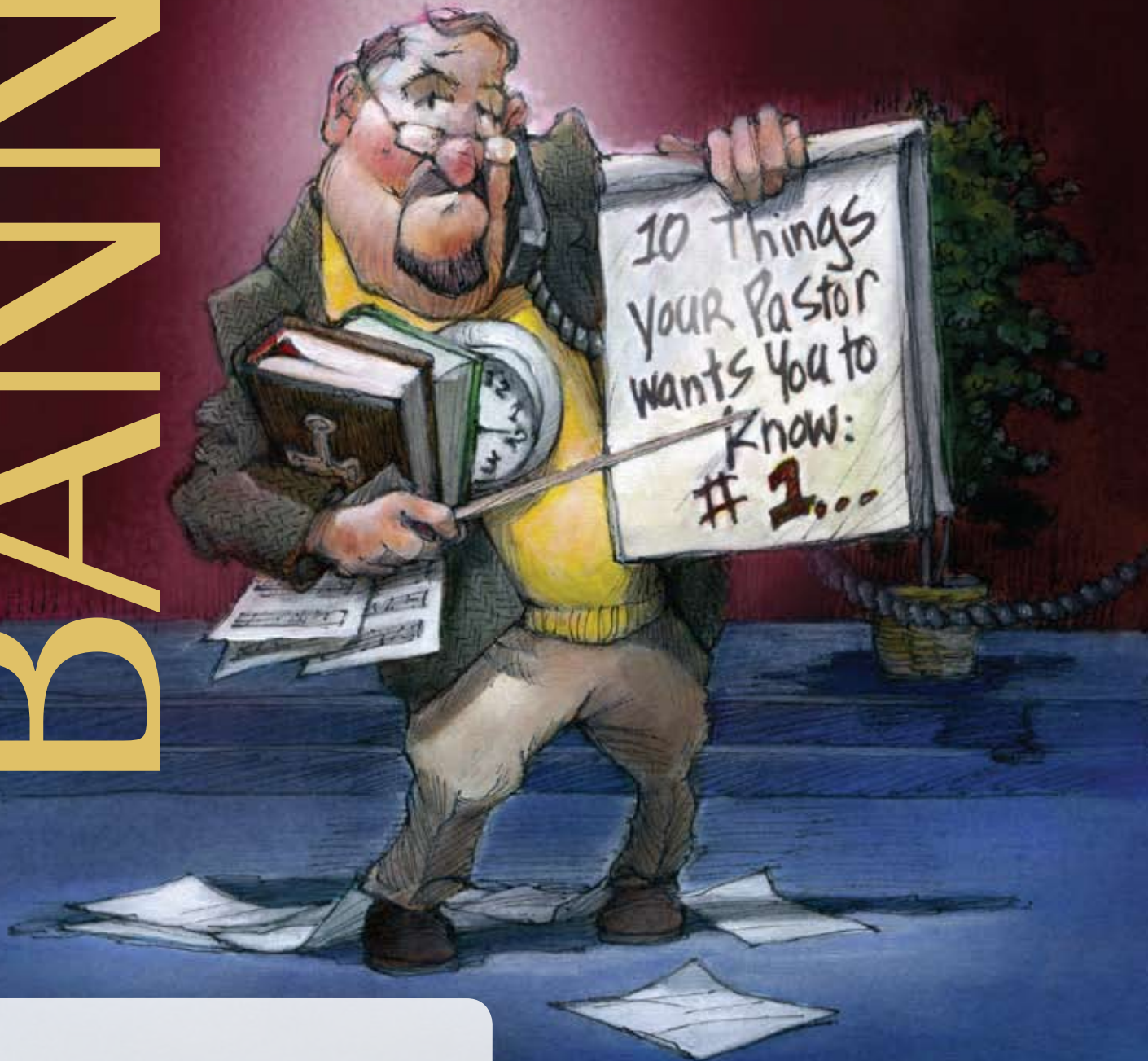


²⁰ What If IT Happens in Your Church?

⁴¹ Supporting Public Education

²⁴ Specialized Ministries in the CRC

³⁸ A Pastor's List



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Genesis 6:5-22;
7:13-14 **11**



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Genesis 37:1-36;
39:1-2 **20**



GOD'S BIG STORY
Joseph the Dreamer

Exodus 1:8-12, 22;
21:1-10 **24**



GOD'S BIG STORY
Baby Moses

Retell: Color in with imagination! It was stained red with blood, but it was a country field and became a stone tablet! **Wonder:** Who was in the bottom? Who was on top? Who do you list for difficult places? **Pray:** How many cot (15 seconds)? Praise you and for all the sheep! **Share:** Can you think of a time when you did up being good? **Respond:** Judah's solution to sell Joseph and for all the sheep. **Share:** Think of one thing you do to improve the situation of another.

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GOD'S BIG STORY



Imagine... The Birth of Isaac



God will always love

Marvel... The Lost Sheep



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God's Mission
My Prayer

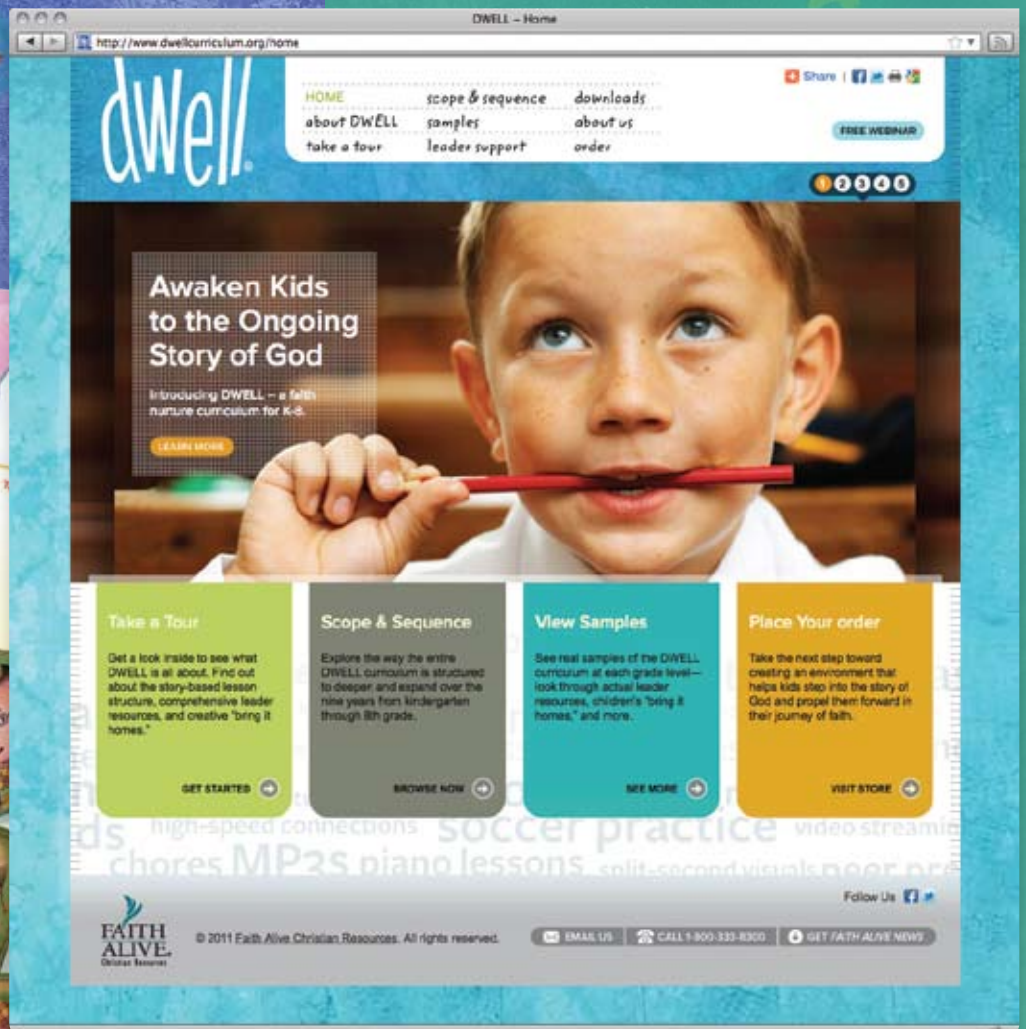
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Specialized Ministries address a variety of needs in the CRC.



Of Justice in an iPad Age

A SATURDAY EVENING IN NOVEMBER, with wet snow splattering Edmonton. Settled in comfortable pew. Eagerly anticipating solo recitation of Ecclesiastes. I *like* Ecclesiastes. Will be good.

Trying to doff coat, grab for keys in pocket. Not there. Fear. Where, oh where? Oh, yes. Used single key for car and put in pants pocket. Still there. But locked house with key on ring. No ring. More fear. Left keys in door lock? Dropped on way to car? Fell out of pocket in car? Can't enjoy Ecclesiastes while burglar finds keys and ransacks house.

Tiptoe out of sanctuary; check car. No keys! Rush home with pedal to metal. Find keys on sidewalk. Yay! Slip back in before soloist is halfway thru chapter 2. Stomp on toes. No problem. Not my toes.

Fast-forward to December. Reap what I sowed back in November when I pressed pedal to metal. Letter carrier fires *two* photo radar tickets through mail slot. *Same* sin caught on two cameras just a kilometer apart. Not fair getting punished twice for same infraction.

Call nice lady at city hall. Agrees: not fair. Advises: attend hearing, give judge piece of my mind. Judge sure to cancel one ticket.

I protest. Will take all day to drive downtown, wait hours for case, vent spleen in sinner's pit, drive home. All for lousy \$89 ticket.

Even bigger problem. Was driving *wife's* car. Photo radar sees license plate, not driver. Driver responsible. I tell wife: go fight ticket. She reads me riot act. Numbskull for losing keys, sneaking out, speeding in *her* car, and now asking her to take day off work for lousy \$89. Me nuts?

I protest to wife: not fair getting nailed two times for same sin. Suppose *1,000* cameras on that stretch. Pay \$89,000 for minor indiscretion? She empathizes. Poor baby, but get real. She won't go downtown. I sin, I fix.

I pout. Use handy-dandy return SASE to plead guilty to *both* tickets and pay, though punished twice for same sin. Unjust. Sulk all the way to mailbox.

Fast-forward another five months. Letter carrier pops *check* from city through mail slot. Surprised. City *never* giveth, only ever taketh away. Photo radar machine wonky. Some other dude drove downtown, waited hours for case, vented spleen in sinner's pit, and drove home. Saved \$89 and nailed city. Court ordered refund to *all* tickets from that type of machine. Now city out a lot more than \$89.

I know *I* was speeding. Deserved ticket, unlike righteous dude. But deserved *one* ticket. Ended up with *one* ticket. Fair. Somehow. Go figure.

Despite our best efforts, human justice is often a comedy of errors. But now and again it works despite itself. So let's never stop trying for it—whether it's at home, in the community, at work, in church, or overseas.

But don't ever forget the wisdom of Ecclesiastes either: "Moreover I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, wickedness was there. . . . I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for he has appointed a time for every matter, and for every work" (3:16-17, NRSV).

Let your heart speak that comfort too, especially when lack of justice ruins entire lives instead of ding-ing you \$89. ■



Rev. Bob De Moor is editor of *The Banner*, pastor of preaching and administration for West End CRC, Edmonton, Alberta, and an occasional numbskull (his words).

Despite our
best efforts,
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is often a
comedy of
errors.

Bob De Moor Editor

Henry Hess Editor, Church@Work

Dean R. Heetderks Art Director

Joyce Kane Managing Editor

Jena Vander Ploeg Features Editor

Gayla R. Postma News Editor

Kristy Quist Tuned In Editor

Sandy Swartzentruber Copy Editor

Pete Euwema Graphic Design

Frank Gutbrod Graphic Design

Shelli Lokers-Calanchi Marketing
Manager

Contact Us

2850 Kalamazoo Avenue SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49560

Address Changes and Subscriptions

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www.thebanner.org

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Editorial

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News

613-543-3603 news@thebanner.org

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Day off . . . or Sabbath?



S SOMEONE WHO works most weekends and just about every Sunday night, I've developed the good discipline of taking Mondays off. I don't

go into the office; I don't check email; I avoid work-related reading.

Instead, I run errands, do laundry, get home projects done, and check things off my to-do list. Which means that I come to the end of Monday tired. My house is in order, but my soul feels just as frenzied as it did when I fell into bed late Sunday night.

I was convicted about the difference between a "day off" and a "Sabbath" while reading Eugene Peterson's memoir *The Pastor*. He writes about taking a three-day silent retreat with his wife early in their ministry and speaking with the retreat leader, Douglas Steere, about some spiritual challenges they were encountering.

Like me, they often took Mondays off, only they used the day to go hiking or enjoy a picnic. The retreat leader encouraged them to consider taking a "Sabbath," rather than a "day off."

"A day off," he said, is 'a bastard Sabbath,'" writes Peterson. "He affirmed our commitment to a day of not-doing, a day

of not-working. 'That's a start. You've gotten yourselves out of the way. Why not go all the way: keep the day as a Sabbath, embrace silence, embrace prayer—silence and prayer. Hallow the Name.'"

In response, the Petersons began a Sabbath ritual of prayerful hiking. They would drive to a trailhead, where Jan would read a psalm and pray aloud. Then they would hike in silence, Peterson writes, "an Emmaus-walk silence in which we listened to Jesus." They would break their silence with spoken prayer at lunch, then talk together about what they had heard and seen.

That Sabbath sounds a lot different from a day off. And a lot better.

But even as I write these words I can feel the resistance within me. Then when will I get things done? When will the oil get changed? The groceries bought? The dry-cleaning dropped off?

But stronger than the resistance is the draw. The draw to a morning where I have nowhere to go, nothing to do. The draw to a morning of one more cup of tea, a longer time at prayer. A morning when my heart can listen to Jesus.

Is a trip to Valvoline worth more than that?

For many of us, Sunday is supposed to be our Sabbath. But is it? I had a

parishioner who parodied the hymn title "O Day of Rest and Gladness" by calling Sunday "O Day of Stress and Madness" as he came up the stairs into church, gripping his guitar in one hand and carrying chili fixings for the youth group fundraiser in the other.

If Sunday morning doesn't feel Sabbath-y (and let's be honest: for many of us, it doesn't), could Sunday afternoon? Or maybe Sunday evening? Could we turn off the baseball game, put down the Wii controller, or get off the computer and go for "an Emmaus-walk silence in which we listen to Jesus"? Leave the cell phone on the counter and walk into silence? Or draw? Or journal? Or lie in a hammock, looking up at the leaves and listening to the Spirit's voice on the breeze?

Writer and theologian Marva Dawn once said about her Sabbath, "I got nothing done. Isn't that wonderful?"

"O Day of Rest and Gladness." Sounds good to me. The to-do list can wait till Tuesday. ■



Dr. Mary Hulst is chaplain for Calvin College and teaches at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich.



Six days a week
we wrestle with the world,
wringing profit from the earth;
on the Sabbath
we especially care for the seed of
eternity planted in the soul.

—ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

Responding to 'A Call from the CRC's Young Adults'

OPINION

When I ask them why they've left the CRC, their answers tell of an even bigger disconnect.

IN THE JUNE 2011 BANNER, Chelsey Munneke summarizes a discussion held by passionate young people, which offers a “diagnosis of the disconnect” young people feel with the Christian Reformed Church (“A Call from the CRC’s Young Adults”). Ms. Munneke pointedly asks for churches to make room for the legitimate gifts young people have to offer. Well said, Chelsey.

However, the sad but true context that Munneke writes from is that there has been a mass exodus of young people *out of* the denomination for some time. As a 20-something church planter in West Michigan, my vocation regularly leads me into conversations with young people who’ve given up on the CRC. When I ask them why, their answers tell of an even bigger disconnect. Indeed, few young people have left because of lack of young adult representation in leadership.

The reason that 20-somethings often give me as to why they left? “It just wasn’t for me.”

There’s a lot behind such an answer. Some people report that their home church was for their parents, not them, while many others flatly reply that while growing up they found church boring, unimaginative, or irrelevant.

Surely those aren’t legitimate reasons for walking out on church? No, but that’s also reality.

My observation is that young people who leave the CRC are still likely to join a church, just not a Christian Reformed one. In my area, many choose Ada Bible, Mars Hill, or Resurrection Life. Say what you will about those churches, but they are soaking up all the young adults we drive away.

However, there is hope on the horizon. For a couple generations our denomination emphasized uniformity. When people appreciated traditional church architecture, liturgy, and music, the CRC blossomed. Today people’s tastes are much more diverse.

Some people go to church intensely curious about what the Bible says about families and other felt needs (Ada Bible), others go to church to learn about social justice (Mars Hill), still others go for concert-quality music (Resurrection Life). Together, the churches I mention garner the largest “market share” of young people in my area. They meet the diverse tastes of the latest generation.

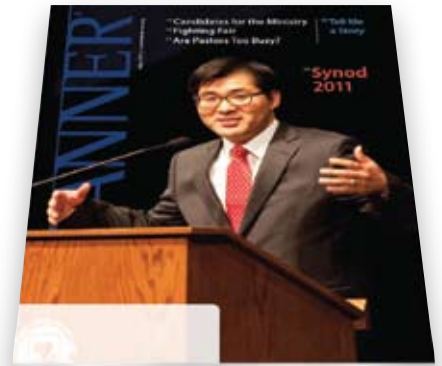
And the hope for the CRC? A new church planting movement is beginning to swell across the United States and Canada. These new church upstarts intentionally reflect the culture in which they are set, yet are counter-cultural enough to speak the gospel into young lives.

We may be a little behind the trends, but by focusing our efforts on starting new churches for new generations, we ensure the succession of our distinctively Reformed denomination through the years. ■



Rev. Dirk VanEyck is church planter of Encounter Church in Kentwood, Mich. Encounter officially launched weekend services

in October 2010. Currently 25 percent of their weekly attendees are age 13 or younger.



Scapegoating

I was struck by the question on scapegoating in your FAQs, June 2011. The answer was a good essay on scapegoating, but what struck me was that the question seemed to be a red herring for the real issue. The scenario described in the question portrays a typical pattern of emotional and religious abuse. The “healthy discussion” recommended by the answer is indeed the proper way to handle such a situation, but it is impossible for a wife to have this healthy discussion with an abusive husband.

