and congratulations from her friends and family: children, Douglas (Joyce) Jeltema, MaryBeth (Bob) Zaagman, 10 grandchildren, and 24 great grandchildren. Her husband Jay and daughter Barbara are deceased. Praise God for His faithfulness in her life.

**DENA ROONEY** Rest Haven 3450 Saratoga, Downers Grove, IL 60515, celebrated her 90th birthday on July 16. Her family and friends wish her God's continued blessings. We thank God for you.

## Anniversaries

### 70th Anniversary

**ALKEMA**, Lawrence & Lila (Visser) of 3040 Grenada SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 will celebrate their 70th Anniversary on Aug. 8, 2010 with an Open House on Sat. Aug 7, 2-4 pm at the Woodlawn CRC Ministry Center, 3190 Burton SE, GR (across from Calvin) Praising God with them are their children: Tanya & Steve Sawdy, Greg & Betsy Alkema, Valerie & Larry Hobbie, Laurel & Jim De Graaf, Brad & Linda Alkema; 17 grandchildren & 14 great grandchildren. Please join us! No gifts.

**VANDER BAAN**, Richard and Wilma (Van Gorp). 1717 Maplecrest Road #306, Fort Wayne, IN 46815. Celebrating their Christ-centered marriage that began July 25, 1940. Children: Susan G. Vander Baan, Barbara and Richard Resch; grandchildren and greatgrandchildren: Jonathan and Sophia Van Noord (Jonathan and Stephanie); Matthew and Brenda Resch (Owen); Allison and Sean Breining (Maya).

### 65th Anniversary

**VERSTRATE** Abe & Anna (Hannink) Hudsonville, MI celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary June 27. God bless! Larry & Carol, Mark & Lois, 8 grandchildren, 6 greatgrands.

### 60th Anniversary

**BUSSCHER** Robert & Ruth (Dykstra) Sunset Drive, Fennville, MI 49408 will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on August 4. God is so good! We love you! Carol & Larry, Karen & Rog, Bill & Sandi, Cindy & Randy, 10 grandchildren, 9 greatgrands.

**HOFFMAN**, Boyd & Claudia (Wobbema). Thanks be to God from your loving family for 60 years together! Open house at Calvin CRC from 2-4 on Aug. 15.

**HOFMAN**, John M. and Bertha (Kooy), 4670 Millhaven SE Grand Rapids MI 49548, celebrate their 60th anniversary on August 10. With gratitude to God and love from their children: Marv & Mary Hofman, Ruth & Steve Hofman Venhuizen, Greg & Judy Hofman, Tom & Wendy Hofman; 10 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren

**VANDYKE** Martin and Ruth Ellen (Bult), 3064 S. Columbine St., Denver, CO 80210 will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Aug. 3. Children: Carol and John Overbeck, Lynn and Michael VanHofwegen, Laurel and Darrell Olson, 7 grandchildren, 1 great grandchild.

### 50th Anniversary

**BEUKEMA**, Alvin and Joanne (VanHarmelen) of 2347 Broadway St. Abbotsford, BC Canada V2T 3G6 will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on August 13, 2010 (D. V.) Their children, Peter (Kari), Betty, Veronica (Arnold), Sandra (Dave), Susan (Mark) and their grandchildren: Robert, Caitlin, Jason (Jessica), Taryn, Daniel, Malorie, Stephen, Tim, Amanda, Jessica, Bradley, Luke and Joel and their great grandchild Kallie, thank God for His faithfulness to our family. Congratulations Mom & Dad!

**BIELEMA** With thankfulness to God, Ron and Sally (Heethuis) of 463 Mary Lane, Fremont, MI 49412 will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on August 26, 2010. Their children Dave and Jill (Ben and Lindsay Gandy, Kara, and Kristin), Ken and Jane Wolffis (Jon, Emily, Lizzie, and Becca), Bill and Sue Morren ((Blake, Elise, and Macy in the arms of Jesus), Jessa, Brynna, and Lindy)) praise God for their example and His faithfulness.



