

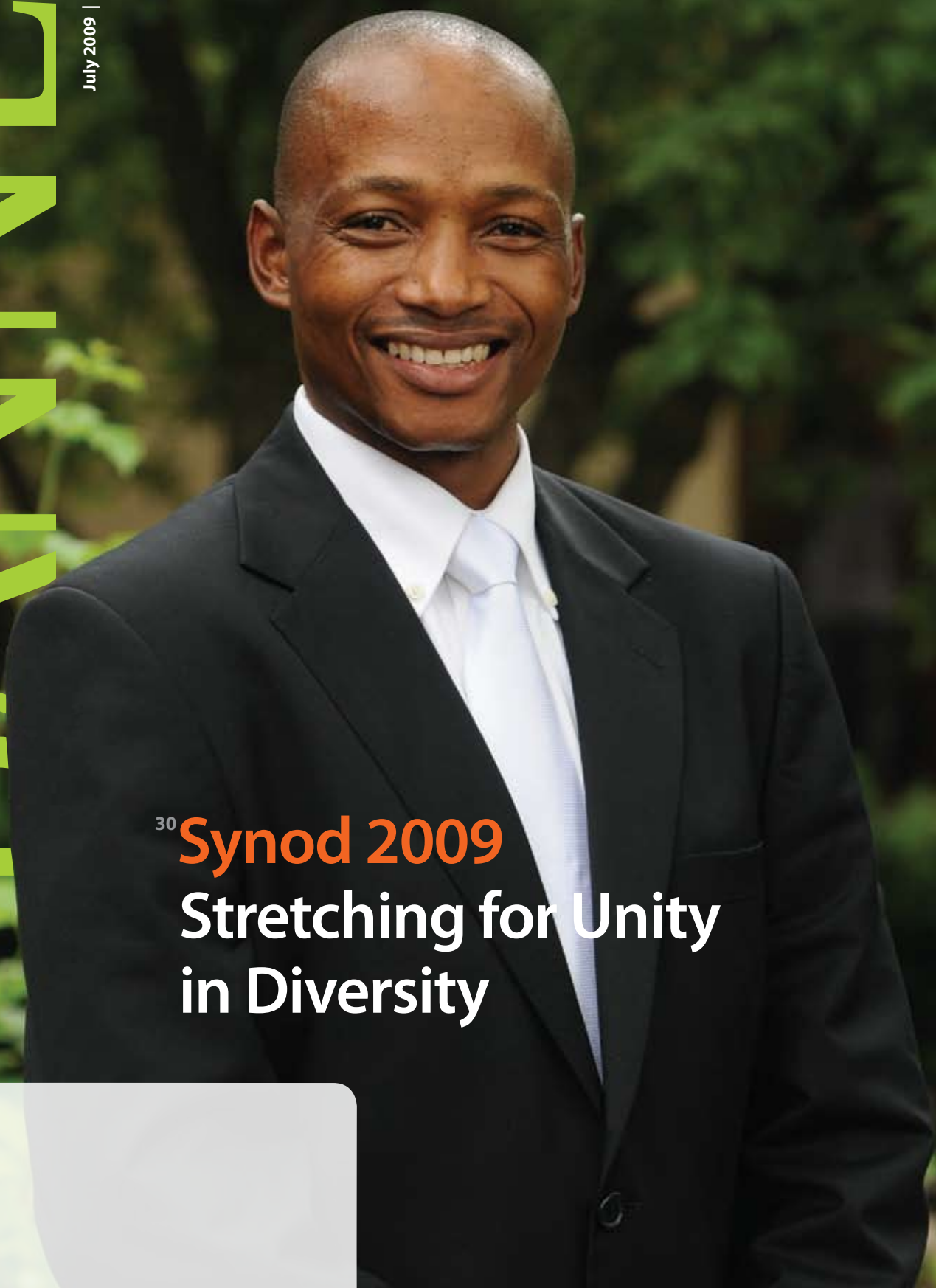
# THE BANNER

July 2009 | [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org)

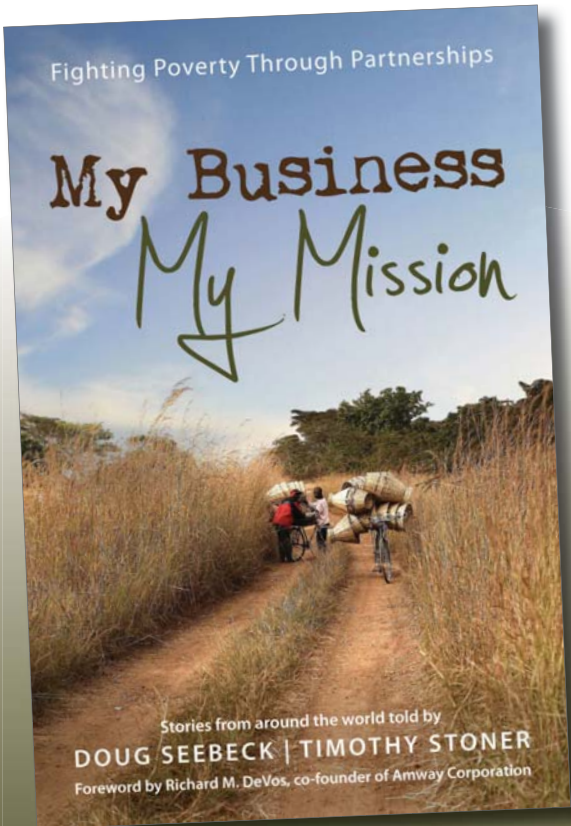
<sup>14</sup> Christian Imagination Needed