—Rebecca

(Last name and location withheld)

Church Structure

Your editorial “Denominational Governance: Time to Get Back to Reformed Basics” (June 2011) indicates a crisis in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. A time of crisis is a time of great opportunities.

To enhance the CRC’s ministries, we need to go back 2,000 years to 1 Corinthians 12-13. In the body there can be no disintegrated (severed) body parts. Each part of the body is nourished by the body—and nourishes the body. In addition the body has a powerful, loving immune system: a responsible concern for each other’s well-being.

LETTERS

This is a new day for CRC integrated ministries. There are highly qualified CRC members who have already implemented the Corinthians way of ministry. This group of diverse agencies prays together, plans together, implements together, and evaluates each other's ministries together—at rapidly growing sites/levels of their organizations. They have discovered the joy and benefits of using the biblical approach above. This is an amazing gift from the Lord that must not be ignored.

—John De Haan
Sierra Vista, Ariz.

Evolving?

The Holy Bible begins with this statement: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” . . .

When we read (and re-read) the Bible and our Reformed confessions, we are encouraged over and over again to believe that God's work of creation was both miraculous and instantaneous. . . . So we were shocked to read in the *Grand Rapids Press* (Sept. 26, 2009) that a Christian Reformed science professor said, “*Evolution* is the paradigm out of which we teach biology [at Calvin College].”

Our correspondence with Calvin College only confirmed our fears: that evolution is indeed the “paradigm” for teaching biology at Calvin—instead of the historic doctrine of creation. How can this be true?

How can we consider adding the Belhar Confession to our Reformed standards when we are having such trouble upholding the doctrines we have subscribed to for generations (“Why the Belhar Should Not Be a Confession,” June 2011)?

—The Council of Lamont CRC
Coopersville, Mich.

Editor's note: This is an excerpted version of the council's letter. The full version is available online at www.thebanner.org.

Our Muslim Neighbors

In his May editorial, “True Dialogue,” *Banner* Editor Bob De Moor challenges us to respond graciously to “Jihad: What Does the Qur'an Really Say?” and “Mash'Allah: Whatever the Will of God” (also in May). I can't help asking why *The Banner* didn't follow his admonition to ask “Have we engaged enough resources to survey the vast range of differences from one Muslim (and Muslim society) to another?”

Instead, *The Banner* cherry-picked one Muslim scholar, skilled in the art of apologetics, to present one point of view—which makes all Muslims look as gentle as lambs.

—Larry Van Otterloo
Prinsburg, Minn.

We need to know that the peaceful verses in the Qur'an quoted by Zacharia Al Khatib (“Jihad”) were “received” by Mohammed in the early part of his life, when he and his followers lived in Mecca and were in the minority and seeking acceptance from their neighbors. Years later, when Mohammed and his followers had moved to Medina and achieved a position of power, he “received” verses that spurred them to use force and violence in dealing with infidels. The early and later verses contradict each other. Islamic scholars resolve the conflict by saying the later verses abrogate the early ones. Consequently, the Qur'an does teach *Jihad* to mean a physical struggle.

—Richard A. Smits
Lansing, Ill.

To quote the May editorial, “Fruitful dialogue doesn't mean we need to agree on everything. But let's forgo the bombast and snotty attitude we learn from the media. . . . Our words . . . must be filled always with grace, especially when we dialogue with and about such folks as

Muslims, homosexual people, six-day creationists, and women clergy.”

As a six-day creationist, let me say that lumping unbiblical, deviant views with biblical creation is highly demeaning; the exact opposite of “true dialogue.” Snotty, indeed.

—Mel Mulder
Banning, Calif.

The brief report “Habib's Story” (May) about Habib and his wife finding salvation and new life in Christ through the Arabic radio programs of Back to God Ministries International is refreshing and encouraging—a stimulus to pray for Habib and millions like him. May the Holy Spirit give the increase.

—Mike Frederiksen
Gallup, N.M.

If we accept the moderate Muslim's claim that Islam is a religion of peace (“Jihad”), then how are we to make sense of “Habib's Story,” in which Habib states, “The community would have forced me to recant my faith in Christ or face death?”

—Janette Schaafsma
Surrey, British Columbia

Please do not confine the discussion of Jihad only to the mild personal exertions of individual Muslim believers. Our allegiance to the truth requires that we also acknowledge the harsh and growing severity of radical Jihad as practiced by Islamic extremists around the world today.

—Dan Flikweert
Kitchener, Ontario

More letters online!

See more letters at www.thebanner.org.

NEWS CORRESPONDENTS

For correspondents' e-mail addresses, see www.thebanner.org.

Gayla R. Postma News Editor
E-mail: gpostma@crcna.org

Sarah J. Boonstra
Classes Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone
303-247-0697

Anita Brinkman
Classes Chatham, Huron
519-354-9126

Jenny deGroot
Classes BC North-West, BC South-East
604-888-5505

Monica deRegt
Classes Hamilton, Niagara, Toronto
905-385-6697

Larry Edsall
Classes Arizona, Red Mesa
602-300-4518

Karen Gorter
Classes Holland, Zeeland
616-399-6123

Melissa Holtrop
Classes Central Plains, Chicago South,
Northern Illinois
708-217-7197

Calvin Hulstein
Classes Atlantic NE, Hackensack, Hudson
860-644-8512

Jonathan J. Kim
Classis Pacific Hammi
626-616-0411

Daina Kraai
Classes Muskegon, Northern Michigan
517-896-8855

Rachel deKoning Kraay
Classes Alberta North, Alberta South &
Saskatchewan
403-782-9917

Noah Kruis
Classes Grand Rapids East, Grand
Rapids North
616-558-8166

Kate Padilla
Classes Iakota, Heartland, Northcentral Iowa
616-834-1476

Ryan Struyk
Classes Grand Rapids South,
Thornapple Valley
616-550-6723

Amy Toornstra
Classes Columbia, Pacific Northwest
503-399-9165

Roxanne Van Farowe
Classis Illiana, Southeast U.S.
919-477-2084

Brenda Visser
Classes Eastern Canada, Quinte
613-924-1792

Heidi Wicker
Classes California South, Central California,
Greater L.A.,
209-599-3799

Michelle Visser Wikkerink
Classes Lake Superior, Minnkota, Wisconsin
204-586-8393

Carolyn Koster Yost
Classes Georgetown, Grandville
616-516-9175

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616-949-4539

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Worship is a highlight for conventioners.

ALL PHOTOS BY ANITA BRINKMAN

Ontario Teens Infused with God's Character

Many teens came to the All-Ontario Youth Convention in Waterloo, Ontario, for the fun.

Between bounce-castle gladiator fights, bands, board games, dance lessons, and swimming, there was something for everyone.

But the real reason for the annual convention shone through: many youths said they had grown closer to God and hoped to share this new excitement with their church and friends.

Samantha Buys, 14, from Burlington, Ontario, headed home



A giant inflated twister game tangled teens.

with renewed commitment. "Every time you go to places to get closer to God, you come back empowered," she said. "I want to bring that back and spread it around to other friends."

This year's convention theme, "Infuse," helped teens learn what it means to be infused with God's character, rather than with what the world offers.

Workshops on topics such as social justice and "No More Entitlement" challenged participants to

look beyond their personal comfort zones.

One goal of the weekend was to help make hunger disappear. Many youths participated in the challenge to walk eight times around the worship area—which added up to about a kilometer—while carrying a 25 kilogram (55 pound) sack of grain.

The teens raised more than \$15,000 during the convention for the work of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.

"So often [at youth events], kids come and praise the Lord and go home and do nothing," said Ray Heeres, the convention worship rep. "These kids continue to amaze me with their passion and their willingness to reach deep into their pockets."

—Anita Brinkman



Bounce-castle gladiator fights helped burn off energy

Calvin Students Bring Freedom to Michigan Boy

Although Isaac Postma, 10, can move only one finger, he is able to zoom around with other fourth graders in his new custom-made power chair.

Four Calvin College engineering students—Dan Evans, Matt Last, Matt Rozema, and Rob VanderVennen—created the device for a senior class project.

Isaac's parents, Arden and Deb, members of Ivanrest Christian Reformed Church in Grandville, Mich., said the new device makes Isaac more comfortable and less susceptible to respiratory infections and choking. Isaac has spinal muscular atrophy.



CAROLYN KOSTER YOST

(L-R) Rob VanderVennen, Dan Evans, and Matt Rozema with Isaac Postma and the power chair they designed for him

The motorized chair allows Isaac to control motion buttons while watching a location-scan-

(L-R) Matt Last, Rob VanderVennen, and Dan Evans with Isaac Postma and the power chair they designed for him

ning screen. And its height makes it easier for Isaac to interact with other people.

"Working with Isaac drove us to do the best we could do," said Evans.

They enhanced Isaac's life along with their own, said Deb, seeing the special need and the abilities God gave them to help.

—Carolyn Koster Yost

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Henry C. Van Wyk

1923-2010

Rev. Henry C. Van Wyk, a World War II veteran, devout pastor and preacher, evangelist at heart, and kindness personified, died from congestive heart failure. He was 87.

Van Wyk served during World War II as a member of the U.S. Marine Corps and drove a truck before entering the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.

Van Wyk graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1957 and served congregations in Minnesota, Illinois, and Michigan. He will be remembered as a quiet, soft-spoken, thoughtful, intelligent servant of his Lord. He was highly esteemed for the wisdom and faithfulness he displayed in his ministry.

Already during his years in college and seminary, Van Wyk was intimately involved in personal evangelism, which became the hallmark of his pastoral service.

Van Wyk's wife, Marilyn, died shortly after he did. They are survived by five children and their spouses, 12 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

—Louis M. Tamminga

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

Ontario Women Gather for Coffee Break Conference

"The entire day was a love letter from God. I was greatly encouraged." That's how Marnie Kranenberg of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in Hamilton, Ontario, described the April conference sponsored by Christian Reformed Home Missions for women involved in local Coffee Break programs.

Ingrid Flikkema of Immanuel CRC in Caledon, Ontario, said she also found the conference inspiring. "I love hearing speakers sharing their stories, and I love the worship."

But Flikkema did note, as did others, that there weren't



MONICA DE REGT

Mother and daughter Fran Kuntz and Jennifer Raad attended the women's ministry conference.

as many young mothers in attendance this time as in years past.

Acknowledging the latter, conference organizer Marian Lensink said, "We believe that over time this conference will continue to attract a youthful audience. But we also love the grandmas who keep coming.

"Coffee Break has a rich heritage of women who are in the Word and in prayer—we celebrate that as we come together."


—Monica de Regt

PHOTO BY BRANDY ROBERTSON-YOUNG



Pro-Life Church Members March on Ottawa

Sixty people from Chatham, Ontario, traveled all night to Ottawa, Ontario, to join 10,000 others at the annual pro-life rally in Canada's capital.

Jeff Bultje, a member of Grace CRC in Chatham, organized the trip. He said he hopes more Christians will take up the challenge of fighting for the unborn. 

—Anita Brinkman

Seeing the Developing World 'Through Her Eyes'

More than 50 women gathered in Grand Rapids, Mich., recently to hear stories of the resilience and hope of women in countries such as Nicaragua, Uganda, and Bangladesh.

"Through Her Eyes" was hosted by the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. "We hope that our guests will be moved by the stories of women who have the same hopes and desires as women here in West Michigan," said Joel Lautenbach, who organized the event.

Mothers, daughters, grandmothers, and friends listened to Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, Leanne Talen-Geisterfer, and Nancy Ten Broek, all of whom have served overseas with CRWRC.

They heard the story of Shibani, who saw many women and babies dying in her remote village. Shibani traveled 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) for three weeks to train as a traditional birth attendant for her village, where she now helps deliver babies along with teaching prenatal and maternal health.

They also heard sadder stories of women with no access to health care or education, subjected to human trafficking or forced marriage, and living with HIV and AIDS.

One of those in attendance, Betty Doll, said afterward, "It put faces on the statistics and gave me an overwhelming feeling of gratefulness. And out of that gratefulness we need to find a way to help."

—Daina Kraai

Women of all ages gathered to hear the stories of women in developing countries.



DAINA KRAAI

Calvin College President to Retire

Calvin College president Gaylen Byker announced he plans to retire at the end of the 2011-2012 academic year. The college in Grand Rapids, Mich., is owned by the Christian Reformed Church.

Byker, 63, has led the college for 16 years.

Byker's tenure oversaw construction of the DeVos Communication Center, Prince Conference Center, Spoelhof Fieldhouse Complex, and more.

"While his success at fundraising and building may be most noticeable, President Byker's ability to understand and protect who we are will be his legacy," said Scott Spoelhof, chair of Calvin's board of trustees.

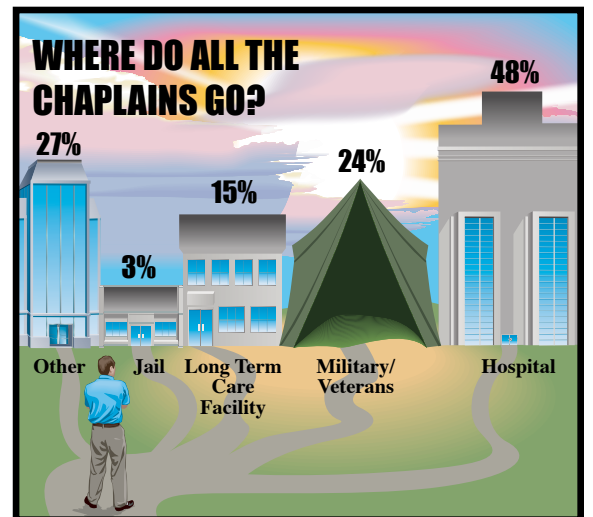
Byker's tenure was also marked by periods of friction with staff, faculty, students, and the CRC. The writings of



President Gaylen Byker

two religion professors drew criticism from the church, while a memo regarding the college's support of the church's position on homosexuality angered some students and faculty.

A nominee to replace Byker will be selected by Calvin's board of trustees and submitted to Synod 2012 (the CRC's annual leadership meeting) for approval. —Ryan Struyk



Ontario Church Signals Intent to Disaffiliate

The leadership of Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Belleville, Ontario, has served notice that the congregation intends to disaffiliate from the Christian Reformed Church in North America, rather than comply with the request of Classis Quinte (its regional group of churches) that it apply special discipline to depose its pastor, Rev. John Visser.

Only a local church council may apply discipline to its pastor.

Classis Quinte made the request at its May 10 meeting after receiving the report of a team that assessed the situation of Maranatha. The report included concerns regarding the principles and practices of the church's healing ministry.

Classis Quinte met in special session again June 2 to hear Maranatha's response to its May 10 request. After presentations by the church's council, staff, and concerned members, and by members of the independent assessment team, the classis upheld its earlier request.

During the summer months the classical ministries committee of Classis Quinte will meet with members of Maranatha CRC.

—Brenda Visser

New Approaches in New Curricula for Reformed Churches

Faith Alive Christian Resources, the publishing arm of the Christian Reformed Church and publishing partner of the Reformed Church in America, has developed two new curricula: *Dwell* is for students from kindergarten through eighth grade, while *WE* is an intergenerational curriculum for entire congregations.

Dwell is designed to create a break from the fast-paced culture in which we live.

"It is more quiet and reflective," said Rev. Leonard Vander Zee, editor in chief for Faith Alive. "It focuses on the biblical story and how the children can really interact with the story and make it theirs."



And, like all curricula produced by Faith Alive, it is distinctly Reformed.

It's very much centered on the Bible and upon God as the main actor in the Bible, said Vander Zee, rather than on the Bible stories as simply lessons about how human beings should act.

With growing interest from churches in programs that involve

whole congregations, Faith Alive has also created *WE*.

WE is an event-based program meant to be used with intergenerational groups. Each monthly event begins with a meal, with people of different generations sitting together. After a shared story, people at the table talk and do activities or crafts with one another, then rejoin the larger group.

"Young people need to hear faith stories, to hear older people talk about what faith means to them," said Vander Zee.

—Melissa Holtrop

Highlights from Spring Classis Meetings

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

Those **welcomed into ministry** in the Christian Reformed Church included Candidate Elizabeth Guillaume-Koene, Rev. Doug Vande Kamp, and Rev. Charles Geschiere.

Rev. John Kuperus, Blyth CRC, Ontario, was **released from his congregation**. Coleman Moore was **released from CRC ministry**.

Classis Toronto approved support for **ministry with the Somali community**, and Classis Chatham approved a **campus**



Palmerston (Ont.) CRC put up a tent when it hosted Classis Huron, prompting inevitable jokes about the church's "in-tent-ions."

ministry on the Woodstock, Ontario, campus of Fanshawe College.

Ministries closed included The Gathering, a church plant in Grand Rapids, Mich., and Living Mosaic CRC, Burlington, Ontario.

Classis California South discussed **church discipline** in the current culture.

Classis Quinte held a training session on **healthy leadership styles**.

In Classis Kalamazoo two churches continue to **protest the presence of women** delegates.



—Banner news correspondents


NEWS



ANITA BRINKMAN

Ontario Church Invites Bikers to Worship

Twenty-six motorcycles lined the parking lot of First Christian Reformed Church in Chatham, Ontario, when the congregation hosted their first annual "Ride to Church Day" on June 26.

Riders came from towns as far as 200 kilometers (124 miles) away. "We're very happy with how many showed up for the first year. We hope to do it again next year," said John Lankhof. 

—Anita Brinkman

Many bikers came for First CRC's Ride to Church event.



CAROLYN KOSTER YOST

Trinity CRC and Rosedale Park Baptist youths spent a weekend together.

Dispelling Stereotypes

When members of Trinity Christian Reformed Church in Grandville, Mich., hosted members of Rosedale Park Baptist Church of Detroit for a weekend, it was part of a cross-cultural partnership formed by the two churches to build relationships and dispel stereotypes.

"We all came together as a whole," said Rachael Kuipers, 15, of Trinity CRC. "It wasn't as awkward as people might think."

Rosedale Park member Taina Hughes, 20, enjoyed it. "Trinity people are my family," she said. "They accept us, and I feel very comfortable being here."

At the Sunday-morning worship service, Rev. Haman Cross Jr., pastor of Rosedale Park, emphasized unity in the diverse body of Christ. "We made a commitment to love each other. Can you spend time with people you don't know and who don't look like you?" he asked.

Mary Ludwig, 49, loved the joint service. "The more people can get to know each other, the better," she said.