**ESSENBURG** Milton & Gladys (Kotman), Aug. 18. 134 Cypress, Holland, MI 49423. Congratulations and love from Mark & Sheri Bennink (Laura and Matthew). Open House at Holland Heights CRC on Sat., Aug. 21 from 2-4 PM.

**MEYER**, Carl and LaVonne (Hoekstra), of Raymond, MN will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on August 11, 2010. Congratulations from your children and grandchildren.

**STOB**, Warren and Jean (Dykstra), 3849 Piute Dr., Grandville, MI 49418 will celebrate their 50th anniversary on Aug. 12. Children Shelli and Doug Boomsma, Linda and Geoff Glass, and Jeff and Jane Stob and grandchildren Emily, Betsy, Olivia, Mac, Jared, Victoria, Joe and Jonathan. Congratulations and much love from your whole family. God has blessed us deeply!

**VUGTEVEEN**, Jochem and Marlene, August 23. 1904 Millbank SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508. Children: Jon and Lori, Jane and Bill Bradshaw, Chuck and Linda, Eric and Angelika; 9 grandchildren. All thanks and praise to God!

## Obituaries

**BEADLE**, Martha; aged 81; June 16, 2010; Grand Rapids, MI; She was preceded in death by her husband, Frank Beadle, sister-in-law, Mary Haverkamp, and brother-in-law, Engel Knapper. She is survived by her children: Milton (Mary) Zaagman, Carol (Tom) Spelman of Spring Lake, MI, James (Shirley) Zaagman, Cynthia Slendebroek of Big Rapids, MI; grandchildren: Daniel Zaagman, David Zaagman, Paul (Martha) Spelman, Patrick (Amy) Spelman, Erica (Luke) Jageler, Matthew

Zaagman, Chad Zaagman, Lance (Julie) Zaagman, Albert, William, and Russell Slendebroek; great grandson: Thomas E. Jageler; brothers and sisters: Harvey (Lorraine) Haverkamp, Peter C. Haverkamp, Jack (Jackie) Haverkamp, Christine (Philip) Van Zytveld, Jayne (Gerard) Geelhoek, Anna Knapper.

**BOL**, Jim, age 85; June 11, 2010; 1411 Turpin St., Anchorage, AK, 99504. Survived by his wife Barbara; children Bob and Rachel Bol, Debbie and Doug Norton; grandchildren Andy and Peter.

**BOUMA**, James, age 83, passed away on June 13, 2010; 505 Trosky Rd. W., Edgerton, MN 56128. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Lorraine (Jabaay); children: Pat (Rob) Trathen, James Bouma, Jr., Tom (Arla) Bouma, Becky (Fritz) Polite; 6 grandchildren; 3 great grandchildren; one brother, one sister, many in-laws, nieces and nephews. Preceded in death by five brothers and one sister.

**BRASSER**, Anne H. (Ippel); aged 95; June 30, 2010; She was predeceased by her husband Herbert. She is survived by their children and grandchildren: Marilyn DeKryger Stremmer and Ferrel Stremmer (Camilla and Douglas Lenning, Curtis and Lisa, Todd and Jennifer), Dennis and Mary (Bruce and Cathie, Brian and Heidi, Brad and Carrie) and Jim and Suki (David and Amy, Rebecca, Martha and Jason Roelofs); 22 great grandchildren; brothers: Henry Ippel (Marian), Lester Ippel; sister-in-law: Ruth Zylman Ippel. She was also predeceased by her son-in-law, Clarke DeKryger, four siblings, Peter and Hannah (Hollander) Ippel, Anton and Elizabeth (Ippel) Eggebeen, George and Marie (Ippel) Ten Pas, John Ippel, and sister-in-law, Janet (Vander Puy) Ippel.

**DE BOER**, Bessie (Ooms) age 92 of Lansing, IL went to her heavenly home on May 25, 2010. She was preceded in death by her husband Jan. She is survived by daughters, Becky (Mark) Villeneuve, Mary

(Gregg) Giewartowski and four precious granddaughters. Her smile is forever in our hearts.