<sup>20</sup> That Dreaded "E-Word"

<sup>18</sup> Summer Boredom-Busters



<sup>30</sup> **Synod 2009**  
Stretching for Unity  
in Diversity



**B**usiness people are being exposed to a revolutionary paradigm: the idea that God has called them into mission through business.

I strongly encourage pastors and businesspeople to read and reread this book. The partnership of business leaders and churches will transform lives and communities worldwide.

– Rev. Jerry Dykstra  
Executive Director of the CRCNA

[www.mybusiness-mymission.com](http://www.mybusiness-mymission.com)

place your order • read reviews • preview the book



# Discover the joy

of adding a "Child Named Charity" to your estate plan.

It's a simple, but satisfying concept.

If your family has three children, you simply add a fourth child named "Charity" to your estate plan. Each child then receives one-fourth of your estate—with Charity's share of the estate given to one or more of your favorite kingdom causes.

Learn more about how you can bless your family and the kingdom of God with a "Child Named Charity." Call Barnabas Foundation at 1.888.448.3040.

[www.barnabasfoundation.com](http://www.barnabasfoundation.com)





 **TRINITY**  
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE  
Palos Heights, Illinois

Schedule a visit to our campus in Palos Heights, Illinois, just 30 minutes from downtown Chicago.  
[www.trnty.edu/destination](http://www.trnty.edu/destination)

**START BUILDING MOMENTUM TODAY.**  
Call 866.TRIN.4.ME or visit [www.trnty.edu](http://www.trnty.edu)



**MY FAVORITE THING ABOUT TRINITY IS THE PRAISE AND WORSHIP** service on Thursday nights. I love gathering together with hundreds of other students to praise our heavenly father.”

Amanda Geels '11  
Psychology and Theology  
Hometown: Sheldon, Iowa





## EXTRAORDINARY RESULTS

Kuyper College is a school for those who truly want to make a difference. Our vision for the world is what motivates students to come here. They want to live lives of significance after they graduate. And they are doing so—with extraordinary results—as they use what they've learned at Kuyper to touch the lives of others.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Kuyper College alumni are making a difference in more than 50 countries around the world. As social workers, pastors, teachers, worship leaders, professors, accountants, healthcare providers, and in many other professions they are helping to build God's Kingdom.

## EXCEPTIONAL VALUE

Kuyper's high-quality education is very affordable. Compared with other Christian colleges, Kuyper's tuition is significantly lower—an average of \$6,000 less per year. In addition, Kuyper offers many scholarship opportunities.

## A PLACE FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS

As a ministry-focused Christian leadership college we put biblical faith first in the educational experience of our students, and nurture that faith in every aspect of our academic and professional majors. We also put it to work in service to others through internship opportunities. A Reformed worldview, and the results-driven commitment of our students to lives of service, make Kuyper College unique—and set it apart from other colleges.



3333 East Beltline N.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49525 • [www.kuyper.edu](http://www.kuyper.edu) • 866.722.1004