—Carolyn Koster Yost




(L-R) Ross, Kathy, and William Poel

Michigan Family Goes Public with Addiction Story

Ross Poel, 27, and his parents, spoke publicly about Ross's heroin addiction for the first time this spring. About 70 people came out to their church, Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Grandville, Mich., to hear their story.


Ross' father, William, said he and his wife, Kathy, suffered in silence. "Many parents tend to live in their own private hell, usually too embarrassed to share such a story," he said.

After finding successful treatment in Argentina, Ross said, "The happiness, joy, and freedom—that is a much higher and more pure sensation than any chemical can give you. God gave me a beautiful and powerful gift to do his work."

For much more, including video, visit www.thebanner.org. 

—Carolyn Koster Yost

Church Keeps Hazardous Waste Out of Landfills

First Christian Reformed Church in Grand Haven, Mich., collected 37,234 pounds (16,889 kilograms) of old cell phones, computers, radios, and other electronics during a recent e-recycling event. First CRC partnered with CompRenew, a nonprofit, licensed company owned by Worldwide Christian Schools, which does all its recycling on-site rather than shipping it overseas. This was the church's third electronics recycling event since 2010. Pictured below, Kayla and Ella DeWyn herd computer cords. 

—Daina Kraai





LARRY EDSALL

Megan Smith (left) and Charlotte Donaldson

Nova Scotia Teens Win Innovation Award

Megan Smith, a member of Faith Christian Reformed Church in Milford, Nova Scotia, and her friend Charlotte Donaldson won the Young Canadian Innovation Award in the Canadian National Science Fair Competition for their aquatic spinal board design.

Smith and Donaldson created a prototype that, unlike conventional rescue boards, can be adjusted to fit the person being rescued.

The girls have filed for a Canadian patent for their invention.

—Brenda Visser



Classis Red Mesa Grows Its Own Pulpit Supply

The Leadership Development Network (LDN) in Classis Red Mesa (regional group of churches), recently graduated its first class, licensing them to preach in local churches. Classis Red Mesa is predominately Native American, and many of its congregations lack seminary-trained pastors. It launched its LDN to fill some of those church leadership roles. Graduates pictured above (l-r): Evelyn Benally, Francis Nelson, Martha Frank, Don Edwards, James Litson, Sharon Jim, and Willie Benally.

—Larry Edsall

Maine Professor Wins Outstanding Faculty Award

Brian Frederick, a chemistry professor at the University of Maine, received the 2011 Outstanding Research and Creative Achievement Award from the University of Maine in Orono. Frederick is a member of New Hope Christian Reformed Church in Bangor, Maine.

—Calvin Hulstein

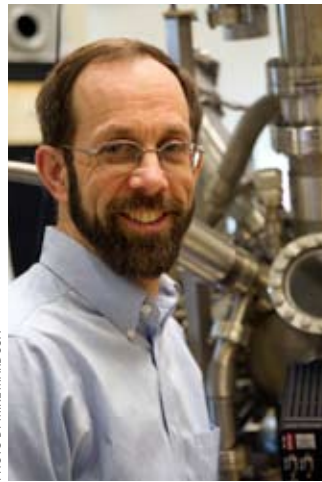


PHOTO BY MIKE MARDOSA



YANET RIVAS

Wilton and Susana Méndez participate in parenting classes.

Bringing Help and Hope in New Jersey

New Hope Ministries, a diaconal outreach of several Christian Reformed Churches in New Jersey, is providing help both to parents and those seeking employment.

Ministry Associate Felipe Cortes teaches parenting classes on topics such as changes during the teenage years, listening skills, different parenting styles, and discipline that makes sense.

Cynthia Segovia, a mother of two children ages 11 and 18, said, "I now know it is never too late to learn more effective approaches to help our children," she said.

Mary Dombrosky found a job as an oncology assistant at a local animal hospital after receiving help from Stephanie Steen, the community and employment director at New Hope. Steen showed Dombrosky how to incorporate all her relevant experience into resumes that focused on her work with animals.

"I couldn't be more thankful for all of her help!" Dombrosky said.

New Hope's program offers practice for job interviews, computer and internet access for online job applications, and training.

—Calvin Hulstein



Deconstructing an Illinois Church

Instead of just demolishing its former worship center, Grace Valley Christian Reformed Church in German Valley, Ill., took it down piece by piece to recycle. The deconstruction cost about five times less than demolition and was more stewardly, said Rev. Jake Ritzema. The majority of the building materials could be salvaged for future use.

—Melissa Holtrop

NEWS



Empty-Nesters Mentor Young Adults in Colorado

Rodney Hansen and Josh Chandler (above) are the first pair from New Life Christian Reformed Church in Grand Junction, Colo., to complete the church's mentoring program. The church pairs up empty nesters and high school students to work their way through material preparing the student to make public profession of faith. Erik Newhouse, 18, and Terry Kraft, have been paired up, too. "It's been good having somebody to listen and care about me, making sure I stick with the faith," said Newhouse.

—Sarah Boonstra

Supporting Families Touched by Murder

After Carolyn Priester's son, Lee Randolph Priester, was killed July 28, 2007, she dealt with her grief in part by creating Conquerors, a network for families impacted by homicide. Priester is a member of Oakdale Park Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Since its inception in 2008, Conquerors has helped more than 100 people, including helping some with financial assistance for burial costs.

Priester takes joy in providing support but laments every time the group grows, since each new family represents another senseless death. "It is a beautiful thing to support," she says, "but also to help with unexpected loss." —Noah J. K. Kruis



California Church Aids City Parks

When the city of Ripon, Calif., cut back on maintaining a number of local parks, it became an opportunity for outreach for Almond Valley Christian Reformed Church. Volunteers from the church have taken over the weekly maintenance of two parks. "The community sees us 'doing' and invites us to share why," said Dusty Hoekstra. —Heidi Wicker



Hope Haven provides wheelchairs around the world, including Haiti.

Iowa Woman Heals Through Wheels in Haiti

Val Brummel, a member of First Christian Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa, recently delivered a shipment of refurbished wheelchairs to people still recovering from last year's earthquake in Haiti.

The wheelchairs are donated and then get rebuilt in one of the many satellite shops around the country.

"Our biggest need is for children's wheelchairs," said Brummel, a ministry coordinator for Hope Haven.

Every trip allows the ministry to bring between 170 and 200 wheelchairs in addition to crutches, walkers, and commodes.

—Kate Padilla

Wii Tournament Raises Money for Wells

Youths at Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church in Trenton, Ontario, used a Mario Kart Wii tournament to help raise \$2,500 for a well in Africa. The youths also carried five gallons of water for one kilometer (.6 miles). "The seriousness of the water issue in Africa is worse than I thought," said Caleb De Vries. "I am a lot more grateful for clean water."

—Brenda Visser





Nelson Bates (center) from Rehoboth CRC, with Adam Helm and Brooklynn Feinauer

Partnership Helps Rehoboth Teens Serve

Several teens from the Rehoboth (New Mexico) Christian Reformed Church spent time in Beaverton, Ore., helping run a day camp held at Oak Hills CRC.

Kevin Ruthven, youth leader from Rehoboth CRC, said, "Many of the teens from Rehoboth are used to ministry teams coming to their own area. This opportunity gives our young people a chance to serve."

For Nelson Bates, coming to Beaverton was the first time he had been on an airplane. "I love helping the kids and teaching them about God," he said.

The Rehoboth team also participated in local service projects in the Portland, Ore., area in the evenings, and learned about some of the needs within downtown Portland.

"We live in one of the third poorest counties in the county," explained Ruthven. "Our young people learned that needs are everywhere."

—Amy Toornstra



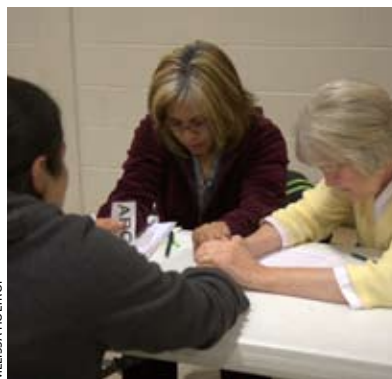
RACHEL DEKONING KRAAY

Alberta Church Celebrates Abundance of Long Marriages

Nineteen couples of Woodynook Christian Reformed Church, near Lacombe, Alberta, have celebrated more than 50 years of marriage.

Femmie TenHove, married to Eb for 54 years, said there is no secret to their lasting marriage. "Living in a farming community, we depended much on our Lord and each other, through the good, bad, and worse."

—Rachel deKoning Kraay



MELISSA HOLTROP

Illinois Church's Food Pantry Sparks New Relationships

The food pantry of New Life Christian Reformed Church, New Lenox, Ill., provides food aid primarily to the community's Hispanic population, but few New Life CRC members speak Spanish. Now, thanks to clients who also volunteer, there is often an interpreter at every table as volunteers interview and pray with clients before they shop. Above, Lucy Gutierrez (left) interprets for a food pantry volunteer and shopper.

—Melissa Holtrop

Creating Community with Karate in Michigan

Every week, about 30 people, as young as age 4, come to Providence Christian Reformed Church in Cutlerville, Mich., to attend Spirit Moves Christian Karate.

"Our philosophy is that [karate] isn't just about punching and kicking—it's about the person that you become," said member Marylu Dykstra, who teaches the class with her husband, Rick.

"What makes us different from typical karate schools is that we really build mutual respect and work together in a very loving atmosphere," said Dykstra.

Several people have become members of Providence after first attending the karate ministry.

—Ryan Struyk

Justin Wolters, 9, right, takes a jab at his sister, Megan, 11, at Spirit Moves Christian Karate.



RYAN STRUYK

SARAH BOONSTRA



Peggy Lorusso and Lupe Degi use Braille materials provided as they sing a worship song at Jewel CRC.

Denver Church Connects the Dots

In order to make their services more accessible, each Sunday Jewel Christian Reformed Church in Denver, Colo., creates five binders containing the order of service, all songs, and litanies embossed in Braille. Extra copies are available for visitors.

Marlene Kaiser, a member who has visual impairments, said, "The services are more meaningful. In the past I've been to a church where I don't know the words to the songs. If you don't know what's going on, you don't feel like you belong."

—Sarah Boonstra

Hispanic and Anglo Congregations Combine Youth Groups

Yuanita Gitamara, youth pastor of Bethel CRC, and Dan Houston, youth pastor of First Christian Reformed Church, lead a ministry called Oasis, a space where middle school students of different cultural backgrounds can grow together in faith. The group includes students from their churches as well as students from Amor Viviente, a Hispanic congregation in Lynden.

Holly Hiemstra, a student from Bethel CRC, said she has "learn[ed] how to be more accepting of different people, to go out of my comfort zone and live out my Christian beliefs."

—Amy Toornstra



The Oasis middle school group meets every other week for games and Bible study.

DAN HOUSTON

Equine Program Helps Survivors of Domestic Abuse

At Project Ponytails, Kristin Duryee uses horses and art to aid women and children affected by domestic abuse.

Duryee is a member of Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich. "You use the horse as a counselor," she explained.



Kristin Duryee helps a child at Project Ponytails.

"It's a great resource" said Christine, who was referred by a court-appointed counselor. Her daughter Anna, age 10, was quick to share how she feels about the horse she rides at Project Ponytails. "He helps me a lot to build healthy fences around my heart."

—Karen Gorter

MARK LEONARD



California Church Celebrates 100 Years

The River Christian Reformed Church celebrated 100 years of CRC presence in Redlands, Calif., in May.

First CRC of Redlands was formed in 1911, followed by Highland Avenue CRC in 1949 and Bethel CRC in 1961. Two different mergers brought about The River CRC. With nearly 800 members, The River is larger than any of its predecessors.

—Heidi Wicker

Stories exclusively at www.thebanner.org:

New Congregation Just for Seniors A Brampton seniors' complex gets its own church.

Illinois Couple Aids Small-Church Outreach in India Offering health clinics helps indigenous churches.

Ontario Parents, Teens Study Bible Together An intergenerational Bible study has teenagers talking with their parents about spiritual matters.

Practicing Presence in Seattle Awake CRC members provide open hearts and listening ears.

Building Bridges Between Refugees and Their Neighbors South Dakota ministry serves refugees while raising community awareness.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

FAQs

Church

Q Please define the role of evangelists in our denomination. May they take on full-time work in another field in order to support their families and still continue to preach? May they baptize people? If so, is it appropriate for them to baptize their own children?

A In the past an evangelist worked in a “chapel,” not a church. Typically the evangelist had a Bible school education rather than a seminary degree, and worked under the supervision of a supporting church. The ministers and elders of the supporting church administered the sacraments. Gradually the evangelist was permitted to do some of these “official” acts of ministry.

Today, evangelists are part of a group of people identified as “ministry associates.” Their tasks and the regulations that govern their ministry are explained in Church Order Articles 23 & 24 and in the supplements to those articles (see www.crcna.org).

Church Order Article 15 states that a minister (this would also be true of a ministry associate) may “obtain primary or supplementary income by means of other employment.” The time spent in ministerial and nonministerial tasks is approved by the council/governing board that supervises the ministry associate and by classis and may not exceed an average of 60 hours per week.

Ministry associates who serve as pastors have all the privileges and responsibilities that ministers of the Word do, but they operate within the context of a local, specialized

Ministry associates who serve as pastors have all the privileges and responsibilities that ministers of the Word do.

call. Thus, they may administer the sacraments and may baptize their own children if they choose to do so.

—George Vander Weit

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

Relationships

Q I am a wife and mother and am active in my church. I realize that the Christian life is about service, but I’m depressed and irritable when I have no time for myself. Am I ever allowed to put my own interests before those of others?

A The answer is yes—and not only allowed, but mandated by God, since God calls us to “love others *as ourselves*.” When giving of ourselves we often fall into the trap of being guided by two mistaken beliefs: (1) that other people’s needs are more important than our own, and (2) that helping means taking responsibility for someone else’s life or behavior.

We need to pay attention to what motivates us to give of ourselves—is it guilt or is it passion? If we feel passionate about something (the responsibilities we have taken on) we will have the energy needed to do it, even for the mundane aspects of our tasks. If we are motivated by guilt, however, it is time to check whether we are acting from one or both of the above mentioned mistaken beliefs. We might have to practice saying “no” and spend some time doing activities that express “loving ourselves” in order to regain health, energy, and a positive outlook.

In the end, Jesus invites us to give him our burdens every day. He reminds us the world (also our children, spouses, churches) belong to him, not to us. Instead of being burdened

he invites us to a “light” yoke as his helpers, and he invites us to trust in his provision as we seek to serve him.

—Judy Cook

Judy Cook (judycook@quickcllc.net) is a family therapist and a member of Meadowlands Fellowship CRC in Ancaster, Ontario.

Outreach

Q I want to learn more about the Bible’s history and context. Can you give any recommendations for accessible works that get into these areas of biblical study?

A Many, many people have studied the Bible’s history, context, language, and culture and have devoted their lives to it.

As far as reading recommendations, I heartily recommend NT Wright’s *Following Jesus* or Brian McLaren’s *The Secret Message of Jesus* for very accessible readings on the gospels. If you’re looking for something a bit more in-depth, read anything by Brad Young or Kenneth Bailey on the Jewish and Near Eastern background to the New Testament.

For books on Paul, I would recommend Wright’s *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, Crossan and Reed’s *In Search of Paul*, and Krister Stendahl’s *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*.

As with anything you read, you may not agree with all of the authors’ theological perspectives and assumptions, but these have been helpful resources to me, despite my disagreement with some conclusions the authors draw.

—Bryan Berghof

Rev. Bryan Berghoef is pastor of Watershed Church, a Christian Reformed church plant in Traverse City, Mich. ■

WHAT IF IT HAPPENS IN YOUR CHURCH?



Is your congregation or classis prepared to minister to victims of sexual abuse?

WHAT IF abuse happens in your church? Your friend tells you the pastor touches her breast when he hugs her. “That would never happen here,” you insist. “I’m sure it’s unintentional. Our pastor is a good man.”

Yes, Christian Reformed churches are full of faithful people who treat others with respect and love. I hope “it” will never happen in your church. But what if it does? What if it’s happening right now? Are you prepared? What would the victim hear from you and other church members?

It Happened to Me

I never dreamed sexual abuse would happen in the CRC, much less in my congrega-

tion. I knew we all loved the Lord and others. But not only did it happen in my church, it happened to me.

When my pastor first touched me sexually, I trusted him as a representative of God. I believed he was a kind and wise pastor whose passion was to serve the Lord, the church, and especially the poor in the community. What my pastor did *must* be OK, I thought. He explained his actions in biblical terms, insisting that God would approve. I was young and did what I had been always taught to do: believe and follow my pastor, an ordained Calvin Theological Seminary graduate with many years of experience.

What Would Help?

What would you do? Do you wonder what would be helpful to someone who has experienced sexual abuse in the church? Here’s what would have helped me:

Make it clear in your congregation that you want victims to break their silence. German Catholic Church Bishop Stephan Ackermann said recently, “We have to convey that we will not look the other way but face the bitter truth.” Let everyone know that safe, caring, wise people are available to listen to anyone who has an abuse story to tell. Don’t let victims bear this burden alone. Put posters up in the church restrooms with names and phone numbers to call. Promise and enforce strict confidentiality.

When I first disclosed what happened to me, I was told it would be taken care of and I should be quiet. The abusive pastor was given a private slap on the wrist, and he remained in his position. I felt so alone, even after I found out I was not the only person he abused. I suffered shame and guilt over the years that damaged my mar-

“WE HAVE TO CONVEY THAT WE WILL NOT LOOK THE OTHER WAY BUT FACE THE BITTER TRUTH.”

riage, my parenting, and my walk with God. Imagine what it’s like to listen to a pastor preach and know that in private he touches young women sexually.

The issue of abuse in the church is twofold. First is the horror of the original abuse, which we all denounce. Second is the way in which the church responds to the original abuse. If I had any indication that the church would respond to my disclosure with care and justice, I would have come forward much earlier. The damage in my life would have healed sooner, and the man who abused me would have had fewer opportunities to continue abusing.

Make sure that those safe people have extensive training in abuse issues and how to process them in the congregation, classis, and denomination. The CRC’s **Safe Church Ministry** offers excellent training for classical panels as well as for advocates who can walk alongside victims through the process of disclosure. When we prepare in advance, we communicate that we care deeply for the people in our church.