**DEN BRABER**, Carl Raymond; aged 87; June 29, 2010; Kentwood, MI; He was preceded in death by his wife, Dorothy, son, John Den Braber, grandson, Jason Brieve, brother and sister-in-law, Robert (Evie) Den Braber, and brother-in-law, John Van Anandel. Surviving are his children: Jim Den Braber, Jeanne (Jim) Gainey, Jerri (Steve) Brieve; grandchildren: Todd (Kim) Den Braber, Sara Gainey (fiance, Raymond Hochsprung), Brian (Amanda) Swets, Jim (Jenna) Gainey, Jeremy (Tiffany) Brieve, Jenn Brieve (fiance, Stefan Kuipers); 5 great grandchildren; sisters: Phyllis Van Anandel and Joanne (Clare) Wuerfel.

**DE VRIES**, Bertha (Buitter) 79; with her Lord on June 15, 2010; Orland Park, IL. Preceded in death by husband Walter and sons John (Denise) and Robert. Survived by daughters Anne (Wayne) Wierenga, Jean Voss, Karen (David) Van Zytveld, and Susan. 13 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Beppe will be dearly missed!

**HUIZINGH**, Josephine R. (Van Houten); aged 86; July 1, 2010; 3539 Whispering Brook Dr. SE, Kentwood, MI 49508; Surviving are her husband: Marvin; children: Mark (Barb) Huizingh, Lorel (John) Baatenburg, Jeanne (Dan) Van Pernis, Luanne (Ed) Boorsma and Steve (Lynn) Huizingh; grandchildren: Todd (Kara) Huizingh, Mike Huizingh, Ben (Jen) Huizingh, Nicole (Rich) Williams, Jeff (Katie) Baatenburg, Randy Baatenburg, Matt (Stephanie) Van Pernis, Jon (Jenn) Van Pernis, Tom (Kelsey) Van Pernis, Betsey Boorsma, Amy Boorsma, Audra Boorsma, David Huizingh and Lora Huizingh; 12 great grandchildren; sister: Ruthe (Elmer) Toonstra, brother: Dave (Linda) Van Houten; sisters-in-law: Bertha (Harold) Lucas, Marilyn (Jerry) Purcell, Shirley (Bill) Ten Have; brothers-in-law: Harold Datema, Dale Sikkenga.

## Church Positions Available

**WORSHIP DIRECTOR** Inglewood Christian Reformed Church in Edmonton, Alberta is looking for a part-time Worship Director. Visit the Worship Director Job Description Link at [www.inglewoodcrc.org](http://www.inglewoodcrc.org) for more information.

**WORSHIP DIRECTOR:** Heritage Christian Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, MI is seeking a part-time worship director to develop and lead the worship ministry. The applicant must be committed to a blended worship experience, proficient on the piano and able to take the lead in worship planning. The position is for up to 20 hours per week. For more information on this position and to submit a resume and cover letter please contact the church office at [church.office@heritagecerc.org](mailto:church.office@heritagecerc.org) or (269) 372-3830.

**PASTOR OF PASTORAL CARE** Prairie Edge CRC of Portage, MI is seeking an ordained pastor in the CRC or RCA (possibly retired) to fill a part-time position (40 hours/month) of ministering to our elderly, sick, and widowed. A full job description is available at [pccr.org](http://www.pccr.org) or from Tom VandenBerg at 269-207-4024 or [tvandenber@mallcitycontainers.co](mailto:tvandenber@mallcitycontainers.co)

**ANN ARBOR CRC** The Ann Arbor CRC (Michigan) has an exciting ministry opportunity for a full-time pastor. We are looking for a qualified person to join our pastoral team which ministers to the whole congregation. We are looking for a pastor to take on primary responsibility for the needs of family and youth. He/she will partner with our Pastor of Worship Ministries including shared worship leading and some preaching. The job description comes with built-in flexibility to shape the position, based on the selected candidate's gifts and interests. To learn more, please visit: <http://www.aacrc.org/about/pastor-position>, e-mail [AACRCPastorSearch@aacrc.org](mailto:AACRCPastorSearch@aacrc.org), or call Ross at 734-945-0683.