## S U S T A I N I N G Congregational E X C E L L E N C E

### Results from SCE's second year:

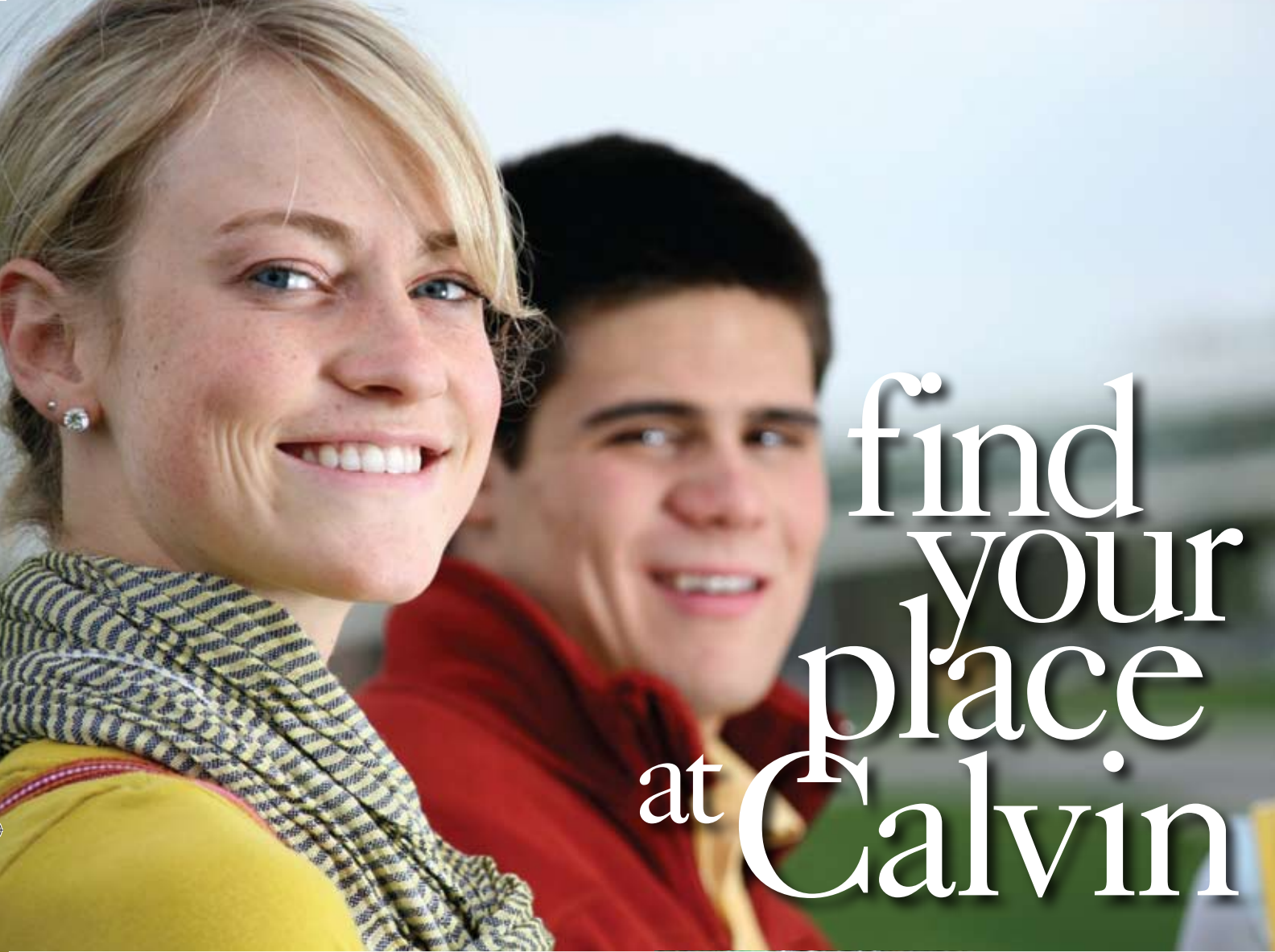
- 105 congregations received a Technology and Equipment grant
- 60 congregations participated in a Learning Event
- 43 congregations received a Health and Renewal grant
- 1 congregation received a Coaching grant

To date 40% of smaller CRC congregations have participated in SCE.

We'd love to talk to you about what we have to offer!

Contact us by  
phone toll free at 877-279-9994 x0805  
by email [sce@crcna.org](mailto:sce@crcna.org)  
or visit [www.crcna.org/sce](http://www.crcna.org/sce)

SCE is a program to support and strengthen congregations—so they can be used by God to transform lives and communities.



# find your place at Calvin



Come to Fridays at Calvin—or one of our other visit programs—and get a taste of life at what the *Fiske Guide to Colleges* calls one of the country's best evangelical colleges. At our FREE Fridays program you can:

- Tour campus with a current student
- Chat with faculty over lunch
- Take in a small group information session
- Meet with admissions and financial aid counselors
- Worship in chapel
- Visit a class

- Stay overnight in the residence halls
- Talk with current athletes
- Attend a parent information session

**Register at [www.calvin.edu/go/visit](http://www.calvin.edu/go/visit)**  
or call 800-688-0122

[www.calvin.edu](http://www.calvin.edu)

3201 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 (616) 526-6106 or 1-800-688-0122

Calvin does not discriminate with regard to age, race, color, national origin, sex or disability in any of its educational programs or opportunities, employment or other activities.

**CALVIN**  
MINDS IN THE MAKING



## More Bounce in Our Step

**IN THIS BANNER YOU WILL READ ABOUT SYNOD 2009**, starting on page 30. *Synod* is a compound Greek word that marries the words for “with” and “road.” So literally it means “a merging of roads.” In church lingo it’s a place where representatives come from different congregations to walk together for a while, wherever their journeys started or will take them.

The Christian Reformed Church convenes a synod every June. The CRC’s 47 classes (regional clusters of churches) each delegate two elders and two pastors to the weeklong meeting. There the assembly sets policy for our denomination, hears from and gives direction to denominational leaders, and spends considerable time worshiping the God we seek to serve in all of this.

Synod takes some getting used to, but I’ve heard from a number of delegates who were state legislators that if their shop ran the way synod does, our governments would get a lot more done and with greater unity.

I believe them.

It’s amazing how 188 people can slog through an agenda of some 500 pages and finish their work without committing mayhem on each other. Without fail they do so with wisdom, grace, and good humor. I can’t describe how that works. It just does.