I finally came to a point in mid-life when I recognized what happened to me as abuse and dared to speak up again. I was relieved to find that there was a **church process, approved by synod** (the CRC’s annual leadership meeting), with guidelines for how allegations of abuse by church leaders should be handled. I began that process but soon discovered that many churches and classes don’t follow it.

Why? I know it’s not a perfect process, but it is much better than untrained people responding to a situation for which they are unprepared. It helped me.

In my case several church leaders tried to silence me and thwart the process. I was tempted to go underground again and keep bearing my burden alone. But the advice and care of my two wise and tenacious advocates, trained by Safe Church Ministry, gave me the courage and strength to continue.

Establish a committee in your congregation to reach out to survivors of abuse. Also, make sure your classis has a Safe Church Team. (Only 18 of the CRC’s 47 classes—regional groups of churches—do, **despite synod’s “strong encouragement” to establish them** [*Acts of Synod 2010*, p. 885] and to **make them a priority** [*Acts of Synod 2007*, p. 582]). Expect some resistance from church members or maybe even from your own heart.

Spending time and resources on the possibility that something bad *might* happen may seem like a low priority. But what’s at stake is the integrity of the church. Maintaining that integrity should be a high priority.

It is profoundly uncomfortable to hear that a trusted leader has abused. That bitter truth shatters the assumptions on which we base our congregational life. But silence and secrecy do much more damage to our integrity as a community. God hears the cries of the brokenhearted, and I believe God gives us the power to deal with evil openly and justly.

Good News

Not long ago someone on the CRC’s online forum **The Network** asked the Safe Church Ministry if there were any stories of success where healing has come through the work of abuse prevention. My story isn’t a finished “success story”—the fallout of what happened to me continues to ripple out pain in my life, in the life of the pastor who abused me, and in the church. But there is good news in my story. I was heard by the CRC. My story was taken seriously. I went through the process for dealing with abuse, as laid out by synod.

My request was simple: that the ministerial credentials of the person who abused me be removed. Along the way

many people opposed my request, but many more supported me, followed the synodically approved process, and worked to make sure justice was done. The minister finally was held accountable. The church made it clear to me that what happened was wrong and that perpetrators of abuse should not be tolerated in the CRC. That is good news.


What if it happens in your church? Be prepared. Take advantage of the many quality resources available to you from the Safe Church Ministry. Be a part of preventing abuse, and when it does happen, be a part of bringing justice and healing to a devastating situation. You can help make the CRC a church that responds justly and effectively to abuse, encourages healing, and restores integrity. ■

For abuse-response help or training resources, please contact the Safe Church Ministry of the Christian Reformed Church at 616.224.0735 or crcna.org/safechurch.

Why not print my name?

I asked for my identity to be withheld for two reasons: **First, I fear condemnation. There are those who hear my story and blame me for what happened. They don’t see it as a pastor abusing his office and the sacred trust he holds. Second, I could be in any church in the CRC. During my process of disclosure I talked with people from congregations in many states and provinces. I found that abuse is not confined to the Roman Catholic Church or to certain congregations in the CRC. It is an evil that can invade any church in which there are people who misuse their spiritual power.**

Trompe-l'oeil



a mystery, this sad girl
her inner workings cloistered
she retreats to the corner
aloof, withdrawn, quiet
she sits apart
stands apart
all of her
body
mind
creaking to a halt
she is no longer a well-oiled machine
with all gears
functioning smoothly
moves in slow motion
 load the clothes
 empty the dryer
 fill the dishwasher
her spark is snuffed out
fire smothered by sand
she struggles for freedom
gaining strength to rise
her life's façade a trompe-l'oeil
fooling everyone except
the most vigilant observer

—Irene Fridsma

Chores

AS A PARENT I have found the management of household chores to be a chore. When my children are supposed to clear the dinner table or clean their rooms, they need to be reminded again and again. In turn, they view these reminders as nagging and tend to resist the chores even more. When I asked my youngest why he didn't do his chores immediately, he countered, "You're the parent, why don't *you* do them?"

It's true: I didn't always like the chores my parents told me to do. I can't remember, though, ever questioning the need to pitch in. I'd thought some things were obvious. Obviously I have some communicating to do.

My wife and I mainly use a weekly job list on the fridge to manage chores and at times even demonstrate how a chore should be done. While the lists and modeling have provided clarity, they have not always supplied motivation.

In search of the latter, I contacted other parents—both friends and family—about their experiences with chores. Here's a summary of advice taken from these conversations, as well as from other parenting resources:

- 1. View chores as a type of training that will help your children when they are out of the house.** Chores teach children important life skills and the responsibility kids will need to maintain a household and keep a job. One friend emphasized that this training is a "process," one that "takes a lot of repetition and sometimes develops slowly." Consequently we should be OK with the finished product, even "if it's not done perfectly."
- 2. There is no ideal "chore system."** Adapt chores to your children's ages and characters. The Internet abounds with chore charts and other resources. The best thing to do, though, is to *be clear and consistent* in your expectations.

The worst is to do your children's chores yourself, even if it avoids a lot of bother. Otherwise children only learn to expect that you will complete their chores!

- 3. Chores can teach children to enjoy life's gifts.** When one of my brothers was in high school, Mom gave him \$40 to buy groceries at the farmers' market. He relished the responsibility and especially the chance to enjoy the market, have a coffee, and watch people. To this day, my brother considers a trip to the market a highlight of his week.
- 4. Avoid constant reminders, which will be viewed as nagging, particularly by teens.** Patricia Sprinkle, author of *Children Who Do Too Little*, recommends explaining a chore once and then imposing a consequence if it isn't completed. For younger kids, toys that are continually left out could get gobbled up for a day by a mysterious toy monster; for teens, a refusal to clean up laundry could mean their clothes don't get washed that week. Patricia Sprinkle recommends, however, that the child agree on the fairness of any consequence.
- 5. "It's important to get our hands dirty."** So argued one of my colleagues when we both realized we enjoyed mowing the lawn and washing the car—chores we learned from our fathers. Even in the suburbs we can still teach our children the sense of accomplishment attached to manual work. At the same time, don't hesitate to present chores as an equal-opportunity moment; that is, both girls and boys should learn how to polish the car . . . and how to clean behind the toilet.
- 6. Try not to tie household chores to an allowance.** Another friend summed up this sentiment when commenting on housecleaning at her place: "No one gets paid for this—it's the price of living." (That said, each parent I spoke with had different views on allowances

My comments have been met with much rolling of the eyes. But Rome was not built in a day.



as well as payment for special jobs above and beyond regular chores.)

Amid these discussions I realized that I have had an unexpressed ideal for chores: that my children would do them out of a sense of gratitude for having a home, food on the table, and clothes on their backs. When I've said as much to them recently, my comments have been met with much rolling of the eyes. But Rome was not built in a day, nor a household. In that light I have a great appreciation for chores, for the patience they require, and for the hopeful vision they offer for our children's future. ■



Otto Selles teaches French at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. He is a member of Neland Avenue CRC, Grand Rapids.



Rev. Edward Hommes, a CRC chaplain, visits a patient at a hospital in Denver.

Reconciling, Restoring, Encouraging, Seeking Justice

Specialized Ministries are an important face of the Christian Reformed Church. Together, these ministries help to bring about changes that reconcile people and restore communities. Specialized Ministries address a variety of needs in the CRC: the quest for social justice and racial reconciliation, care for people who are abused or disabled, navigation of congregational conflicts, the support and development of chaplaincy ministries.

Everybody Belongs. Everybody Serves. Disability Concerns works to ensure that all people, regardless of their challenges, are able to participate in the life of the church.

The ministry encourages that participation in several ways, including writing materials for churches to help them better incorporate all people into the life of their congregation, says Rev. Mark Stephenson, director of Disability Concerns.

The office also advocates on behalf of people whose voice and needs the church might otherwise overlook.

“We affirm that everyone is created in God’s image, reflecting his nature,” says Stephenson.

One of Disability Concerns’ newer services is providing resources for serving the needs of people with mental illness. Such ministry can be frustrating, “leaving



John Cook and Reg Harmsen talk things over at a Disability Concerns conference.

one with a feeling of powerlessness when it comes to ministry in these difficult situations,” says Rev. Randy Blacketer, pastor of Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church in Alberta, Canada.

Many pastors and other pastoral caregivers feel inadequate in caring for people



Gail Selfridge, who served as a regional advocate for Disability Concerns and is blind, fulfills one of her dreams: skydiving.

and families who face challenges such as depression, bi-polar disorder, or eating disorders.

“There is a great deal of fear by other members of the congregation toward those with mental illness,” writes one pastor in a survey done by the office of Disability Concerns. “Erratic behavior can make it difficult for people to bond. . . .”

To help congregations enhance ministry to and with people who have mental illnesses, Disability Concerns formed a Mental Health Task Force, which has a number of resources available on its website: www.crcna.org/disability.

Since ministering to someone who has a mental illness can become complex, the Mental Health Task Force has held conversations with representatives from the CRC’s other Specialized Ministries, including Safe Church Ministry, Chaplaincy and Care, and Pastor-Church Relations.

“With some issues, we can be more effective in our ministry with churches if we work together,” said Rev. Norm Thomasma, director of Pastor-Church Relations.

For example, sometimes a person with a mental illness may be either a victim of abuse or an abuser in a church, an area of concern addressed by the CRC’s Safe Church Ministry. And CRC chaplains

receive extensive training in caring ministry—many work in the mental-health field.

“By talking and planning together, the hope and dream of our ministries is simply this: that churches receive additional help in dealing with complex and often difficult pastoral situations,” Stephenson noted.

—*Disabilities Concerns and CRC Communications*

Working on Behalf of the Abused

In a culture in which violence, disrespect, and abuse are far too common and reflected also in the church, **Safe Church Ministry** provides resources to fight against those forces and maintain healthy church environments.

Healthy churches proactively acknowledge the issues and work toward solutions. They have policies for preventing abuse and minister to victims and abusers with compassionate understanding, as well as with justice and accountability.



An image representing Safe Church Ministry.

They take seriously claims of misconduct against a church leader and follow the procedures put in place to guide those affected through that extremely difficult situation.

In addition to abuse by church leaders, Safe Church Ministry addresses issues



Bonnie Nicholas is interim director of Safe Church Ministry.

such as child abuse, sexual assault, domestic abuse, and teen dating violence.

“It is our desire that all of our CRC church congregations be safe places; safe from any threat of abuse, where each person is regarded in light of their infinite value, where relationships are characterized by openness, honesty, and respect,” said Bonnie Nicholas, the new interim director of Safe Church Ministry.

“I covet your prayers as we together wrestle with the issue of abuse and its devastating effects on individuals and on our church communities.”

—*Safe Church Ministry and CRC Communications*

Reaching Out in Los Angeles

Rev. Richard Jones was impressed by the racial solidarity he experienced when he attended his first Multiethnic Conference, in 2009, as a pastor in the Christian Reformed Church.

The CRC’s Office of Race Relations holds the conference biennially just before synod, the annual leadership meeting of the CRC. A former Reformed Church in America and African Methodist Episcopal Church pastor, Jones was then settling into a new position as pastor of Los »



(L-R) Rev. Richard Jones, Richard Jr., Grace, Ryan, Victoria, and Alison.

Angeles Community CRC. He wasn't sure what to expect from the conference, but he enjoyed it from the start.

"It was a privilege to attend. It was so good to see people from all over the church," said Jones. He left the conference full of excitement for expanding the ministry of his congregation.

Jones said he has always harbored concern for those who live in the neighborhoods around his churches. But the conference, and especially resources from the Office of Race Relations, really helped him to focus his energy when he got back home.

"We often think of diversity as being between blacks and whites, but it is so much more," he noted. "There are people of many nationalities who live in the neighborhoods around our church."

Jones ministers in an area where gangs are a menace and many families struggle to pay their bills. Also, his church and the surrounding community have had an influx of Spanish-speaking people.

"We need to understand people's worlds," he said. "We may be alike, but how we understand God is different."

Members of his church reach out to the Los Angeles area by cleaning up trash

and helping to paint houses, among other works of service.

"Many people struggle with us Christians not representing Christ very well," Jones said. "We need to remember that we are one in Christ. It is a sad testimony if we can't get along."

Rev. Esteban Lugo, director of Race Relations, said

Jones is a wonderful example of the type of church leader with whom his office works. He is one of the people of color who have joined the CRC and are working to expand its horizons, Lugo said.

Jones said his approach is simple: "We're all trying to get to the same heaven. Because we are saved, we know that is where we are going. Now let's get busy and get out there and take on the challenges."

—Office of Race Relations and CRC Communications

Tapping the Power of Stories

What is the power of a story?

Every society known to history has used storytelling as a way to entertain, to remember lessons of the past, and to transmit values into the future. Socrates, Jesus, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King Jr. all knew and used the power of stories to elicit lasting thoughts and responses. Every good speaker, leader, or persuader knows the power of story to penetrate the mind and touch the heart.

Rev. Ron Klimp, director of the CRC's **Chaplaincy and Care Ministry**, says it is his conviction that chaplains have "some of the greatest stories never told."

Chaplains are often in the presence of great drama (human crisis and trauma) and great transitions (from despair to hope), he observes.

"They are often blessed with the opportunity to walk with pilgrims through the valley of the shadow of death into the light and hope of a new day," Klimp said. "Their fellow journeyers don't always get well, get rich, or get free; but they often come to a place of new understanding, peace, and power by regaining a spiritual hope that transcends all the darkness around them."

If you haven't heard a chaplain's stories, it may be because you haven't

Rev. Douglas Vrieland, a U.S. Navy Command Chaplain, converses with a sailor while their ship is at sea.



asked—or because the chaplain failed to recognize the power of those stories. “We are aiming at fixing that,” he said.

A workshop at this year’s annual CRC Chaplains Conference, titled “Stories Matter,” was led by Michael Kelly Blanchard, musician, songwriter, and storyteller; and David Blauw, an RCA chaplain from Holland, Mich. Their message helped chaplains to understand the power of stories and learn how to craft and tell their stories more effectively.

Klump urges churches to invite a chaplain to tell his or her story sometime in the near future (maybe on Chaplaincy Sunday, the second Sunday in November). “Be prepared to gain a whole new appreciation for the amazing job that our chaplains are doing to touch the hearts of the secular world—non-Christian, pre-Christian, or post-Christian—with the love of our amazing God,” Klump said.

— *Chaplaincy and Care Ministry*

Two Ministries Work Toward Excellence

Each year the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence and Sustaining Congregational Excellence programs, sometimes in conjunction with the Office of Pastor-Church Relations, put on educational events across Canada and the United States. The events give pastors and ministry leaders opportunities to share best practices, learn from each other, and join together for encouragement and renewal.

Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) is geared toward supporting and enhancing the ministry of pastors and their spouses. Sustaining Congregational Excellence (SCE) provides grants to help churches develop ministries that can bolster the health and vitality of Christian Reformed congregations.

Through presentations and activities the learning events focus on healthy congregations. One main presentation this past year centered on hospitality. Rev. Cecil Van Niejenhuis, pastor-congregation consultant for Pastor-Church Relations,

walked attendees through the Bible as they explored how important hospitality is to a congregation’s health.

Pastor Couple (pastor and spouse) Learning Events occur once a year. Pastor-Church Relations staff facilitate the two-day Sustaining Pastoral Excellence events.

Sixteen couples engage in conversations about transitions in life and ministry—a topic that seems to resonate for couples navigating change as part of their life call. The events include open and honest group discussions and periods of couple time.

When asked their opinion on the best part of the retreats, couples have responded, “Being forced to talk about/look at issues and topics we would not so quickly discuss or study on our own.” Or, “The mood was great for making people feel comfortable.”

Over the past seven years, Pastor-Church Relations has written two training tools to assist pastors and ministry leaders in their work. The third edition of *Toward Effective Pastoral Mentoring* was published by SPE in 2008.

This tool is for mentors (those experienced in ministry) to use in mentoring relationships with those new to ministry.

Evaluation Essentials for Congregational Leaders came out in 2010. It assists congregations as they explore evaluations for pastors and other ministry leaders. In 2012 a guide will be published on how to handle the search process for a new pastor from beginning to end. All of these resources are free. See www.crcna.org/pastoralexcellence for details.

Pastor-Church Relations, Sustaining Pastoral Excellence, and Sustaining Congregational Excellence have appreciated as Specialized Ministries in working together to foster health in pastors, ministry leaders, and congregations.

—*Norm Thomasma, Pastor-Church Relations, and Lis Van Harten, SPE-SCE*

Seeking God’s Justice

Working in a powerful way, though often in the background, the CRC’s Office of Social Justice (OSJ) strives to “strengthen and focus the justice lens of the CRC,” says Peter VanderMeulen, director of OSJ.

OSJ bases its mission on Isaiah 1:17: “Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of the orphans. Fight for the rights of widows.”

It works to promote change—true justice in God’s world. It both tackles and offers information on tough issues: immigration reform, women’s rights, care for creation, restorative justice for victims of crimes, and peace in the Middle East.

For example, OSJ has asked supporters to send a card for peace in the Holy Land to Canada’s prime minister and to give public witness to their belief in the



A postcard that OSJ provides to send to lawmakers to promote peace.

shared call of Christians to be peacemakers, a role that can mean participating in great feats as well as taking everyday actions to live peaceably and encourage peace.

“The OSJ is here to support you and encourage your congregation as you seek justice—by offering worship resources, education, advocacy, and especially, support for those seeking justice,” VanderMeulen said.

—*Office of Social Justice and CRC Communications*

Will You Remember My Name? by Joan Sikkenga

Nothing set Mary apart from the other children waiting in line for their health assessments.

Most of the children at the orphanage in Nairobi, Kenya, had never seen a doctor before—especially a North American doctor—and they whispered and giggled nervously while waiting their turn.

When Mary's turn came, she walked in quietly. She jumped up and sat on the table with her big watchful eyes. In answer to his question, she told the doctor that she was 9 years old.

She didn't say another word as the doctor checked her eyes, ears, throat, heart, lungs, abdomen, and extremities and pronounced her a healthy young lady. He then asked her if she had any questions. She shook her head no and hopped down.

At this point most children scurry off, relieved to have "survived" the exam and eager to compare notes with their friends. But Mary had something else on her mind.

As I filled in the information on Mary's chart, I looked up to see her standing patiently by my table, waiting for me to finish. So I said, "Mary, do you have a question for me?"