**WILLARD CRC** located in the quaint village of Celeryville just south of Willard OH is actively seeking a full-time pastor. We are a congregation of about 70 families who are involved with active church life and Christian education. We are looking for a caring leader who will lead us in Bible-based preaching, nurture our multigenerational members and encourage and enable our congregation to continue in spiritual and congregational growth. We are a rural community in

the heart of agricultural Ohio. We are not far from Lake Erie and are on the edge of an industrial community. For more information and to obtain our church profile, please send inquiries to Willard Christian Reformed Church, attn: Allison Wiers, Secretary of the Search Committee, 4163 Broadway Rd, Willard, Oh 44890

**PIANIST** Rockford Springs Community Church in Rockford is looking for a Pianist. Duties include accompanying hymn singing, providing music at the Offertory, during Communion, as prelude and postlude to the worship service and at other appropriate times during Sunday worship (am and pm). The Pianist will also play at special services (Thanksgiving and Christmas eve), and will require practice and performance with the Praise Team (generally every week) The Pianist should also be available to practice with musicians for special occasions. To set up an appointment, please call Carol at 616-696-3656.

**WORSHIP LEADER:** Munster (Christian Reformed) Church, Munster, In. Plan and lead blended morning worship services. Work with Pastor, praise team and other music ministries. Music expertise is required and ability to assist with visual technology a plus. The ability to accept additional responsibilities in other areas may result in full time position. Send resume and DVD/CD demonstrating musical qualifications to: MCRC Worship Committee, 214 Ridge Road, Munster, In 46321 or [randy@siteservicesonline.com](mailto:randy@siteservicesonline.com)

**TRINITY CRC** in Rock Valley, IA is seeking a Pastor of Worship with a passion for the Lord and His ministry. The Worship Pastor serves in a team ministry along with the Shepherding Pastor and Director of Ministry. Primary responsibilities are preaching, teaching, and pastoral care while working in a co-pastor environment with the Shepherding Pastor. We are a congregation of 851 members motivated by God's love for us and a hurting world. Seeking a pastor to encourage us to teach of God through His Word and equip us to serve others to the praise of God. If you feel the Spirit leading you to inquire more about this position see our website [www.trinitycerc.com](http://www.trinitycerc.com) or contact Brad Vis at [bvis@rockvalleychristian.com](mailto:bvis@rockvalleychristian.com).

**DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP & ARTS** (Full-time) Hillside Community Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan is seeking a person gifted and experienced to lead contemporary focused worship ministries that

bring glory to God and encourage and shape believers. Hillside Community Church, 1440 68th St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508 (616) 698-0122 [www.hillsidech.org](http://www.hillsidech.org) Email: [kkohlhoff@hillsidech.org](mailto:kkohlhoff@hillsidech.org)