Synod is made up of Canadians and Americans, Koreans and African Americans, women and men. It’s also made up of old and young . . . sort of. The oldest delegate at this year’s synod was 82; the youngest, 25; and the next youngest, 32. That’s not very young because, remember, you need to be an elder or a pastor to be a delegate.

So where *do* our younger members get to lend their voices to synod? Shouldn’t we hear from them too? The apostle Paul told his colleague Timothy, a gifted evangelist, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young” (1 Tim. 4:12). The church needed Timothy’s gifts.

Let’s ask  
Synod 2010 to  
turn youth  
observers into  
youth advisers.

This year, for the first time, synod invited six young adults to attend its meetings as official observers (see p. 43). That’s a significant first step.

But it’s only a first step. We need to hear from this generation. They are, and represent, not only the church of tomorrow but also the church of today. They should be given the floor so they can enter into synod’s discussions and debates. Their views matter. Their fresh perspectives and insights into a rapidly changing world can help us make better-informed, more savvy decisions. Their enthusiasm and love for the Lord and his kingdom are infectious and will encourage and energize us. And their involvement will better connect them to our churches.

Next year let’s take that second step and ask Synod 2010 to turn youth observers into youth advisers with the full right to speak at synod. Let’s invite them to fully engage with us in seeking the well-being of the denomination, our congregations, and the world we seek to disciple in Jesus’ holy name.

I look forward to the day when young and old will walk this fascinating stretch of road together. Needless generation gaps have made us walk apart for much too long. ■



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

Alberta. See his blog at [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).

**Bob De Moor** Editor

**Henry Hess** Editor, [Church@Work](mailto: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

**Ron DeBoer** Media 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

800-777-7270 or visit our website at  
[www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org)

### Classified Advertising

616-224-0725 [classifieds@thebanner.org](mailto:classifieds@thebanner.org)

### Display Advertising

616-224-0729 [ads@thebanner.org](mailto:ads@thebanner.org)

### Editorial

616-224-0732 [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org)

### News

613-543-3603 [news@thebanner.org](mailto:news@thebanner.org)  
fax 613-543-3041

Published monthly (12 issues per year).  
Periodicals postage paid at Grand Rapids,  
Mich. Postmaster, send address changes to:  
*The Banner*, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE,  
Grand Rapids, MI 49560. Canadian  
publications mail agreement #40063614.  
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:  
*The Banner*, 3475 Mainway, PO Box  
5070, STN LCD 1, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8.

Copyright 2009, Faith Alive Christian  
Resources, a ministry of the Christian  
Reformed Church. Printed in U.S.A.  
*The Banner* (ISSN0005-5557). Vol. 144,  
No. 07, 2009.

Member of Associated Church Press and  
Evangelical Press Association.

# BANNER

Volume 144 | Number 07 | 2009



## FEATURES

- 14** **Imagination Required**  
*Why Christians can't check their imaginations at the church door.* **WEB Q'S**  
by Syd Hielema
- 20** **That Dreaded "E-Word"**  
*Imagine what we could do if we weren't so afraid to talk about the environment.*  
by Brian and Carmen Los

## SYNOD 2009 HIGHLIGHTS

- Editorial: More Bounce in Our Step** by Bob De Moor **6**  
*Walking and truly talking with our younger members*
- Candidates for Ministry 2009** **8**
- Multicultural Conference:**  
**Diversity Doesn't Come Easily** by Gayla R. Postma and Delia Caderno **28**  
*Attendees experience joyful highs and painful lows*
- Synod In Our View:**  
**Stretching for Diversity and Unity Even When It Hurts** by Gayla R. Postma **30**  
*It's a big job—are we up to it?*
- Synod 2009 Proposes Adopting the Belhar** by Dan Postma **32**  
*Considering a new confession for the first time in our history*
- Synod Requests Steps to Increase Diversity in CRC Leadership** by Roxanne Van Farowe **34**  
*Solving an age-old inequity*
- Snapshots** **48**

## DEPARTMENTS

- Catch Your Breath: Soul Care** by Regina Riley **13**  
*Finding Love in the valleys*
- Parenting: Driving Lessons** by Kristy Quist **17**  
*What I want my kids to learn when we're on the road*
- Just for Kids: Summer Boredom-Busters** by Sandy Swartzentruber **18** ▶  
*Cool ideas for lots of fun!*
- Frequently Asked Questions** **23**
- Tuned In: Gifts for the Birthday Boy** by Wayne Brouwer **24**  
*What do you get John Calvin for his 500th birthday?*
- Next: Synod Through My Eyes** by Katie Ritsema-Roelofs **26**  
*The view from our youngest delegate*
- Reformed Matters: Not Alone** by Dale Cooper **27** **WEB Q'S**  
*A central truth about the Holy Spirit*
- Punch Lines** **63**

## CHURCH @ WORK

- Answers to Prayer in the Philippines** by Kristen deRoo VanderBerg **50**  
*The amazing birth and growth of the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines*
- Dear Reader: A Church of Living Color** by Jerry Dykstra **54**