"Yes," she said, "Are you going to come back here tomorrow?"

Wondering where this was leading, I answered, "Yes, I will be back tomorrow."

"Well," Mary asked, "when you come back tomorrow, will you remember my name?"

Wow, that was not what I was expecting! Knowing that we would be seeing about 50 children that day, I quickly prayed, then answered, "Yes, Mary, I will remember your name."

Then I reminded her, "You know, Mary, there is Someone who never forgets our names." And just that quick she came

back with, "I know Jesus knows my name, but I want *you* to remember it too!"

When we drove up the bumpy dirt alleyway to the orphanage the next morning, kids came spilling out of the doorway, waving and calling out greetings. However I didn't see the child I was looking for.

"Lord, please help me recognize her!" I prayed.

Soon we were again on the roof in our makeshift clinic. A cluster of another dozen children were waiting for us.

They greeted us noisily with big smiles and happy chatter—except for one child who stood quietly behind the others, watching. I walked to the back of the group, put my arm around her, and said, "Good Morning, Mary."

Her face broke out in a radiant smile, and she said, "You *did* remember! Thank you!" as she returned my hug. I don't know when I have been more touched or humbled.

Two days later we had to say goodbye.

As we were taking group photos, Mary came up to me and asked if I was ever coming back to Kenya and to the orphanage. I told her I hoped God would allow me to come back because I loved her country, and I

had come to love her as well.

Then she asked if I would take a picture of her "all by myself"—which I did. I told her I would keep this picture with her name on it so I would always remember her. It's now framed and in my family room.

We left Kenya just before Christmas. I don't know what gift, if any, Mary received at the orphanage, but she gave me something. She reminded me of the importance of treating each individual with dignity and respect. She makes me thankful each day that Jesus remembers *my* name! ■



Mary

PHOTO BY JOAN SIKKENGA

“Lord, please help me recognize her!”
I prayed

Joan Sikkenga, a retired substance-abuse nurse and her husband, Roger, spent two weeks in Nairobi, Kenya, with Partners Worldwide. While there, Roger did some teacher training for Heritage of Faith Christian School, while Joan and another nurse and retired doctor, all from Fremont Mich., did medical assessments for HIV/AIDS orphans. The Sikkengas are members of Trinity CRC, Fremont.

Complete Healing in Jesus

B, a retired Fulani man living in West Africa, has a generator repair business. Since he lives near a Christian Reformed World Missions' (CRWM) radio production studio, B often fixes the studio's generators.

B quickly sees what needs to be done and how to do it. But when he came to help one time, he wasn't feeling well.

Too sick to move, he sat on a chair and told his apprentice and a Fulani believer what generator parts to remove and replace.

Seeing his sickly state, the Fulani believer suggested that they set up a special time to pray over him. B comes from a Muslim family like most Fulani, so he might have refused the offer. But instead he accepted it.

The Fulani believer and a CRWM missionary met

together beforehand to pray for their meeting. They prayed that the Holy Spirit would speak through them into B's heart. Then they met with B. They shared the gospel with him and prayed for him to be healed in Jesus' name.

As he traveled home, B felt a heat come over his body and the sickness lift. He knew that Jesus had healed him. And he responded in faith.

"I'm encouraged by two things in this story," says the

CRWM missionary. "First, it was because of the concern and initiative of the Fulani believer that we prayed for B. This suggests a good level of maturity on the believer's part. Second, we've often prayed for the sick but have seldom seen cases where healing was so clearly related to the prayer, and where the one healed was ready to follow Jesus." ■

—Sarah Van Stempvoort,
Christian Reformed World
Missions

CRC in Philippines Starts New Chapter

C.S. Lewis wrote: "You must celebrate the past to successfully leave it for a new future." That was the thinking behind a celebratory event in April when people from across the Philippines and elsewhere gathered to mark a new phase of ministry.

"The highlight for me was the fact that we were, after 50 years of partnership, successfully celebrating the past and anticipating a new future," said Joel Hogan, director of International Ministries for Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM).

Vince and Lucy Apostol, graduates of what is now Kuyper College, went to the Philippines and developed the first Christian Reformed congregation, Hogan noted. Today there is a denomination with six classes, 44 organized churches, 28 organizing



Leaders from the six classes of the Christian Reformed Church of the Philippines during the celebration event

churches, and the Reformed Ministry Academy with 28 students.

As of June 30, CRWM and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee ended their formal presence and partnership in the Philippines. The CRC of the Philippines (CRCP) is taking responsibility for its ministry of church planting, discipleship, com-

munity development, and disaster response.

"A vibrant diaconate has developed in the CRCP," says CRWRC Asia team leader Tom Post. "It's been a blessing to witness the hospitable, merciful, evangelistic enthusiasm that has grown out of the CRCP."

The CRCP will be supported by several Christian

organizations that the Christian Reformed Church in North America helped to start or strengthen during its years of partnership.

CRCP will remain in relationship with the CRCNA through the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee. Bob and Patti Harris of CRWM will also continue to teach at the Asia Theological Seminary.

"Ministry in the Philippines will continue with the faith, vision, and resources that God has given his people there," said Bruce Adema, the CRCNA's director of Canadian Ministries and a former missionary in the Philippines. ■

—Kristen deRooy
VanderBerg,
Christian Reformed World
Relief Committee

Bringing Hope to Haiti

Radio is still one of the most effective avenues of mass communication to people in Haiti as they recover from the devastating earthquake in January 2010. Now, thanks to “Help Haiti” donations and the work of 12 volunteers from First CRC of Fremont, Mich., Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) is able to reach even more people with words of hope from Scripture.

Shortly after the earthquake, French ministry leader Rev. Paul Mpindi began preparing special messages for the Haitian people. The initial response was encouraging. Nearly 2,000 listeners signed up for the BTGMI Bible study course. But Mpindi realized BTGMI was missing a large segment of the population whose first language is not French, but Creole.

“Programs in the Creole language would speak the good news of the gospel in the ‘heart language’ of the vast majority of the population,” notes BTGMI director Rev. Bob Heerspink.

“Haitians are still feeling the aftershocks of the earthquake today, both emotionally and spiritually,” reports Lesley Millar Toussaint, CRC World Missions staff member who helps coordinate the Bible study program for BTGMI.

Working with BTGMI Haitian staff, CRWM staff, and CRWRC representatives, Rev. Zachary King, CRWM church



Volunteers from Fremont First CRC traveled to Haiti to build a new recording studio.

and leadership developer, proposed a plan to translate messages of encouragement into Creole to more effectively reach people still suffering. In order to accomplish that, the Haitian ministry needed a recording studio in Port-au-Prince.

That’s where the Fremont volunteers stepped in. Rev. King mentioned this need to his supporters at First CRC. “We’ve all had a heart for ministry to those who are underprivileged,” said Steve Breuker, one of the Fremont

volunteers whose group has made several mission trips to the Caribbean to work on construction projects. “Following the earthquake, we all decided God was calling us to go to Haiti.”

The volunteers—among them four carpenters—hailed computers, speakers, and recording equipment with them, and spent eight days transforming a room in the Haitian CRC ministry center into a soundproof recording studio. Local electricians worked to get all the

equipment up and running.

Through the “Help Haiti” fund, BTGMI was able to hire additional staff to provide spiritual counseling to those who respond to the broadcasts—an average of 1,500 people each month since the studio was completed. Other partners—including CRWRC and the Billy Graham Association—are also making use of the new studio to provide audio and video resources in Creole. “Our small investment is bearing significant fruit,” says Heerspink.

“We are preparing short advertising spots to let the public know about our counseling and pastoral care services,” Toussaint reports. “We really look forward to see how God will use this studio to advance the work in his kingdom here in Haiti.” ■

—Nancy Vander Meer, staff writer for Back to God Ministries International

CTS Partners with Kuyper College

Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) has created a new partnership with Kuyper College through an agreement that shortens the required time for students to complete their undergraduate and graduate level work. Both of the educational institutions are in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The new arrangement will allow students to complete all their required courses for a bachelor degree from Kuyper and a master-of-divinity degree (M.Div.) from CTS in six years, an academic plan that used to take seven or more years to complete.

Administrators at both institutions have been working hard to see how a potential partnership could more efficiently prepare students interested in parish ministry, all without taking away from a student’s academic experience.

“The six-year B.S. and M.Div. agreement does not change the requirements of either degree program,” says David Rylaarsdam, acting vice president for Academic Affairs at CTS.

“It simply shows Kuyper students how to take full advantage of Calvin Seminary’s advanced placement possibilities, as well as Kuyper’s summer courses.” ■

—Matthew Cooke, director of admissions at Calvin Theological Seminary

Student Lands Prestigious Theological Fellowship

People were always telling Daniel Camacho as he was growing up that he had a call to ministry. But what Camacho wanted was a call to play shortstop for the New York Mets. “I thought those claims were ridiculous,” he said of the predictions, “but they’ve come back to haunt me.”

Now a Calvin College religion and philosophy major, Camacho recently won an undergraduate fellowship from the Fund for Theological Education (FTE). The \$2,000 fellowship supports “gifted young leaders from diverse racial and ethnic communities and a variety of Christian faith traditions who are exploring ministry as vocation.” It also enabled Camacho to attend a four-day FTE conference in New Orleans this summer.

Camacho grew up in Uniondale, N.Y., the son of Colombian parents who, though not full-time pastors, engaged in several types of ministry. “I think they know a lot more than I do,” he said. “Even if I know more knowledge in books, they know Jesus, and that continues to inspire me.”

His mother was a preacher, and Camacho compares her to Monica, the

mother of St. Augustine. “It’s been her prayers and her love and her work that have pushed me forward,” he said. The family attended a Spanish-speaking United Methodist church—“a vibrant community that nourished my faith,” he said.

Despite prognostications, Camacho didn’t have a sense of his calling until high school. “I realized that among friends and in school, I was passionate about sharing the gospel, and I was passionate about sharing my faith,” he said. “That was the moment that I realized this might be what God wanted me to do.” His pastor confirmed his calling and encouraged it—even allowing Camacho to share the pulpit from time to time.

Camacho chose Calvin to give his ministry preparation a liberal arts foundation—which is why he studies philosophy as well as religion. “I see it as giving me a broader perspective. Just because I get involved in the church doesn’t mean I have to limit myself,” he said. “Philosophy asks the big questions.” Camacho also minors in church, society, and ministry through the department of congregational and ministry studies. ■

—Myrna Anderson, Calvin College



Daniel Camacho:
passionate about
sharing the gospel

Every Square Inch

Heavy rain drenches the streets outside as about 25 people arrive on a Sunday afternoon for worship as part of the newly formed Square Inch Church.

Most members are in their 20s and 30s. Children roam freely in the congregation’s spacious room on the third floor of a renovated building in the artsy East Hills Neighborhood of Grand Rapids, Mich.

This Christian Reformed Home Missions-supported church begins worship with a call-and-response litany; their liturgy follows an ancient Christian pattern.

Congregational prayers come next. People speak of sick friends and of work they can do for others. They offer praises for getting jobs and words of comfort for those who have lost jobs.

Guitars accompany both contemporary praise songs and old-time hymns. Pastor Steve De Ruiter plays one guitar. He also gives the sermon and oversees communion.

De Ruiter’s message centers on the workings of the Holy Spirit in the lives of people. In it, he says, “In moments of great pain, the Holy Spirit articulates our moans and groans. The Spirit holds us tight. . . .”

After the worship service, everyone gathers for a vegan potluck dinner, sharing food and stories and elements of their faith.

“I felt the call to plant Square Inch in Grand Rapids when I realized how those skeptical of the Christian faith—and the church in particular—were seeking their answers outside of the Christian community,” De Ruiter says.

“I am particularly drawn to artists and musicians. . . . But Square Inch is not just a place for artists. It is a place for those who are seeking God and seeking a community within which to work out life’s questions.” ■

—Christian Reformed Home Missions
Communications

Really Cool Rainforests

Are you ready for a food hunt? Go into your kitchen and place a checkmark next to the items that you have in your refrigerator or cupboards.

- bananas
- coffee
- cinnamon
- coconut
- cashews
- chocolate
- mangos
- pineapple
- vanilla
- black pepper
- rice

What do these foods and spices have in common? They all come from rainforests!

Tropical rainforests are amazing places filled with millions of trees, plants, wild animals, and other creatures. Rainforests provide people with food, many different types of medicines, rubber for tires, and much more.

Though the closest rainforest may be thousands of miles from your home, these wonderful places are part of our lives in more ways than we realize.

I hope you brought your umbrella and hiking boots—let's explore!



Where Are Rainforests?

Many of the earth's rainforests are located in hot, humid places like Central and South America and parts of Africa, Asia, and Australia. Though rainforests cover only a small amount of space on the Earth, they contain more than half the world's land-based plants and animals!

Who Lives in Rainforests?

Millions of rare and beautiful insects and animals live in rainforests. So many different types of creatures live in rainforest trees, rivers, and on the forest floor that thousands have not yet been discovered!

Circle the creatures below that you think live in tropical rainforests. Then check your answers at the bottom of the page.

				
gorilla	red-eyed tree frog	grizzly bear	toucan	bald eagle
				
boa constrictor	loon	tarantula	moose	jaguar



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY

Are Rainforests in Danger?

Rainforests are some of the most beautiful places in the world. Sadly, parts of these majestic forests disappear every day. Many rainforests are destroyed to provide land for farming, to raise cattle, or to sell wood to make paper and furniture. As a result, millions of rainforest creatures are killed or forced to find new homes. Some creatures become *endangered*, which means there are only a few of their kind left on Earth. Many of these creatures die off completely and become *extinct*.

Why Does It Rain So Much in Rainforests?

Many of the rainforests in the world are located around an invisible line along the center of the earth called the *equator*. Countries near the equator are usually very hot because they receive lots of sunlight. Tropical rainforests also tend to have plentiful supplies of water from rivers, streams, and oceans, making these forests hot and humid.

The intense light from the sun rapidly heats up water in rainforests, causing the water to turn into a gas (known as *water vapor*) and rise into the air. As the water vapor rises into the sky, it cools down and collects into water droplets in the form of clouds. After a while, so much water collects into clouds that the water becomes too heavy and falls back to the ground as rain.

This process happens over and over again, sometimes several times a day in the rainforest. Many rainforests receive as much as 100 inches of rain a year—that's around 8 feet (2.4 meters)! See "Rainforest in a Bottle" for how to make your own example of this cycle.

How Can We Save Rainforests?

In Genesis 2:28, God tells Adam and Eve to care for the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and every living creature that roams the earth. That includes creatures in the rainforest! Today it's our turn to take care of God's magnificent creation, including the rainforests. So how can we do that?

Here are a few ideas:

- Recycle paper in your home and school.
- Ask your parents to buy materials made from recycled paper and cardboard.
- Use less paper by writing on the front and back of each sheet.
- Write letters to your local government leaders to help raise awareness about rainforests.
- Tell others about the importance of rainforests.
- Hold a fundraiser in your school, church, or with friends and donate the money to a rainforest organization.
- Visit <http://kidssavingtherainforest.org> to learn more about saving rainforests.

Rainforest in a Bottle

Try making a miniature rainforest to keep in your home!

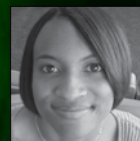
What you'll need:

- A clean 2-liter plastic soda bottle with top
- Scissors or a knife (ask a grownup for help)
- Clear packing tape
- Potting soil
- Small houseplants
- Water
- Small rocks or gravel

What to do:

Ask a parent to help you cut the soda bottle in half to separate the top of the bottle from the bottom. Add the rocks to the bottom of the bottle and cover them with potting soil. Place your small plants into the soil and add enough water to make the soil moist. Put the top of the bottle back on and tape the bottle back together.

Place your bottle in a window with lots of sunlight. Over the next few days, watch your "rainforest" grow! You don't need to add extra water to the bottle, since the water trapped inside the bottle recycles itself. Do you notice little water droplets on the side of your bottle? You've successfully created a rainforest!



Christin Baker once went ziplining through a rainforest in Costa Rica.

She is a full-time stay-at-home mom who also writes for Faith Alive. She and her family live in Grand Rapids, Mich.

On the Edge of Faith

SOMETIMES I'M JEALOUS of other Christians.

Maybe you know the ones I'm thinking about: those who seem to have their "Christian act" together a lot better than I do. Their faith and confidence in God remain stable and strong. When they pray, they receive discernible, positive answers to their requests. They can clearly identify where and how God is at work in their lives. Maybe that's why they always seem optimistic and cheerful.

My experience is very different from that. My faith goes up and down like a roller coaster. On a good day I feel pretty confident that God indeed is my compassionate and caring Father, that Jesus Christ has erased the record of my sin, and that the Holy Spirit is empowering me to live a new life.

But then there are the days when I am simply not sure. I feel like I'm praying to an empty space in the sky. I see no evidence of God actively at work in my life. I wonder whether Christianity is maybe just a myth after all. I try to keep believing, but it's not easy. I cling to faith, but sometimes I don't know how much longer I can hold on. I survive somehow, somewhere on the edge of faith.

As a young person my doubt centered on the question of assurance: How could I be sure that I was really a Christian? How could I know that God had really forgiven *me*?

As an adult my doubt has centered more on the question of truth: Does the gracious and loving God Christians profess actually exist? And, if God does exist, why does the course of my life seem so difficult and confusing? I have experienced repeated job failures, depression, and chronic pain. God's presence amid these difficulties has been hard to discern. I'm always clinging to the edge of faith—

sometimes, it seems, hanging on only by my fingertips.

Myth of Certainty

Several years ago I read *The Myth of Certainty* by Daniel Taylor (InterVarsity Press, 1986). Taylor addresses his book to "the reflective Christian." He describes the reflective person as someone who is always asking questions, someone for whom reality is always ambiguous and confusing.

Reflective people struggle to achieve certainty in their lives. The absolute confidence of both the "cynical unbeliever" and the "fundamentalist Christian" eludes them. Taylor contends that the experience of reflective people is, in a sense, true to the nature of reality. Absolute certainty about truth does not exist: "My own experience is that for human beings certainty does not exist, has never existed, will—in our finite state—never exist, and, moreover, should not. It is not a gift God has chosen to give His creatures, doubtlessly wisely," Taylor writes.