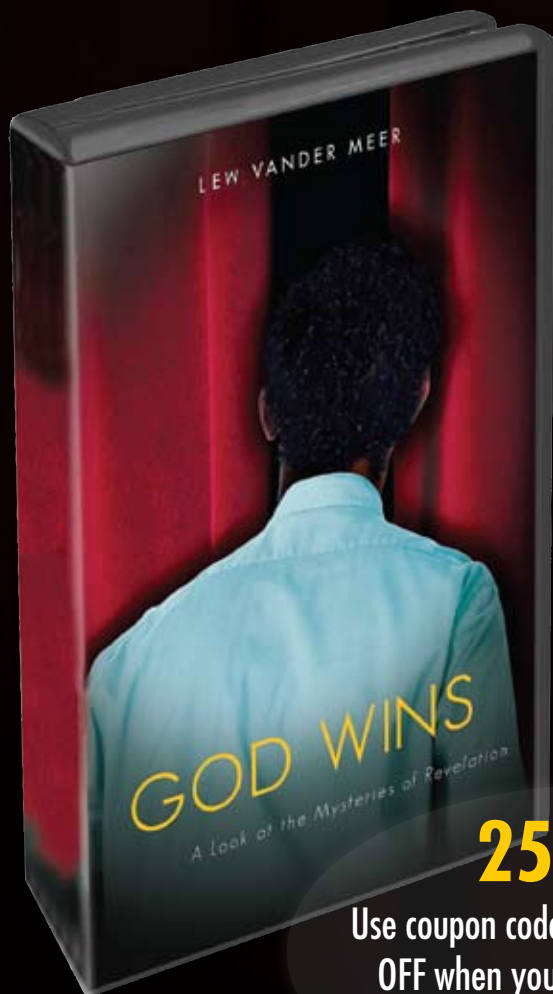
**MINISTER OF ADMINISTRATION** Church of the Servant in Grand Rapids, invites applications for a new half-time position of Minister of Administration. This person will, in concert with the Senior Pastor and the other ministerial staff, help to coordinate creatively the various ministries of the church and will supervise the church's overall administration. This position assumes strong managerial skills and, while not requiring ordination, requires the biblical, theological, and spiritual sensitivity necessary to grasp and implement the vision and initiatives of the church. For further information, including a full job description, contact Stephen Monsma at [svmonsma@sbcglobal.net](mailto:svmonsma@sbcglobal.net) or consult the church's website (<http://www.churchoftheservantcerc.org>). Letters of application and resumes should be sent to Monsma at his email address or 2605 Golfridge Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546

**CHOIR ACCOMPANIST:** Seymour CRC of Grand Rapids is in need of a Sanctuary Choir accompanist for the 2010-2011 season. For a job description and details, please contact Ilene Woldhuis at 616-262-0324 [woldhuis@wmis.net](mailto:woldhuis@wmis.net).

**SONRISE CRC** of Ponoka, Alberta, is looking for an energetic full time pastor with a passion for youth and young adult ministry. Sunrise is a growing congregation with about 75 families. Ponoka is a rural community located in Central Alberta. A church profile is available from the search committee by contacting Hendrik deGier at [hjdegier@xplornet.com](mailto:hjdegier@xplornet.com) or phone 403-783-4501.

**SENIOR PASTOR, WHEATON, IL CRC** After 22 years of faithful service, our pastor John Schuurman will be retiring in April 2011. We are seeking a dynamic and experienced pastor with strong preaching skills to lead this energetic and active church of 300 members. Located in Chicago's far west suburbs next to Wheaton College, WCRC is committed to sound Biblical teaching, spiritual growth of its members, community outreach and missions. If interested, please contact us at [searchcommittee@wccr.org](mailto:searchcommittee@wccr.org).

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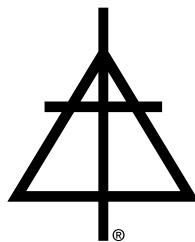


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## Director of Home Missions

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) is seeking a new **Director of Home Missions**. Home Missions plays a vital role for our denomination in its mission through multiplying new churches and campus ministries, cultivating diverse missional leaders and helping churches discern their place in God's mission.



This visionary leader will serve as the voice of Home Missions—giving leadership to the CRCNA in its task of transforming lives and communities in North America. He or she will discern and articulate the vision of Home Missions and develop local, national and global strategic partnerships to advance God's mission.

Successful candidates will have demonstrated skills in casting vision and thinking strategically. The candidate will be a strong communicator, an experienced Christian leader providing strong team leadership, and a skilled manager. Applicants should be able to demonstrate a commitment to racial reconciliation and to the growth of the CRC as a multicultural denomination, be devoted to Jesus Christ, and be a person of exemplary Christian character who practices the spiritual disciplines and is in good standing in the Christian Reformed Church.

We invite you to pray for, participate in, and partner with Home Missions in this search process. A complete job description is available on our web site at [www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org) under *About the CRC*. To apply send cover letter and resume to [hmsearch@crcna.org](mailto:hmsearch@crcna.org) no later than **September 30, 2010**.