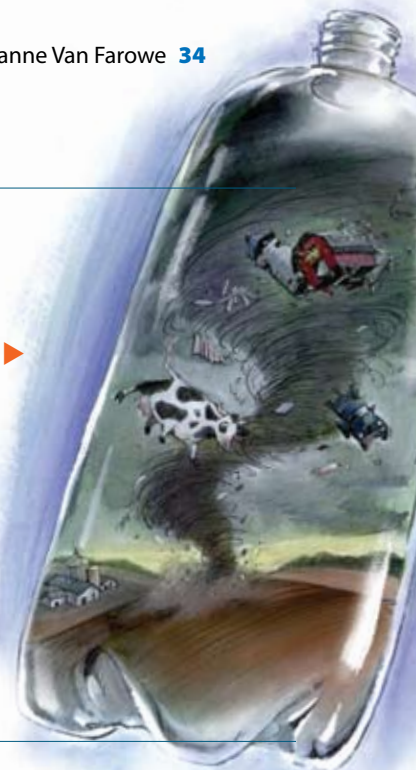
## Synod 2009

The weeklong annual meeting of the Christian Reformed Church in North America took place June 13-18 this year on the campus of Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Ill. Each year the denomination's 47 classes (regional groups of churches) send four delegates to make decisions on everything from financial to confessional matters. This year many of the delegates were felled by a norovirus but faithfully managed to carry on their work nonetheless. Beginning on page 30, you'll find stories about their decisions, as well as a good bit of their grace and humor.



**Cover:** Rev. Motlalentwa Godfrey Betha came to Synod 2009 representing the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa, the church that developed the Belhar Confession and introduced it to the world in 1986. "In considering the implications of the Confession of Belhar for the CRC," Rev. Betha urged synod, "you are being challenged to confirm once again that reconciliation is the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and thus that justice and unity are the indispensable public duties of the church in this divided world and terrifying time." synod coverage begins on p. 30.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAREN HUTTENGA





# 2009 Candidates for the Ministry

*\*Asterisks indicate candidates who are not eligible for call until they have completed all requirements.*

**O****N THESE PAGES** you will find the annual presentation of candidates for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. They represent, in a very concrete way, God's answer to our prayers for "harvest workers" (see Matt. 9:36-38). They each have their own story and gifts for ministry, and they each will live into the pastoral calling of God on their lives.

We thus receive these men and women with great joy. This is a time of joy for them as well, as they have finished a significant and rigorous period of preparation. It is also a time of joy in the lives of the Calvin Theological Seminary staff and faculty, who have poured their lives into these candidates. Together they join the CRC's Candidacy Committee and Synod 2009 in recommending these candidates to the churches.

Most of the people pictured here earned their master-of-divinity degrees from Calvin Seminary, the CRC's official theological school. Some earned their degrees elsewhere and completed the CRC's Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy, administered by the seminary. For more detailed information on these candidates, see [www.crcna.org/pages/candidates09.cfm](http://www.crcna.org/pages/candidates09.cfm).

As the entire Christian Reformed Church, one small part of the body of Christ, we can look confidently to the future. We know that the Lord of the harvest will be there to provide. To use the other metaphor of Matthew 9:36-38, we know that the Good Shepherd will guide us. May we remain sensitive to him until his kingdom comes and his will is done on earth, as it is in heaven! ■

—Rev. David Koll  
Director of Candidacy





**Jonathan Averill**

Language: English

**Contact:**

6 Hobbs Rd.  
North Hampton, NH 03862  
603-918-0411  
javeril0@calvinseminary.edu



**Sean Baker\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

6379 Old Log Trail  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009  
231-878-4256  
baker.sean@gmail.com



**Joshua Benton**

Language: English

**Contact:**

3513 193<sup>rd</sup> St.  
Lansing, IL 60438  
616-516-0265, 708-474-9526  
jbenton8@sbcglobal.net



**G. Ben Bowater IV**

Language: English

**Contact:**

RedArrow Ministries  
31133 E. Red Arrow Highway  
Paw Paw, MI 49079  
269-779-7338  
benbowater@redarrow  
ministries.org



**Nathaniel Bradford\***

Languages: English  
and some Spanish

**Contact:**

300 Calkins SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
616-454-9483  
nbradf34@calvin.edu



**Steve Bussis**

Language: English

**Contact:**

551 E. Riverside Dr., Apt. 126  
Ontario, CA 91761  
616-886-4039  
pwstevo72@yahoo.com



**Simon Cunningham**

Language: English

**Contact:**

1211 South 15 Rd.  
Harrietta, MI 49638  
231-878-3392  
simoncunningham@gmail.com



**Anthony J. Curran**

Language: English

**Contact:**

W313 S2596 Penny Lane  
Wales, WI 53183  
616-350-8414  
tonyjcurran@gmail.com



**Samantha DeJong  
McCarron\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

1721 Ridgemoor Dr. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
708-203-0937  
SamanthaDeJongMcCarron  
@gmail.com