Reading Taylor's book was a minor revelation for me. It affirmed that I am not the only Christian who struggles with uncertainty and doubt. And it suggested that my God-given personality might have something to do with it. This makes a lot of sense to me. After all, everyone recognizes that different personalities cause people to respond to the same situation in remarkably different ways. The optimist takes a cold, rainy day in stride, while the pessimist concludes that it confirms his suspicion that life is a miserable, frustrating affair.

So one Christian with a more confident attitude may find what she regards as positive certainty in her Christian faith, while another may agree with Taylor that no such certainty is possible.

But personality cannot explain all our differences. Do confident Christians, for





Doubt is a necessary condition for faith to exist.

PHOTO BY MATTHEW HOWARTH

example, receive more answers to prayer than so-called reflective Christians, or is that simply how it appears to them? Someone might claim that the confident Christian has more faith than the reflective one, but I think that leads us to an unfair conclusion: that it may require more faith for me to keep believing in God in my difficult and confusing circumstances than it does for a confident Christian to receive what she perceives as concrete answers to her prayers.

Look at Job and his friends. Job struggled to maintain his faith, while his confident friends claimed to have all the answers. But who was closer to the truth?

Necessity of Doubt

More recently I read *Faith & Doubt* by John Ortberg (Zondervan, 2008). Ortberg admits that he continually struggles with doubt in his own life and claims that this is normal for all Christians. In fact, he explains that doubt is a necessary condition for faith to exist: If we possessed absolute certainty, faith would no longer be necessary. Doubt drives us to seek to know God better and is thus a necessary motivation for our faith.

The important thing is that we do not allow our doubt to keep us from making a commitment. Ortberg asserts that “trying to put off deciding what to do about God is like jumping off a diving board and trying to put off actually entering the water.” Living without faith and without making any commitments is impossible.

Ortberg’s book is encouraging in its affirmation that many Christians struggle with doubt and that such struggle is perfectly normal. Our Christian hope is that someday our faith will become sight, but until that happens we must learn to live with ambiguity and uncertainty.

There is certainly scriptural warrant for acknowledging and affirming believers in times of doubt. We need only turn to

the psalms of lament to see Old Testament believers struggling with serious doubts about God. In Psalm 10:1 the author cries, “Why, O LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?” And in Psalm 88:14 we read these troubled words: “Why, O LORD, do you reject me and hide your face from me?” Doubt and anxiety were obviously part of the Old Testament believers’ experience.

In the New Testament the followers of Jesus were thrown into absolute confusion and despair after his condemnation and crucifixion. It seemed to them that all their excited hopes that Jesus was the Messiah sent from God had been pulverized by the religious Sanhedrin and the Roman government. But when the risen Christ appeared to them, their doubt and despair instantaneously transformed into joy and new hope.

Our face-to-face encounter with the risen and glorified Savior will someday banish all our confusion and doubt too. But, until then, we live in faith and hope.

I still exist somewhere on the edge of faith—never quite certain yet never giving up either. Like Job, who clung to his faith in God even when it seemed that God had become his enemy and his persecutor, I hang on to the promises of God through my experiences of confusion and despair. I can’t wait until my own face-to-face meeting with Jesus transforms my doubt and fear into certainty and joy. ■



Daniel Boerman is a freelance writer and a member of Forest Grove (Mich.) Christian Reformed Church.

Getting Schooled by Superman

DAVIS GUGGENHEIM EARNED AN OSCAR for directing Al Gore's documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*. Soon after that, Guggenheim discovered an inconvenient truth of his own. While he supported "the idea that public school could work," he was afraid of sending his own children to "failing schools." So, every day he drives past three public schools and drops his kids off at a private school.

In the documentary *Waiting for "Superman"* (Paramount), Guggenheim highlights families who don't have the same means or the same choices. He traces five children (four from inner-city areas in Los Angeles, the Bronx, Harlem, and Washington, D.C.; and one from a wealthy California suburb)

and their attempts to get a spot in popular charter schools through lotteries.

Guggenheim intersperses the film's narrative with catchy animations and amusing classroom clips from TV shows such as "The Simpsons" and "Welcome Back, Kotter," as well as engaging interviews with educators such as Geoffrey Canada, president of the Harlem Children's Zone charter system. Canada explains his sadness when he learned as a child that Superman did not exist—that no one was going to pull him suddenly out of poverty. Instead, as in the school



system he leads, success would come from high expectations and hard work.

For Guggenheim, educational success is impossible in many public high schools that have turned into "drop-out factories." He blames top-heavy public school administrations for avoiding true reform and criticizes teacher unions for defending job security (tenure), even when that means incompetent teachers retain their positions.

This documentary has received its share of criticism. In *The New Yorker*, David Denby wished for a film that showed "why some charter schools work and others don't." Diane Ravitch provided a savage critique in *The New York Review of Books*,

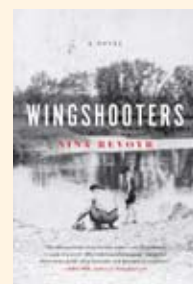
depicting the film as a propaganda piece for charter schools, based on the false assumption that "teachers alone can overcome the effects of student poverty."

While I realize that Guggenheim favors emotion over evenhandedness, I couldn't help being caught up in the lives of the children he features—good kids with little chance of getting a good education. I thought of the public schools down the road, where I know that many students have fewer opportunities than my own children have at neighboring private Christian schools. And, like Guggenheim, I couldn't help but feel a bit guilty and wonder what I could do to help.

Even if *Waiting for "Superman"* lacks balance, it does offer a good starting point for discussion and debate on how to improve all schools, private and public. ■



Otto Selles teaches French at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. He is a member of Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church.



Wingshooters

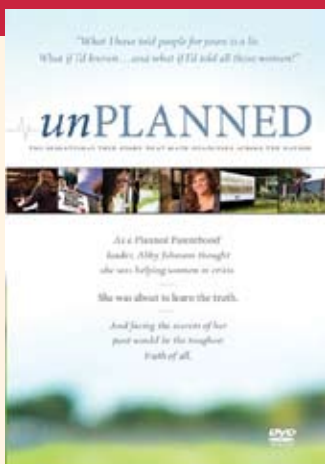
by **Nina Revoyr**

reviewed by **Jim Romahn**

Michelle LeBeau is growing up in her grandparents' home in Deerhorn, Wis., hoping that her war-veteran father and her Japanese mother will reconcile and return. Instead she's bullied by the prejudiced children of prejudiced parents in a rural town that has never had a non-white member of its closed society. Then the town's first black residents arrive, a teacher and a nurse from Chicago, and the tension begins to boil. Charlie LeBeau, the grandfather, embodies both the best and the worst of this society—and is a masterful example of character development. (Akashic)

A good starting point for discussion and debate on how to improve all schools.





unPlanned

by **Abby Johnson with Cindy Lambert**
reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**

During Abby Johnson's eight years with Planned Parenthood, she was, by her own admission, "leading an unexamined life, filled with inconsistencies." Initially, Johnson was convinced that the organization sought women's welfare. However, she couldn't reconcile herself to its changing goals, which included late-term abortions. On the day she helped with an abortion, the scales fell from her eyes and she saw abortion as the murder of a child. Johnson's gripping story is ultimately the story of how God intervened in her life, especially through the "40 Days of Life" prayer movement. (SaltRiver)

Manga Messiah Series

reviewed by **Ron VandenBurg**

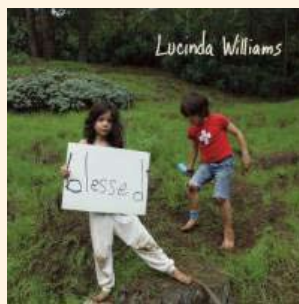


Originating in Japan, manga is a comic book style loved the world over. Roald Lidel created Next, a nonprofit company of authors and illustrators, to "reach children who might resist traditional Bible translations and never attend a church." With its action-packed storytelling, the *Manga Messiah* series wonderfully illustrates biblical truths. Available in 21 languages, *Manga Messiah* presents the gospel stories, while *Manga Metamorphosis* illustrates the book of Acts. *Manga Mutiny*, *Manga Melech*, and the upcoming *Manga Messengers* deal with parts of the Old Testament. Ages 10 and up. (Tyndale House)

Blessed

by **Lucinda Williams**
reviewed by **Adele Konyndyk**

The latest album by seasoned folk-rock singer Lucinda Williams may kick off with a snarling break-up song, but the range of *Blessed* is far richer than just lover's scorn. Lyrics go from wrangling with suicide and war to celebrating gratitude and "sweet love." The music, too, balances what is seemingly contrary, employing both blazing guitar riffs and tender acoustic strums. *Blessed* is a unique and grittily elegant album, aptly described by Williams as an exploration into the "agonizing beauty of life." (Lost Highway)



THE LOWDOWN



Second Helping:

Book clubs everywhere will be heading to the movies to see the

film version of *The Help*, due out this month. (Dreamworks)



Road Trip: Thinking about an end-of-summer vacation? Find out how much it will cost to drive there and back with *GasBuddy.com*, where you can calculate costs and use interactive maps of gas prices in the U.S. and Canada.



Soul Food: *Soul Surfer*, the inspirational biopic of teen surfer Bethany Hamilton who was attacked by a shark, is out on DVD this month. See our review at *thebanner.org*. (AFFIRM Films)



College Bound?

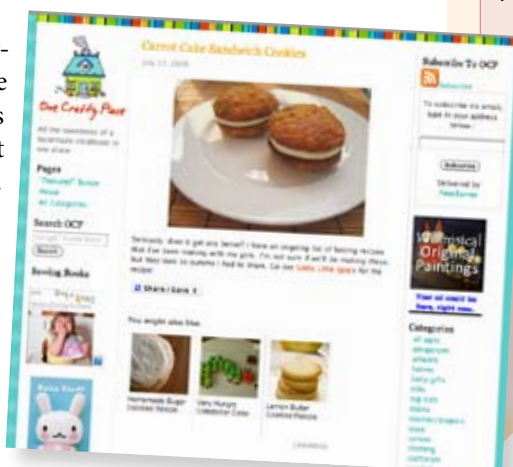
Read Derek Melleby's slim volume, *Make College Count*.

Full of wisdom about what success means for Christians, both in life and in school, it's a valuable tool for students and parents. (Baker)

OneCraftyPlace.com

reviewed by **Sandy Swartzentruber**

You won't find egg carton flowers or handprint turkeys here. *OneCraftyPlace.com* is stuffed to the rafters with instructions for handmade crafts that are humble and old-fashioned without leaning too far toward the cutesy or cliché. Check out the "rag quilt alphabet," the "personalized first word book," and the "felt food." Also included are mouth-watering baked goods recipes, educational toys to make, recycled and repurposed kids' clothes, fun party ideas (see "Young Einstein"), and much more. This blog was crafted with care, and it shows.



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



Here's a short list of needful truths most pastors would like to see you work into your life.

“PASTOR, CAN I TALK WITH YOU?” That question approaches me like an iceberg—I can only see the tip, but I know there’s a lot more beneath the surface. By the time people make their way into my study, their problem has already reached a critical stage. Like doctors, pastors would love people to come in for preventive care rather than wait until they’re in need of intensive care.

What kind of preventive care would pastors suggest for souls on the journey with Jesus? What 10 critical things might *your* pastor want you to know? My top 10 are not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, I’d like to offer a short list of needful truths I think most pastors would like to see you work into your life, so that you may “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18):

1. Pastors care about your soul. People come into my study because their souls are in turmoil. A young woman is pregnant and her parents will not be happy with the news. An elder finds out his son was arrested and wonders what others will think about it. A vibrant and gifted student has thoughts of ending her life and doesn’t believe God would care. A member complains about the worship or my preaching. Pastors are available to listen to the cries of hurting souls looking for a place to unload and talk about things of God. (If we do not care about your soul, we’d better find another line of work.) If you need a therapist, there are capable Christian doctors and counselors to help you. But if the problem lies in your soul, pastors are your best line of preventive care. Your soul needs a person to hear your confessions, to help you see Jesus at work in your life, and to pray with you. We care about you!

2. You are loved! After I announce the final song in our morning worship and begin to stroll down the middle aisle of the sanctuary, my eye catches Amy as she stands outside the pew. Her face has lit up because she’s ready to go. She watches me as I pass to take my place at the door to shake hands with people. Once the song has been sung, Amy rushes toward me. She knows what’s coming, and I know it too. She wants a hug from her pastor. Amy has not missed a hug in 17 years. Then a little boy named A.J. takes a running start and plows into me like a linebacker. He doesn’t hug, he *sacks* me with love. People come into my study carrying the heavy burdens of judgment, shame, and being depersonalized by the world, family, and life. I know a hug doesn’t solve everything and that pastors need to be careful, but an appropriate, healing touch goes a long way. You are enveloped and loved by Jesus Christ! You are loved by your pastors!

3. God is bigger than you. “Pastor, just give me the answer, and I’ll take care of the rest.” That’s a common request from many people who step into the pastor’s study. Spouses want a quick fix for a marriage that took 20 years to destroy. Leaders complain that if more members were as committed as they were, things would magically whip into shape. Or they tell pastors, “If your sermons were better, people would obey Jesus faithfully.” These are all attempts to correct life with easy answers and a side order of can-do attitude. But as pastors, we want to save you some time and trouble by telling you one important thing: God is bigger than you! God is not interested in making your life easier—he’s interested in making you holy. Jesus resists your every attempt to conform him to your life project. The Spirit refuses to stay in your box. As pastors, we want to let you in on a little secret: God has been running the world successfully since, let’s say, forever! God wants to take control of your whole life, not play a supporting role. How are you learning to fit into the mission of the Father, Son, and Spirit?

4. Let Scripture set the text of your life. During many pastoral conversations, when people watch me open up the Bible, tension enters the room. I see their faces tighten. I hear the leather squeak as they squirm in their seats. Their arms quickly fold across their chests. They murmur under their breath, “Oh no, not the Bible,” or ask, “Pastor, is there another book you can recommend?” I reply, “Yeah, but this is the best one I know.” As pastors, we know that everything in the Bible has been lived. The Bible knows the human condition and experience well—God caught it all in one book! The Bible has everything from rocky marriages to wayward children to premature deaths to good sex. And it points you to a good God. When the text of the Bible sets and directs your life, you will find an amazing Jesus at the center of it. Come with an open mind, heart, and soul, and the Lord of the Word will speak life into your life.

5. We all have blind spots. “It’s Al Walker! Do you want to talk to him, pastor?” Mr. Walker considers himself the Black Elvis in my neighborhood. He slicks his dark hair back with enough grease to fry chicken. His eyes are wide and intimidating, scaring most of my staff. He insists on speaking to me. Why? He wants to sell me one of his homemade gospel or blues CDs. After an hour, I buy one of his blues recordings. I listen to it, and it’s the worst music I’ve ever heard. Mr. Walker has a blind spot about his music. He thinks he’s good, but he’s really bad! We all have blind spots in our lives that we cannot see, and we need trustworthy people to lovingly »

point them out. Your pastor wants you to know that your blind spots can help you see your need for Christian community and companionship. That's why we're here!

6. Time is on your side. I visit a young woman admitted to a local psychiatric hospital. She's struggling with anorexia and is in an abusive relationship. She knows her life is a mess and was convinced it would never get any better. She hopes to conquer her disease and take control of her life. She desires to make Jesus the captain of her soul. She sets a target date of one year to become free from her sickness. But what if she falls short, blocked by the limits of human effort? What is the one thing she has going for her? Time. Her journey isn't about setting dates (which can sometimes be helpful) but about allowing Jesus, community, and prayer to perform their patient, good work in her life. Jesus did not expect Peter, James, and the other disciples to become tip-top copies of him in one year. Rather, it took years after he left this world for them to figure out what Jesus was after: commitment to his way, truth, and life. Time works in your favor. Your pastor wants you to know that Jesus will take his sweet time to make you into the person God has called you to be.

7. You need worship! "Pastor, is worship really that important?" I remember a man who sat in the back of the church with his family. He was a hard-working husband and father. He owned his own business. He showed up for church every now and then to make his wife and children happy. He was interested in Jesus but not in worship. He could not work up much lather for worship because he did not see its importance for his soul. Working, providing, and enjoying his weekends were sacred ground for him. About three years ago I saw him in a local store, buying a pack of cigarettes. His face looked worried, his head bent down by life. He purchased his smokes, walked out, and drove away. As I watched him, I whispered in my head, "Please find a place to worship God and give him your heavy burdens." He needed God and he needed worship! We were created to worship God. When we gobble up more time for ourselves, we shrink our souls. We all need regular worship because God wants to address our weary spirits. Jesus wants to speak his amazing grace into our lives! The Holy Spirit wants to encourage us into a gospel world of rest, renewal, and reconciliation. Your pastor wants you to know that regular worship is as important to you as water is to your body.

8. You can pray for God's kingdom to come in you. I've noticed that people do not change much when their lives are cruising briskly along. Then something unexpected crashes into them, and life must be re-evaluated. Old things must be unlearned and new things learned in the light of new priorities—God's priorities. In my study I find

people thinking long and hard about the lessons God wants to teach them. Where does the Lord begin? Right here: pray for God's kingdom to come in you! The place to begin is with our hearts and minds by asking God to change us. As a kid I sang the old gospel song, "It's me, it's me, it's me O Lord, standing in the need of prayer." God's kingdom comes when we are on our knees. Why? Because sin is a tough tenant to evict from our lives! We must ask for outside help. Ask Jesus to come into your life and reconstruct it so you can stand strong when the winds and rains of life pound you.

9. You need to tell others what God has done for you! If Jesus is the best thing that's ever happened to us, why do we keep such good news to ourselves? We believe we are not saved through our works or efforts, but through a gracious Jesus who saved us while we were still sinners. That sounds like the best news in the universe! We are walking and talking miracles. Your pastor preaches and teaches the good news that we are miracles of grace alone in Christ Jesus. How can you keep such good news to yourself? Go and tell your story of grace, mercy, and blessing to your neighbors and friends!