**NATELBORG**, Marian A. (Witteveen), age 92, June 1, 2010. She was preceded in death by her husband of 67 years, Clarence. She is survived by one brother, Leon (Hermina) Witteveen and one sister-in-law, Jo Witteveen; 4 children; Ken (Sharon), Ed (Marie), Phyllis (Bob) Kerr, and Don; 6 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren.

**TIMMERMAN**, Mrs. Agnes M.; aged 98; June 20, 2010; 3820 N. Big Spring Dr. S. W., Grandville, MI 49418; She was preceded in death by her parents, Jacob and Minnie Meerse, husband, James, and sisters, Lavene Meerse and Marie De Roo. She is survived by daughters: Marie (Thomas) O'Hara and Wilma (Tom) Lotterman; grandchildren: Daniel (Denise) O'Hara, Dorothy (Thomas) Cantrell, Christopher O'Hara, Geoffrey (Jennifer) Lotterman, Brent (Carrie) Lotterman; great grandchildren: Sara and Priscilla O'Hara, Allison, Jack, and Luke Cantrell, Isabella, Ellie, and Dylan Lotterman, Braeden and Chloe Lotterman.

**VANDER ARK-VOSS**, Evelyn; age 98, of Fremont, MI; died June 23, 2010. Preceded in death by husbands Norm Vander Ark and Bernard Voss, daughter Ardyce, and grandson Rourke Vande Creek. Children: Celia and Larry Vande Creek, Nolan and Joey Vander Ark, Glenn and Donna Vander Ark. 8 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren.

**VANDERPOL**, Henrietta, age 88, died June 10, 2010, in Boulder, Colorado. She was born December 9, 1921, in Pella, Iowa, to Marinus and Jennie Ver Steegt Franje. She married Harold VanDerPol December 10, 1941, in Pella, Iowa. She moved to Boulder in January 1974. Mrs. VanDerPol was a homemaker and worked in retail sales. She enjoyed quilting, entertaining house guests and helping others when needed. Survivors include three sons, John C. (Sharon) VanderPol of Boulder, Marvin W. (Francene) of Lakewood and Arlan R. (Alice) VanDerPol of Rapid City, SD; three adopted sons, Truyen Nguyen, Phuong Nguyen and Luong Nguyen, formerly of Vietnam; 9 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. She was a member of Crestview CRC in Boulder.

**VONHOF-EINFELD**, Hildred, of Ripon, CA, went to be with her Lord on May 18, 2010. She was born January 10, 1922, in Vesper, WI. In 1944, she married Robert Vonhof, who died in 1963, and is survived by her 2nd husband, Rev. Frank Einfeld (a retired CRC pastor). She was the oldest daughter of Edith and John Vanden Hoek (a CRC pastor). Her brother Julius Vanden Hoek was also a CRC pastor. She was a member of the Alameda CRC for over 50 years.

**ZOETEWY**, Martha (Postma) age 90, holding her Savior's hand and surrounded by her family's love and prayers, passed away on May 26, 2010. Motts is survived by her dear husband Chris, her children, Anne Paige (Dave) Cady, Jon C. (Cathy), Christie (Ken) Pals, and Jill (Dave) Bielema, 12 grand children and 2 great grand children, sister Kay, and brother Bill, and preceded in death by her sisters, Jess and Jeanette. Her life of faithful service to Jesus Christ was an example to many.

## Employment

**CAREGIVERS NEEDED** Are you interested in working for the best living assistance services company in West Michigan? Visiting Angels is looking for people who can be excellent, not average; make a connection with our clients; be perfectly dependable; practice compassion and work with integrity. Contact Heather at 616-243-7080 or [heather@vangels.com](mailto:heather@vangels.com) or visit our website at [www.vangels.com](http://www.vangels.com) and complete an online application.

The CRC in NA is seeking a new **DIRECTOR OF LOAN FUND** based in Grand Rapids, MI. This position will manage lending programs and real estate holdings for the Loan Fund and Home Missions. A Bachelor's degree and 5 years minimum experience in commercial real estate lending or a closely related field is required. Visit [www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org) for more information. Deadline is August 27, 2010.