**Joel DeMoore**

Language: English

**Contact:**

3250 Jervis Crescent  
Abbotsford, BC V2T 4R6  
CANADA  
604-870-9959  
annajoeld@yahoo.com



**Jeff Dephouse\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

8800 Dorchester Rd. #2604  
North Charleston, SC 29420  
616-241-5274  
dephouse@gmail.com



**Jason De Vries\***

Languages: English  
and some Spanish

**Contact:**

3326 Pine Meadow Dr. SE, Apt. 201  
Grand Rapids, MI 49512  
503-781-7347  
jdevrie0@calvinseminary.edu





**Bryan Dick\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

1120 Crosby St. NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
616-366-6219  
dick.stephanie@gmail.com



**Jonathan W. Flikkema**

Language: English

**Contact:**

1647 Southampton SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49508  
616-828-7100  
JFlikkema@gmail.com



**Chelsey Harmon\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

527 Gemini  
Tulare, CA 93274  
559-786-2408  
chelsey.harmon@gmail.com



**Mark Hofman**

Languages: English  
and basic Spanish

**Contact:**

2421 Okemos SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
616-498-2631  
meh4@calvinseminary.edu



**Linda A. R. Johnson**

Language: English

**Contact:**

1660 Montague Ave.  
Muskegon, MI 49441  
231-755-2885  
linda.johnson153@verizon.net



**Rebecca Jordan Heys**

Language: English

**Contact:**

355 Apache Dr.  
Fremont, MI 49412  
609-924-7856  
rebecca.jordanheys@gmail.com



**James C. Kirk**

Language: English

**Contact:**

706 Hill St.  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-770-4624  
jmskrk@gmail.com



**Allen Kleine Deters**

Language: English

**Contact:**

c/o Richard Hoekstra  
113 Jerrett Place  
Dunnville, ON N1A 3E6  
CANADA  
616-802-8161  
allen@ragamuffinvoice.com  
website: www.ragamuffinvoice.com



**Brad Knetsch**

Languages: English and basic  
American Sign Language

**Contact:**

1414 Sigsbee St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
616-481-1291  
b\_knetsch@hotmail.com



**James H. Kuiper**

Languages: English  
and basic Spanish

**Contact:**

c/o Lillian Kuiper  
2111 Raybrook SE #2004  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
616-975-9893  
jkuiper2@calvinseminary.edu



**Lucas Lockard\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

145 10 Mile Rd.  
Sparta, MI 49345  
616-581-3371  
llockar0@calvinseminary.edu



**Nathan McCarron\***

Language: English  
and conversational Spanish

**Contact:**

1721 Ridgemoor Dr. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
616-450-0239  
NateMcCarron@gmail.com





**Matthew McClure\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

12 Chestnut St.  
Douglas, MA 01516  
616-570-5139  
matt.c.mcclure@gmail.com



**Nicholas W. Monsma**

Language: English

**Contact:**

4452 38<sup>th</sup> St.  
Hamilton, MI 49419  
616-446-7792  
nmonsma1@calvinseminary.edu



**Bonny Mulder-Behnia**

Language: English

**Contact:**

10603 Elgers St.  
Bellflower, CA 90706  
562-461-0725  
bmulderbehnia@hotmail.com



**Mark Neymeiyer\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

8020 Sparta Ave.  
Sparta, MI 49345  
616-887-5031  
neyfamily6@juno.com



**Zachary Olson\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

1933 Chateau Dr. SW  
Wyoming, MI 49519  
616-240-0464  
z\_i\_o@yahoo.com



**Albert Postma\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

4 Shawnee Trail  
Chatham, ON N7M 6J7  
CANADA  
519-360-1072  
thepostmas@gmail.com



**Philip Rushton**

Language: English

**Contact:**

35584 Tweedsmuir Dr.  
Abbotsford, BC V3G 2X8  
CANADA  
778-808-1169  
philip\_rushton@hotmail.com



**David Salverda\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

1269 Birkdale Crescent  
Sarnia, ON N7S 5H2  
CANADA  
616-827-7400  
dsalver8@calvinseminary.edu



**Brian Seifert**

Language: English

**Contact:**

862 Otillia St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49507  
616-475-6990  
brian.seifert@sbcglobal.net



**Jonathan Spronk**

Language: English

**Contact:**

1593 16th St.  
Edgerton, MN 56128  
507-442-3800  
jspronk4@calvinseminary.edu



**Brittney Stelpstra Salverda**

Language: English

**Contact:**

1269 Birkdale Crescent  
Sarnia, ON N7S 5H2  
CANADA  
519-337-3815  
b.salverda@gmail.com



**Matthew J. Stob**

Language: English

**Contact:**

201 W. Fulton, Apt. 1217  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
616-403-2172  
mattstob@yahoo.com





**Brian Tebben\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

1506 Cornell Dr. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
616-745-8472  
btebben1@calvinseminary.edu



**Michael J. Vander Laan**

Language: English

**Contact:**

1206 Edna St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49507  
616-246-5236  
mikeandjana@att.net



**Thomas VanderPloeg\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

3305 Parchmount Ave.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49004  
269-382-6529  
tom.vanderploeg@gmail.com