10. Don't settle for a safe life. One woman in my church was a vivacious and compassionate person in her early years. She loved the Lord, faithfully serving Christ's church and community. Then something happened in her life and she began to pull away from people. She stopped coming to church. She withdrew from friends and ministry. She closed the door on life. She lived alone in her apartment for almost 30 years, rarely gracing the outside of her door. When she died, I found out she'd bet her life on security so as not to risk getting hurt again. Hers was one of the hardest funerals I've officiated at as a pastor. Jesus calls us into a world filled with risks and dangers. God does not promise us a hurt-free life. We, as God's servants, cannot build utopias to avoid the world. We are called to enter, redeem, and celebrate that this is our Father's world! When you settle for safety, you never get it. Why not take a risk and teach a child to read, or assist a neighbor with home repairs? Let's make God smile by serving others! Jesus wants to use you to extend his kingdom a little bit today. As a pastor, I just thought you should know. ■



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

Supporting Public Education

IN HIS BANNER ARTICLE LAST AUGUST, James K.A. Smith made a cogent case for Christian schooling (“The Case for Christian Education”). Joining an esteemed list of apologists with names like Beversluis, Oppewal, and Wolterstorff, he made attractive once again a Reformed vision for Christian day schools.

Christian schools are not supported uniformly by all Reformed denominations, however, which implies that Christian schooling is a fitting but not a necessary or sufficient indicator of Reformed orthodoxy. At least some members of the Reformed community recognize that their Reformed identity can be expressed and nurtured in a variety of educational contexts.

In fact, Reformed thinking prompts active involvement by Christians in the world of public schools. Abraham Kuyper’s “every square inch” surely includes the sphere of public education. Christian teachers and administrators are called to leadership roles in public schools. Christian parents, too, can be called to public education by enrolling their children, participating in parent-teacher organizations, and serving on school boards. Public education provides powerful possibilities for engaging the needs of God’s world and for making the gospel luminous.

As citizens, Christians have a stake in the welfare of our nations, and that welfare, as Thomas Jefferson noted long ago, is dependent on an educated populace. That’s why Christian voters consistently support public school millages as well as financially support an alternative school system. Though Christian school supporters lobby for more equitable sharing of public funds, most recognize the public good provided by tax-supported schools. Such civic-minded behavior is fitting for children of the King who “render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s” (Mark 12:17).

Canada and the United States are pluralistic societies that prize religious liberty. Yet how will we live with our deepest differences? Classrooms, both public and private, are places to model and teach how to do this, protecting all people despite our competing views about truth. Our Christian faith demands that all children be treated justly by the government and by schools.

The very existence
of **private schools**
has consequences
for public schools.

Unintended Consequences

The very existence of private schools has consequences for public schools—consequences that are never intended by Christian school supporters but are nonetheless real. One is diminution in the overall quality of schools when some children are removed from the mix.

Children whose parents are able to afford private school tuition typically bring to school with them all the benefits and privileges of their more prosperous lives. They have travelled, gone to museums and plays, and been exposed to books. Studies show that middle-class children have tens of thousands more words in their vocabularies than impoverished children. When such students enroll in nonpublic schools, the opportunity to share their experience and knowledge with peers of differing backgrounds is lost.

A parallel cost for so-called “privileged” children is the loss of opportunity to learn from children whose life experiences differ from their own. Children who appear to have less can teach many things, such as coping skills, resilience, the fact that happiness is not found in the abundance of possessions, and the truth that beauty can be found and love given and received in many ways and places.

Another unintended wound to public education is reduction in the number of powerful advocates for school improvement. Any parent close to schools knows the value of alertness and advocacy. When too few involved parents are on the scene, the potential for injurious things to happen increases. Intolerable conditions persist because they remain unseen or because the people who see do not know how to change them—or because »

injustices that affect someone else are easier to ignore. The energy required to sustain Christian schools diverts the attention of many capable and savvy members of a community away from the public school system.

Illuminating and combating social injustice requires that we honestly and fully acknowledge how the practice of Christian schooling can operate to stigmatize, segregate, and disadvantage some children. We must face the reality that separate schools can contribute to the cultural and political devaluation especially of students who are poor or of ethnic minorities.

Public Education as Calling

Clearly, some Christians are called to teach in public schools. Close to half the teachers who graduate from the Christian college where I teach obtain employment as Christ-centered, transformational teachers in public schools. Many specifically seek employment in public education because they sense the world's great need in that arena. They see schools that are insufficiently funded, poorly resourced, and inadequately staffed. As lovers of justice, they are offended by the inequities experienced by students in public schools, especially in urban areas. Addressing such issues becomes their ministry. For similar reasons, many congregations partner with their neighborhood public schools to provide tutoring, materials, encouragement, and prayer as part of their servant work.

Public school teachers are in a position to love and guide children and adolescents who may not receive what they need at home or in their neighborhoods (though we must not be quick to assume the worst of students' home lives). As one teacher said to Gloria and Julia Stronks, "There is a gap between those who have the background to follow their dreams and those who hardly dare dream" (see *Christian Teachers in Public Schools: A Guide for Teachers, Administrators, and Parents*, Baker Books, 1999). While many children live in homes filled with love, no matter their economic background, too many in North America live in unsafe places in which it is a wonder that they survive. Thank God some teachers are called to spend themselves in the company of such students.

Parents sometimes feel compelled to send their children to public schools for reasons that are inherently Reformed. For example, some families are committed to live in city neighbor-

hoods. They incarnate Jesus in their community advocacy and enroll their children in neighborhood public schools as a way of living out their Reformed witness in the world and as a means to teach their children how to be salt and light.

Much more can be said on this subject. Readers interested in developing their thinking about how Christians can live their faith in nonsectarian schools are encouraged to read the excellent book by Stronks and Stronks referenced above.

Public education is certainly holy ground that summons the investment of Reformed Christians. ■ **WEB Q'S**



Dr. Thomas B. Hoeksema just retired after 36 years as professor of education at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., where his passion has been in building inclusive communities for diverse learners.

Advertising Information

Deadlines: Sept. issue is 8/1/11. Oct. issue is 9/5/11. Visit www.thebanner.org for complete details.

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

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

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

Denominational and Classical Announcements

Candidates for the Ministry

SYNOD 2011, has approved a one-year extension of candidacy for the following candidates: Amanda C. Bakale, S. Nicholas Bierma, Micah J. Bruxvoort, Matthew J. Eenigenburg, Adam T. Eisenga, Chad A. Haan, Jennifer S. Holmes, Linda A. Johnson, Joseph J. Kim, Lucas R. Lockard, George W. Lubbers, Erin M. Marshalek, Mary B. Stegink, David P. Stockdale, Adam J. Stout, Matthew D. VandenHeuvel, Ashley M. VanDragt, Geoffrey A. VanDragt, Brian Willats.
Rev. Joel R. Boot, interim executive director

Congregational Announcements

50th Anniversaries

BETHEL CRC OF FULTON, IL will celebrate 50 years of God's blessings and grace upon our generation and the generations that have brought us to this event on September 24 & 25, 2011. On the 24th, we will enjoy a banquet at Unity High School and a program at the church. We will continue our praise and gratitude to our loving Lord with a special worship service on Sunday morning the 25th. All friends and past members are invited to attend. More information on the events can be found on our web site, www.bethelfulton.org or call the church office at 815-589-2501.

HOPE COMMUNITY CRC of Riverside, CA is celebrating 50 years of God's faithfulness on October 8 - 9, 2011. We invite all friends and former members to join us. Please check our website for more information: www.hopeccriverside.com.

HOPE CRC OF HULL, IA is celebrating "50 Years of Hope" on September 14-18, 2011. We invite all friends and former members to celebrate God's faithfulness with us. Visit www.hullhopecc.org for more information.

HOPE CRC OF OAK FOREST, IL is celebrating 50 years of "Hope from Generation to Generation" on September 24-25, 2011. We invite all former members, friends and Hope family to join us at a dinner on Saturday and for a celebratory worship on Sunday. For more information, please contact Elsa Fennema, efennema25@gmail.com

TRINITY CRC in Ames, Iowa is celebrating 50 years of ministry at Iowa State University and in the Ames community. We invite friends and former members (including those who remember us as "University CRC") to join us October 7-9 as we remember our history, re-connect with old friends and rededicate ourselves to God. For more information visit [amestrinity.org](http://www.amestrinity.org) or call 515-292-4676.

Birthdays

100th Birthday

SARENE MILLER OSENGA, turns 100 on July 30. She and sister Marge De Jong, 90, reside at Holland Chr. Home, N. Haledon, NJ, 07508. Son Ray in N. M. and grandson Ryan. Rene has been a blessing to her church, family, and friends.

Called To Serve



*The Inauguration of
Julius T. Medenblik*

*as the Seventh President of
Calvin Theological Seminary*

*Saturday, October 15, 2011, 10:30 a.m.
Calvin College Covenant Fine Arts Center*

Join us for this special service and the reception immediately following. RSVP and receive more information by calling 1-800-388-6034 or visiting our website at www.calvinseminary.edu. Please respond by October 1, 2011.



CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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NELL HAAGEN-VANDEBERG will celebrate her 100th birthday on August 22, 2011. Love from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Correspondence J. Moedt, 6320 Crestwood Drive, Duncan, BC, V9L 5R3. email: bjmoedt@telus.net

95th Birthday

JO KRUIS (PUNT) 725 Baldwin, Jenison 49428 will celebrate her 95th birthday August 28. Her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren praise God for His faithfulness and blessings. We love you, Mom.

90th Birthday

JOAN VANDERKAMP, 3460 Saratoga Rm 221, Downers Grove, IL 60515 celebrates her 90th birthday Aug. 7. Her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren wish her God's blessings.

80th Birthday

CAROLYN DE VRIES (DORNBOS), 6631 Leisure Way Dr., Caledonia, MI 49316, will celebrate her 80th birthday, Lord willing, on September 1, 2011. Wife of the late Harold De Vries. A cake and ice cream Open House honoring her will be held on Monday, August 8, 2011 from 6:30 to 9:00pm at Kellogsville Christian Reformed Church, 610 52nd Street SE, Kentwood, Michigan. No gifts please. Her children Jim and Sandy, Rev. Larry and Lin Lobdell, Pam, 4 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren are thankful for many years of her love and God's faithfulness.

HERMINA (DYKMAN) VISSER, 11070 Little Holland Road, Manhattan, MT 59741, will celebrate her 80th Birthday on August 18. Her 6 children, 12 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren are thankful for her God-centered example and God's faithfulness. Happy birthday Mom, we love you!

Anniversaries

70th Anniversary

BOS, John and Nellie, 777 Thompson Ave., Worthington, MN. 56187 Will celebrate their 70th anniversary on Aug. 6, 2011. Maynard and Linda, Steve and Julane Bellin, Gordon and Lois, and Milton and Cherie along with 11 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren have been blessed with their love and are thankful for their love of their Lord in their lives daily.

60th Anniversary

BUIKEMA William & Gertrude (Werkman) of 13158 S Oak Hills Parkway, Palos Heights, IL 60463 are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary on August 25. Children: Bill Jr. and Debbie, Jan and Joe Erlich, Rob and Danette, Mary and Steven Cappadonia, Tim and Irene. 14 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild. Your love and faithfulness to God and to each other is a blessing to all of us.

DIELEMAN Bill and Emily (Langstraat) of 25 Mansfield Dr., Bella Vista, AR. 72714, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on August 30. Thanking God with them are their children Wendell Dieleman, Bentonville, AR. Cyndi & Dennis DeYoung, Nashville, TN. Kristen & Frank Gandrow, Minneapolis, MN. & grandchildren Dr. Justine DeYoung-Glenday & husband Dr. Alex Glenday, & Eleanor DeYoung and fiance Jake Van Denend

FENNEMA Andy & Lois (VanZuidam) 2627 Ridge Road, Lansing, IL 60438, will celebrate 60 years of marriage on August 2. Children: Dan & Joan, Steve & Char, Jeff & Lois; 7 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren.

SCHULTZE, Bill and Mary (Lepeltak) 3899 Villa Montee Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512 will celebrate 60 years of marriage on August 1. Thanking God with them are their children Dan, Patrick & Ruth Sick-lesteel, Tim & Marti Slot, Tim & Lori Schultze, Joe & Julie Schultze, 13 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

WONDAAL, Marty and Norma (Kingma), 1505 Pinehurst Lane, Schererville, IN 46375 celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 22. We celebrate God's love and faithfulness to our parents - Jan & Carl VanderMolen, Jo & Steve Boender, Marcia & Russ VanDrunen, Marty & Michelle Wondaal, 12 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. We love you

50th Anniversary

BODE Ron & Ruth (Mellema) 357 Bountiful Path Redding, CA 96003, will celebrate 50 years on Aug. 24. We thank God for the blessing they have been to us. Brian & Beth Guikema Bode, Tim & BJ Bode, David & Rhonda Stoltzfus and 11 Grandchildren!

BOUMA, Sid & Virginia (Voskuil) of Visalia, CA will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on August 10, 2011. Children: Ginilu & Ed Vander Wall (Erica, Scott) and Shelayne & Joel Van Ravenswaay (Sydney, Greg, Carly). We give thanks to our God for His great love and faithfulness!

BRUMMEL Roger and Connie (Northouse), 321 Peppermill Lane, Holland, MI 49423, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on August 5.

We thank God for His love and faithfulness to our parents—Brenda and Paul Katerberg (Derek & Alyssa), Sari and Jon Swets (Emily & Jordan), Jean and Paul Nelson (Ivy & Isaac). We love you!

HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY to Nelvin and Lucille Jager! You are a blessing in our lives! -Your kids and grandkids

LOUWERSE Rev. Anthony and Esther of Holland, MI will celebrate 50 years of marriage August 22. Children: Tim (Ruth), Eric (Jill), Brian (Keri), Keith (Jen), James (Julie), Rachel and thirteen grandchildren. To God be the Glory!

Obituaries

BOEREMA Clarence T., 95, on June 12, 2011. 280 W. 40th St., Holland MI 49423. Survived by wife, Ann (Stob); children Janet (Rich) Krosschell, Ed (Shar) Boerema, 8 grandchildren, 3 great grandchildren; sister Edith (John) De Boer; in-laws Eloise Stob, Konrad (Marilyn) Marcus

BULTHUIS- Dale Robert Bulthuis, 38. At rest June 8, 2011. 1049 Ripple, Darien, IL 60561. Son of Ted and Sharon Bulthuis, nee Aardsma; Brother of Linda Crislip, Ted J. (Barb), Bill (Cindy), and Tom Bulthuis. Nephew of Jacob (Sandi) Bulthuis, the late Alyce Chilton, John (Bev) Bulthuis, Bob (Carol) Bulthuis, Al (Barb) Bulthuis, Grace (Bernie) Menninga, Muriel (Warren) Meyer, Lois (Jack) Wiersum, and Cathy (Ed) Prium. Uncle of Amanda (Matt) Aggen, the late Timothy, and Toby Crislip, Chelsey Hines Bulthuis, Tyler and Andrea Bulthuis, William, Nathan, and Elisabeth Bulthuis.

HASPER, Rev. Jacob, 90, went to be with his Lord on May 30, 2011. He was preceded in death by his wife, Gladys (Mulder), son-in-law Anton Frederick Borst, Jr., and granddaughter, Molly Vander Hart. He will be missed greatly by his children: Mary Borst, Ruth (David) Vander Hart, Carol (Steve) Karrip, and David (Lana) Hasper; and his grandchildren, Anton Frederick Borst III, Stephen Borst, Corinne Vander Hart (Ryan Bose), Dirk Vander Hart, and Eric Cheadle

HIBMA Clarence, 85, June 26, 2011; 2017 Mallard Dr. S. E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546; Surviving are Florence, his wife of 59 years; children: Timothy (Cynthia), Thea (Gregory) Hoekman, Gayla Boice, and John (Vicki); 10 grandchildren, and 8 great-grandchildren; sister: Rena Masselink.

JAGER Hattie, age 90 of Shoreline, WA entered into the loving arms of our Lord on June 28, 2011. She was preceded in death by her loving husband, Hilmer. Survived by her daughters Erica (James) Bauman and Heidi (Dale) Alberda; grandchildren: Briana (Chris) Van Elderen; Megan Bauman, Calvin Bauman. Sydney Alberda, and Noelle Alberda; siblings: Kathryn Krosschell, John (Carla) Rensenbrink, James Rensenbrink, and Evelyn Seberry.

PADMOS Radie (Brolsma), age 94; June 24, 2011. She was preceded in death by her husband John Padmos Sr. She is survived by her child John Padmos Jr. (Barbara); grandchildren Peri den Dulk (Kevin), Grant Padmos (Wendy) and Kara Johnston (Hugh) and nine great grandchildren.

SCHEMPER Leonard, age 97, 105 Vera Ave., Ripon, CA 95366, on June 2, 2011. He is survived by his wife of 71 years Ann (Boertien) Schemper, children Judy & Harold Groetsema, Robert & Karen Schemper, Ward & Yvonne Schemper, Annette & Mike Weintz, eight grandchildren, eight great grandchildren, and sister Jeanette (Garrett) Meninga. Saved by grace!

DONALD HENRY SMALLIGAN SR; age 86; June 5, 2011; 2025 Mallard Dr. S. E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546; Don is survived by his wife: Catherine (Smedes); children: Cristine, Donald Jr (Mary Kenyon), James (Kristie Van Dyken), Beth (Jeph McFall), Lorain (Ted Bergin), Jack (Carolyn Brock); grandchildren: Lewis, Alena, Nathan, Ryan (Sarah), Jamie, Meghan, Emily, Connor and Jeremy; great granddaughter: Ellie; brother: Bill (Eleanor) Smalligan; sister-in-law: Grace Smalligan.

TIGCHELAAR John "Joe" age 95, went to be with his Lord and his dear departed wife Gerda on June 14, 2011. Member of the Terra Ceia Christian Reformed Church of Pantego, North Carolina. Survived by 5 children, 9 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and many neices and nephews.

CORNELIUS VAN DER PUY; aged 87; June 6, 2011; 2200 Raybrook S. E., #103, Grand Rapids, MI 49546; He is survived by his wife: Margaret;

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Church Positions Announcements

OAKLAND CRC of Hamilton, MI is seeking a Senior Pastor to lead our congregation. Please send inquiries to oaklandcsrcsearch@gmail.com

PASTOR Celebration Fellowship, an emerging congregation of the Christian Reformed Church is seeking a full-time pastor to lead the ministry to the men incarcerated and released from the Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility in Ionia, Michigan. This three year old vital ministry is supported by over 75 volunteers, regional CRC churches and classes. Ordained men wishing to receive additional information or to submit a resume and pastoral profile should contact Glen Van An del, Steering Team secretary, at: vdel@comcast.net or (616) 530-8892.