## Real Estate: Sales and Rental

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**COCOA BEACH, FL TIMESHARE** Ocean Front Condo: 2bd, 2ba, full kit, sleeps 6 for 1wk per yr. Sell \$11,000 negotiable, Rent \$800. Info & pict: google "RiiStroman" 708-560-0545

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**OCEANFRONT CONDO RENTALS,** 2BR/2BA New Smyrna Beach, FL (Units 403, 501, 503), Daily, Weekly, Monthly rates. Reference Banner ad for 10% discount. 800-874-1931 or [OBCRENTALS.COM](http://OBCRENTALS.COM).

**ORLANDO CONDO RENTALS** in Ventura Golf Resort. Fully equipped; close to Disney; sleeps 6. Call 616/318-7248; <http://dslobe.home.comcast.net>

**BASEMENT ROOM FOR RENT:** Includes private bath, utilities and meals. About 5 miles from Calvin College. \$350/month. Nice family. [cheri-ken@hotmail.com](mailto:cheri-ken@hotmail.com)

**COTTAGE FOR RENT** Hess Lake, Newaygo, MI. 4 bedrooms, 3 baths. Sleeps 12. \$1300/week. Call Lonnie at 616-942-0048.

**WEEKLY RENTAL:** Douglas/Saugatuck, MI: Walk to the beaches of Lake Michigan from this Newly remodeled Vacation Home, 7Br, 4Ba-comfortably sleeps up to 14. Call Ken @ 630-268-1531 or email [Groenjk@aol.com](mailto:Groenjk@aol.com) for info.

**COTTAGE FOR RENT** all-sport lake 1 hour north of Grand Rapids. Swimming, boating, fishing, 2 kayaks, laundry, 6 bedrooms. Sleeps 16. \$1800. Off-season, 6 people, \$1000. Partial week rates available. 269-998-2991

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**FOR SALE** Brand new lakefront cottage on all-sports Eagle Lake in PawPaw, MI. 2 bed, 1 bath, large living room with great view. \$85,000. Call Mike at 708-372-9373 or [melissalich@yahoo.com](mailto:melissalich@yahoo.com)

**FOR SALE JENISON.** Condo in Boulder Bluff Hi Rise. 2nd floor. HDCP Bath. 2 Bed rms. Stainless steel appl. To See Call 667-8724

**BEAUFORT, NC:** 1br furnished cottages for wkly/mo rental in historic coastal town, near beaches, w/d, TV, internet, grill, bikes. [www.theshellcottage.com](http://www.theshellcottage.com); 252-504-6262

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## Travel



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**PILGRIMAGE TO ISRAEL** March 28 - April 8, 2011 led by Pastor Bill and Lyn Vanden Bosch. A "disciple's pilgrimage," following in the footsteps of Jesus to understand the Gospels and the early church in its historical, geographical, and cultural context, and also increase our commitment to wholeheartedly respond to His invitation to "Follow Me." Visit New Testament sites in Galilee, along the Jordan Valley, and Jerusalem. In addition to having led other groups to Israel, the Vanden Bosch's have studied in Israel at Jerusalem University College and under the leadership of Ray VanderLaan, Director of "In the Dust of the Rabbi" ministries and the teacher of the "That The World May Know" video series. For more information, contact Pastor Bill at (616) 826-1927, [william.vandenbosch@gmail.com](mailto:william.vandenbosch@gmail.com) or visit his website at <http://web.mac.com/lynvdb/Israel>. Arrangements by Witte Travel & Tours, a leader in spiritual journeys since 1975. Early booking discount of \$100 pp for applications received by September 1.