**Kevin C. (K.C.)  
Vande Streek\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

7901 Lamplight Dr.  
Jenison, MI 49428  
616-706-7200  
kvandes0@calvinseminary.edu



**Dirk VanEyck**

Language: English

**Contact:**

1392 Beechwood  
Jenison, MI 49428  
616-635-7005  
dirkvaneyk@gmail.com



**Paul Van Stralen**

Language: English

**Contact:**

6635 5A Ave.  
Edson, AB T7E 1Z3  
780-712-3220  
CANADA  
pvanstralen@gmail.com



**Joshua VanTil\***

Language: English

**Contact:**

6298 Rapidfall Dr.  
Belmont, MI 49306  
616-447-0818  
josh@rrcworship.com



**Aaron Winkle**

Language: English

**Contact:**

1243 Bates St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
616-452-9733  
asw3@calvin.edu



**Timothy Wood**

Language: English

**Contact:**

W115 Oosty Ave.  
Oconomowoc, WI 53066  
608-312-4220  
twood5@calvinseminary.edu



**Anne Emile Zaki**

Languages: Arabic and English

**Contact:**

1045 El Paso Rd.  
Kelowna, BC V1X 2S6  
CANADA  
250-491-0017  
aez2@calvin.edu



**Hernan Zapata-Thomack**

Languages: Spanish, French,  
and English

**Contact:**

266 North 7th St.  
Prospect Park, NJ 07508  
973-942-8646  
zapatathomack@aol.com



**Andrew Zomerman**

Languages: English and Dutch

**Contact:**

C/O Len Weverink  
9131 Carter Rd.  
RR#1 Aylmer, ON N5H 2R1  
CANADA  
616-475-8464  
azomerman@hotmail.com



## Soul Care

**I** **MUFFLE MY CRIES** in the pillow so my children will not hear me: “Jesus, Jesus, Lord, please help me!”

My body is locked in excruciating pain so debilitating I can barely move. I continue to weep—pleading with the Lord to help me get out of bed. I wiggle my way out until my feet reach the floor.

At that point I begin to thank God. Even though I am still blubbering, I’m on my way. I know God is my only hope and help. As a single parent, I have to get up! It’s not an option. I put one foot in front of the other. Each step feels like I’m carrying a bag of bricks. I make it to the bathroom, knowing I can smother my cries with the sound of running water.

I am no stranger to illness. As a young woman I was afflicted with what I thought would be the end of me. On the contrary, the Lord has used it to draw me to trust him implicitly. My mother, who was still on the earth then, came to nurse me for a season. She told me one day, as I lay listening to her worship music, “A person can be ‘healed’ through the power of

During this interval of chronic pain, I began to learn real communion.

Love.” At that moment, I did not have the capacity to receive that kind of love. I was too self-consumed—full of self-pity and concealed bitterness, which the Lord would begin to reveal to me.

Later, true sorrowful repentance came as I began to see how the flesh and the world had tainted my mind and my soul. I was absolutely useless without the grace and real power of God’s Love in my life.

I sought the Lord in my distress. I had taken the gift of mobility for granted—getting out of bed without misery and getting myself dressed with ease and comfort. Now my gratitude was magnified each time I was able to do “the next thing.”

I felt like a newborn baby—totally dependent on God.

I had been faithful and diligent in getting up before the sun and spending quality time with the Lord. But during this interval of chronic pain, I began to learn real communion.

There was nothing inherently wrong with my formalities, but within the ritual the voice of my Shepherd had become dull. I was more caught up in the chore of religion than in the relationship. As my eyes were opened, I wailed, “Lord have mercy on me!”

In the darkness of a deep valley, God shed his Light to deliver me from myself. He had to reattach me to himself, and that process will be ongoing.

Recently, a pastor who’s aware of some of my trials asked me how it is with my soul. Without faltering, I smiled and answered, “It is well with my soul.” ■



**Regina Riley** is a part-time seminarian at Calvin Theological Seminary and a mother of three.



ALL SHALL BE WELL,  
AND ALL SHALL BE WELL,  
AND ALL MANNER  
OF THING  
SHALL BE WELL.

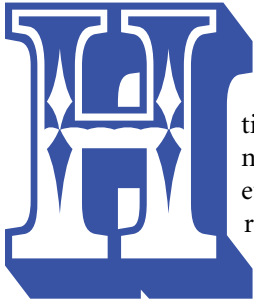
— JULIAN OF NORWICH

BY SYD HIELEMA

LOVING GOD THROUGH  
OUR IMAGINATIONS

**IMAGINATION**  
**REQUIRED**





## HOW DO YOU PICTURE GOD when you pray to him?

I remember being asked that question many years ago in a small group. I'd never thought about it before, but almost everyone had quick responses. Those responses ranged from a grandfatherly figure to one like Aslan (in the *Narnia* series) to the slain and risen Lamb described in Revelation 5. One person said that she didn't picture anything visual but thought of a formless personal being overflowing with power, grace, truth, and love. Everyone responded in some way; not one person said, "That question makes no sense to me at all."