MINISTERIAL POSITION Kelowna CRC is in the beautiful Okanagan Valley of British Columbia and is seeking a pastor to lead our congregation with passion and vision for our church. We are a multi-generational, family oriented congregation. We seek strong Godly relational leadership incorporating Biblical preaching, teaching, and modelling. Contact Karl ksorge@forsons.ca

WORSHIP COORDINATOR The Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church is searching for an innovative, creative Worship Coordinator for our 1115 Contemporary service. A position description and desired qualifications for the applicant along with contact information can be found at our website at aaarc.org. Please check it out. 734-665-0105

PASTOR Valley CRC is seeking a Gospel-centered pastor to shepherd our congregation. We are a thriving, community-focused church that

utilizes a blended worship style. We are multi-generational, welcoming and affirming to all God's children. Our safe suburban community in Central New York (Binghamton) is stunning in all seasons, with beautiful rolling hills, trees, rivers and valleys. If you are a caring communicator and feel the call to lead our congregation in shining Christ's light in our valley, please contact Ron Crawford at ValleyPSC@stny.rr.com or visit <http://www.valleycrc.com/pastorportal.html>

PASTOR First Reformed Church is a friendly & caring congregation, with a wide diversity of ages. Our vision for the future involves outreach & discipleship. Prairie City is a small community 20 minutes east of Des Moines, Iowa. For more info contact the church at frcp@prairiecityaol.com or 515 994-2250.

FULL-TIME PASTOR: Oakwood CRC, located in Belding, MI, is seeking a full-time pastor to lead our congregation. We are looking for strong Godly relational leadership through Biblical preaching, teaching, and modeling that can be applied to everyday life. If you are interested please contact John Leppink at John_Leppink@spartanstores.com. Website: www.oakwoodcrc.org

FULL TIME PASTOR Phoenix CRC in Phoenix, AZ is seeking a full-time pastor. We are a small congregation located in the central Phoenix area. We desire a pastor who is committed to sound biblical teaching and able to interact with the youth as well as the neighboring community. If interested, or would like to send a resume contact Andy Keizer, search@phoenixcrc.org, 623-875-5871, website: www.phoenixcrc.org

children: Fred (Barbara) Van Der Puy, John (Mary) Van Der Puy, Michael (Deborah) Van Der Puy, Beth (Paul) Rau, Mark (Sandy) Van Der Puy, Sara Lugtigheid, Connie (Bryan) De Haan; 22 grandchildren; 10 great grandchildren; siblings: Pearl Sadler, Marion Back, Wilbert Van Der Puy, Richard Van Der Puy; and sister-in-law: Dorothy Theune.

ZUIDEMA Marvin, 75, on June 18, 2011. 1846 Observatory Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546; He is survived by his wife, Virginia; children: Vonnie (Kent) Folkema, Roger (Tamara) Zuidema, and Kevin (Maria) Zuidema; grandchildren: Kyle (Jessica) Kara and Amber Folkema, Lance, Ashley and Paige Zuidema, and Annalise and Elena Zuidema. sisters; Ruth (Jack) Kroeze and Jean (Doug) Vanderlaan; in-laws, Robert (Carol) Vanderlaan, Ruth (Jim) Holstine, Doug (Jean) Vanderlaan, and Glen (Marla) Vanderlaan; many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents Albert and Minnie (Weesies) Zuidema; daughters, Dawn and Barbara, granddaughter Amanda Folkema, and in-laws Gerrit and Emily Vanderlaan.

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 or visit our website at www.vangels.com and complete an online application.

COME JOIN OUR TEAM . . . Kooy Brothers Equipment Ltd. in Toronto, Canada is looking for qualified candidates to fill positions on our parts and service counters, and also mechanics for our shop, click on www.kooycareers.com and apply.

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES New Life Christian Reformed Church in Grand Junction, CO seeks a full-time director to lead middle & high school ministries focused on mentoring, spiritual formation, outreach & linking the youth of NLC to the church body. For more information, contact apply@newlifegj.org or call 970-255-9383.

TORONTO DISTRICT CHRISTIAN High School, serving 400+ students in Grades 9-12 in the Greater Toronto Area of Ontario, Canada, seeks an innovative, seasoned Principal. He or she will be a practising Christian, lifelong learner, collaborative mentor, and astute administrator and communicator who loves young people and appreciates diversity. A master's degree in Educational Administration (or equivalent) is expected, along with experience in both teaching and administration at the secondary school level. Please visit www.tdchristian.ca/ search for more detailed information.

UNITY CHRISTIAN (MI) High School, with the announced retirement of current Principal Jack Postma effective June 2012, is searching for a Principal to lead its dynamic high school community beginning July 2012. She or he will be a passionate follower of Jesus Christ, a leader, and a communicator who loves young people and seeks to develop them as followers of Jesus through their Christian education. A Masters Degree in Educational Leadership (or equivalent) is expected along with experience in teaching and administration. Unity serves 700 students in grades 9-12 in central western Michigan. Confidentially email <unity@unitychristian.org> for more information or confidentially call Dave Baatenburg, Search Committee Chair at work (616)454-4401 x222, or cell (616) 485-6196. School number is 616-669-1820.

WORK FROM HOME: Marketing International Food Science Company offers opportunity to earn income to offset college or other expenses while working from home. We built an income that paid our sons college expenses and avoided student or other loans. Call Betty @ (888) 522-4692 to see how this could work for you.

Real Estate: Sales and Rental

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CONDO FOR RENT Naples, FL, 2 bedrooms, 2 baths and pool, avail. Jan-Mar, 2011. Email pinkhippo2@yahoo.com or call 708-836-1130.

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

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BEAUTIFUL LONG BOAT Key, Florida near Sarasota, Bradenton. 2 BR 2 BA condo directly on white sandy beach. Newly decorated. \$1,000 and up depending on season. 630-655-2888.

FL CONDO - ANNA MARIA Furnished 1 bdm plus p/o couch. Internet, cable, pool, 1 blk to beach. \$2150/month. Weekly rates avail. 616-617-0883 or alandan5@comcast.net

FOR RENT Large ocean front condo on Hutchinson Is. Fla. 2br, 2 full baths. Avail Feb 12-26 2012. 616-281-4270.

WEEKLY RENTAL: Douglas/Saugatuck, MI: Newly built Lake Michigan family guest house, 2br, loft w/ 2.5ba - sleeps 8-10. Lake Mi view & private beach. Call Ken @ 630-268-1531 or email Groenjk@aol.com for info.

PENTWATER MI, SUMMER COTTAGE Views of Lake MI and channel. A few minutes walk to beach. Bike or walk everywhere. pentwatertuckaway.com 616-550-4900

TRAVERSE CITY COTTAGE FOR RENT Cottage on 2500 acre Duck Lake for rent. 4 bedroom 2 bathroom (sleeps 12). Large deck and right on the lake. Call 231-709-0511

COTTAGE 4 rent. 4 bed, 3 bath, updated. Sleeps 12, Hess Lake, MI. \$1,200/week. Call Lonnie 616-942-0048.

WEEKLY RENTAL: Douglas/Saugatuck, MI: Walk to the beaches of Lake Michigan from this newly remodeled Vacation Home, 7Br, 4Ba—omfortably sleeps up to 14. Call Ken @ 630-268-1531 or email Groenjk@aol.com for info.

REAL ESTATE Beautiful Commercial property on busy West Michigan state highway. Nine wooded acres with 50 x 60 showroom separate 48 x 30 warehouse, separate 38 unit self storage building. Paved drive high speed internet, natural gas. Call evenings 231-834-5862 or leave message anytime.

BIG STAR LAKE COTTAGE For Sale: Baldwin, MI. 1308 sq ft; 3 bedrms, kit, dining rm, grt rm w/fireplace; 1 1/2 bths, decks, patio, sandy beach. 616-669-3089

CONDO FOR RENT lower level \$360 Kentwood/GrandRapids, MI: Furnished Private bedrm, bath, living, and dining rm, shared entry kitchen. 5 min to Calvin. rmwestra@netzero.net

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Travel

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BRANSON CHRISTMAS 11/14-19 8 Christmas Shows, 10 Meals, 6 day tour from GR. \$819.00 ppdo. For reservation or detailed brochure call Spectrum Tours at 616-243-8381.

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GOLDEN ASPEN TOUR - 9/7-17 Colorado and Utah - Motor coach from GR - Beautiful colors, 5 National Parks - Jeep Ride and Float Trip in Canyonlands & Arches NP, Rocky Mtn NP, Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Mesa Verde, Garden of the Gods, Royal Gorge, and Vail, Ride Silverton - Durango RR. 11 days, \$1899 ppdo. Some seats remain. For reservation or detailed brochure call Spectrum Tours at 616-243-8381.



HOLIDAY IN HOLLAND in our self-contained cabin or suite. We also offer vehicle rentals and tours. Fully furnished house for rent in Holland Aug. to Feb. www.chestnutlane.nl.

NEW ENGLAND COLOR TOUR-10/5-14 Motor coach from GR - traveling though Canada. Guided tours of Montreal, Vermont's Shelburne Farm, Portland, Kennebunkport, Boston, Cape Cod, and Nantucket Island. Dinner cruise on Lake Champlain - visit Norman Rockwell Museum and Niagara Falls. 20 Meals, 10 days, beautiful fall colors \$1799 ppdo. For reservation or detailed brochure call Spectrum Tours at 616-243-8381.

WITTE TRAVEL & HOLLAND AMERICA proudly present ON STAGE ALASKA, an exhilarating live performance and film presentation. Discover all the Great Land has to offer; towering mountains, Ice Age glaciers, abundant wildlife, a rich history, and more. Join us on August 11, at 6:30pm at the Prince Center at Calvin College for this refreshingly different travel show. Straightforward planning tips, exclusive cruise and cruisetour offers for 2012, and more! Reservations required. RSVP to Witte Travel, (616) 942-5112 or 800-469-4883 by August 1.

NEW YORK CITY - 11/2-7 Motor coach from GR - includes Broadway show Mary Poppins, excellent guides and meals. Travel through neighborhoods of Little Italy, Chinatown, Soho, visit Ellis Island, Ground Zero, Tenement Museum, Greenwich Village, Trump Tower, and Tiffany's. Horse & Carriage ride in Central Park. 10 meals, 6 days, \$1399 ppdo. For reservation or detailed brochure call Spectrum Tours at 616-243-8381.

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CHURCH ORGAN Like new Rodgers model 751 i/e church organ for sale in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Contact: (807) 475-0459

Punch Lines

What has made *you* smile lately? Got a joke or funny incident you'd care to share with your wider church family? Please send it to *The Banner* at 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560; or email it to editorial@thebanner.org. Thanks!

Following our Sunday-morning worship service, I was visiting with my friend Doug Vande Griend, an attorney in Salem, Ore.:

"Hey, Doug, I was wondering: how much would you charge me to answer three simple questions?"

"\$300," he told me.

"Wow, that's kind of steep isn't it?"

"I guess so. So what's your third question?"

—*Dick Bylsma*

As our 3-year-old granddaughter descended our family room steps, she noticed the high school graduation photos of our four children, including one of our son who at the time had very "Jesus-like" long hair. When asked if she knew who the people in the photos were, she quickly identified "Uncle Mark, Uncle Jack, Aunt Ann, and Daddy when he was a girl!"

—*Michael DuMez*

Our young grandson was in church with us when he heard the minister say, "The kids will now go to Sunday school, and

the rest shall have the Lord's Supper." At which point our grandson blurted out, "Hey—I haven't even had lunch yet!"

—*Jack and Edna Prins*

Acouple years ago my daughter Janae and her grandfather ("Odie") were having a conversation about her newborn baby brother. "You're so lucky!" Odie said to Janae. "You get to see him and hold him every day. I only get to see him when we visit you."

"Oh, Odie, you are WAY luckier than me," Janae responded. "You're so old, you're gonna get to see Jesus soon!"

—*Monica deRegt*

My daughter was teaching her 2-year-old to pray:

Mom: "Lord . . ."

Sarah: "thank you . . ."

Mom: "for . . ."

Sarah: "five."

—*John Depooter*

Bulletin bloop: "The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment, and gracious hostility."

—*Herman Kelderman*

Found in a church newsletter: "If you find a mistake in this publication, please understand that we have purposely included it. We attempt to publish something for everyone, and some people are always looking for mistakes."

—*George Vander Weit*

Our village's newspaper has a section where they reprint something from the archives. This is a snippet from the paper published on June 2, 1911: "Some women are awful touchy. A widow has brought an action against a paper, which said that her husband had gone to a happier home."

—*Joy Vermaak*

Three friends from the local congregation were asked, "When you're in your casket and your friends and the church members are mourning over you, what would you like them to say?"

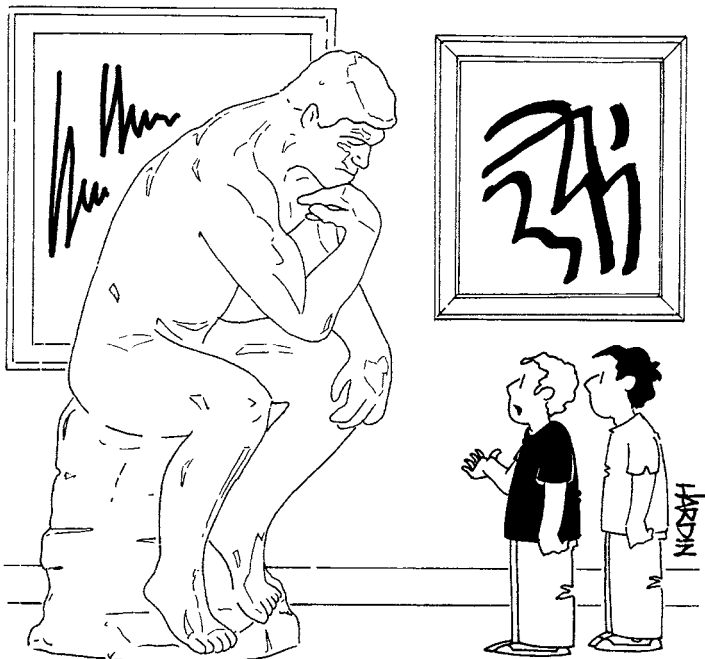
Gerrit said, "I would like them to say I was a wonderful husband,

a fine spiritual leader, and a great family man."

Cornelius commented, "I would like them to say I was a wonderful teacher and a loyal servant of God who made a huge difference in people's lives."

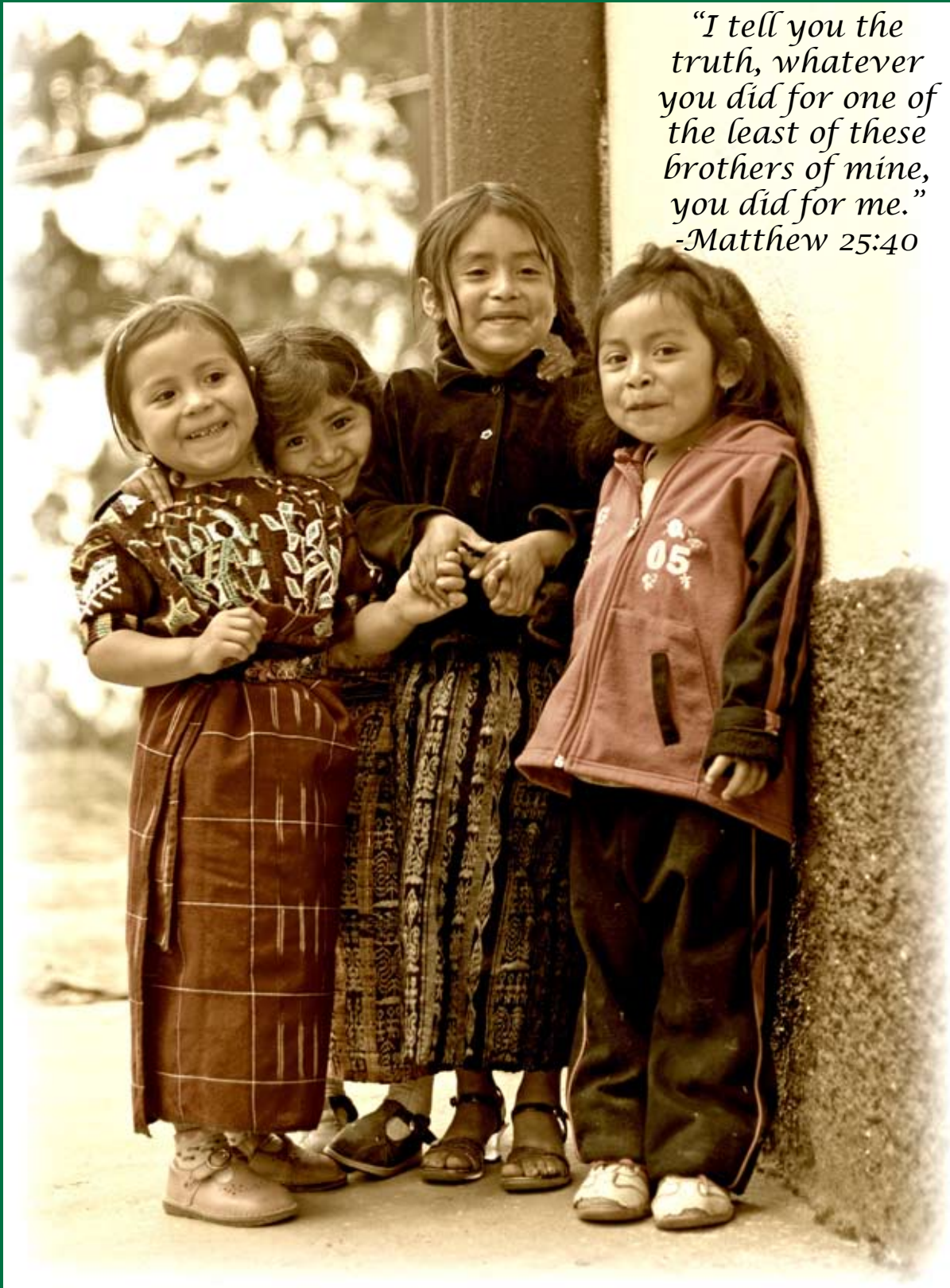
Elmer said, "I'd like them to say, 'Look, he's moving!'"

—*Bill Wilson*



"But where has it gotten him?"

SAN JUAN, GUATEMALA



*"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."
-Matthew 25:40*



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