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## Miscellaneous

**SEEKING MINISTRY:** Returning from missions in Europe, from 1st Sept, Pastor Frank Guter, eligible for CRC call, looking for full-time or part-time position. Mrs. Hilary Guter, accomplished organist and/or pianist and/or choir director also available for full- or part-time. Willing to accept two 1/2-time positions, in any kind of ministry. Reply to [fcalguter@hotmail.com](mailto:fcalguter@hotmail.com) or c/o Marlene Guter, 239 Bristol Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

**4 ADJOINING GRAVE SITES** in Garden of Benediction, Rosedale Memorial Park, GR, Mi. Paid \$900 ea Make offer 941-792-0282 [hoeksema@ix.netcom.com](mailto:hoeksema@ix.netcom.com)

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# Punch Lines

Got a photo of something funny related to Reformed history, culture, or tradition? Send it to *The Banner* and you might see it in print! You can email photos to [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org) or send them to 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560.

Several years ago, Billy Graham was returning to Charlotte, N.C., after a speaking engagement. When his plane landed, a limousine was waiting to transport him to his home.

"You know," he said to the driver, "I'm 85 years old, and I've never driven a limousine. Would you mind if I drove it for a while?"

"No problem," the driver said. "Have at it." The two headed off down the highway.

A short distance down the road sat a rookie state trooper operating his first speed trap. When the long black limo sped by him doing 70

in a 55 mph zone, the trooper quickly pulled it over.

When the window was rolled down, the trooper was surprised to see who was driving. He immediately excused himself, went back to his car, and called his supervisor.

"I know we're supposed to enforce the law," he told the supervisor. "But I also know that important people are sometimes given certain courtesies. I need to know what I should do, because I have stopped a very important person."

"Is it the governor?" the supervisor asked

"No," said the trooper, "someone more important than that."

"Oh, so it's the president?"

"No, even more important than that."

"Well, then, who is it?" the supervisor finally asked.

The trooper answered, "I think it's Jesus, because he's got Billy Graham for a chauffeur!"

—Johanna Zomermaand

A little girl was watching her father, a pastor, write a sermon.

"How do you know what to say?" she asked.

"Why, God tells me."

"Oh. Then why do you keep crossing things out?"

—Ray DeVries

My friend's great-grandson Joey was excited about having a birthday. Talking to his great-grandmother, he told her, "I'm 6 now. How old are you?"

"Well, I'm 78," Great-grandma replied.

"Seventy-eight!" exclaimed Joey in astonishment. "Why, Grandma, you should be in heaven!"

—Hildy Van Dyken

A friend told me that people on a Calvin College listserv have been discussing "self help" and Christianity. One of them posted the following:

Bookstore Customer: "Could you point me toward the self-help section?"

Bookstore Clerk: "I could, but that would defeat the purpose."

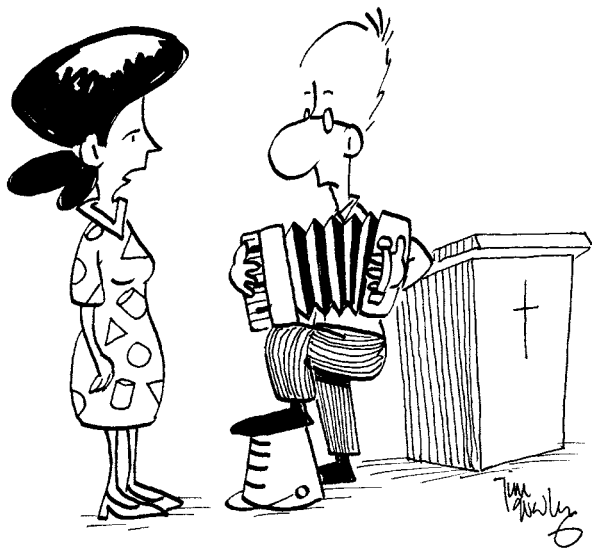
—George Vander Weit

## Send Us Your Photos!

Lee and Judy Hardy of Eastern Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich., spotted this unusual juxtaposition in Paris at the intersection of the Rue Mouffetard, a well-known market street, and Rue Jean Calvin ("John Calvin Street"). Lee had been invited to speak to several groups at the American Church in Paris on the topic of vocation.



LEE HARDY



"I'm sorry, Stan, but when the organist is sick we prefer to sing a capella."



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