Another time I asked a group of people this question: How is Psalm 23:4 a part of your life? ("Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff they comfort me.") Two group members recalled times when a loved one was dying. A third remembered the Nazi occupation of Holland during World War II. Another related it to a time when he had lost his job, his brother's marriage had broken up, and his church was going through a difficult conflict. Everyone could easily weave the psalmist's words into a particular time in their lives.

One small group reflected on prayer, the other pondered Psalm 23. What's the thread connecting these two discussions? It's this: the role of the imagination.

Members of the first group reflected on how they imagine God in particular ways, and the psalm readers spoke of how they imagine themselves walking with the Lord through the valley of the shadow of death. These two stories point to something central in the Christian life: faith *requires* an active imagination.

### What?!

Some of you might be thinking, "Wait a minute—the imagination has to do with fantasy, and faith has to do with fact. There might be a limited place for the imagination in our walk with God, especially for folks more creatively inclined, but I would rather relate to God without my imagination. Combining imagination with faith is too dangerous and might lead me into error."

Certainly there are dangers to be aware of (see "Cautions"), but it's impossible to turn off our imaginations as we walk with God.

Our spiritual lives deal with largely invisible realities that are too deep for us to comprehend but are woven into every fiber of our beings. God has created us with imaginations so

that we have ways to visualize, think about, and discuss these invisible, mysterious realities that are part of every moment of our lives. Loving God without using our imagination is like loving good food but eating three meals a day at McDonald's: that love is forced to remain superficial and immature.

### Love Letters

Before my wife and I married, we lived 800 miles apart. (We foolishly decided to attend two different Christian colleges.) During that pre-electronic era we wrote each other snail-mail letters three times a week.

As I read each newly arrived letter, I imagined her living through the things she described, and my imagination became a servant that helped my love for her to grow in spite of the miles between us.

Frequently, a new letter helped me to see that what I had imagined in the previous letter wasn't quite right, so my imagination was continually being "tweaked." My imagination could never perfectly capture what her life was like, but that didn't matter—its portraits "through a glass darkly" were accurate enough to deepen our relationship.

Our walk with God is somewhat like that, because the Bible is God's love letter to us.

### Imagination in the Bible

Let me suggest four ways in which the Bible appeals to our imagination:

#### 1. The Bible encourages us to pray imaginatively.

In Scripture there are dozens of creaturely metaphors and pictures to help us imagine God and ourselves in relation to God. An introductory list of biblical metaphors for the Father, Son, and Spirit would include these: shepherd, lamb, rock, fortress, light, bread, living water, down payment, comforter, warrior, shield, lion, mother hen, and stronghold. One verse alone, Psalm 18:2, contains seven different metaphors for God!

Similarly, the Bible describes us in many ways as well: wheat, chaff, a city on a hill, salt, light, a body, living stones. If we were to read Scripture without our imaginations, we'd be forced to become idol worshipers, confusing Scripture's many creaturely metaphors with the actual reality of God.

#### 2. Jesus' primary teaching tool was the parable, an enigmatic story aimed directly at our imaginations.

Parables work through our heart's understanding of God, ourselves, and our place in God's world.

Think of the parable of the prodigal son: it provides a profound picture of our heavenly Father's deep grace responding to our »

# How do you picture God when you pray to him?

rebellious hearts (younger son) and our proud, legalistic hearts (older son).

Why didn't Jesus limit his teaching to simple facts? Why didn't he just say, "We rebel against God's love with murderous intent and we judge each other in self-righteous indignation, but my Father's profound grace challenges us to repent of both of these types of sin to find transformation in God"? We know the answer to that question, of course. The parable travels through our imaginations into our hearts in a deeper, more profound way than bare facts ever could.

**3. The Bible repeatedly uses open-ended metaphors.** Remember Paul's account of his "thorn in the flesh" in 2 Corinthians 12? We don't know what his thorn was, though a handful of scholars speculate that it was bad eyesight. Imagine if Paul had written, "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, I was given poor eyesight. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But God said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'" (vv. 7-9). These would still be powerful verses, but the focus would fall more directly on Paul and his failing eyes.

## It's impossible to turn off our imaginations as we walk with God.

But because Paul uses the open-ended metaphor of the "thorn in the flesh," the focus falls instead on a common dynamic in our walk with God: a significant trial in our lives leaves us no choice but to abandon ourselves again to God's grace, and as we do so we discover that God's power is made perfect in our surrender.

This metaphor frees our imagination to place hundreds of different trials from our own lives under its wide umbrella.

**4. We are called to dream dreams and see visions.** We live in the age of Pentecost. On that wondrous day when the Spirit was first poured out, Peter explained what was happening by quoting the prophet Joel: "In the last days," God says, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18).

Through the Spirit we are called to see visions of God's coming kingdom and then live toward these visions as we seek first God's kingdom in all that we are and do.

We are called to imagine the ways in which God at present is making all things new (Rev. 21:5), and then to participate in God's newness-making project. Once again, we have no choice but to follow God through our imaginations.

Twenty years ago at a conference I heard Nicholas Wolterstorff read a poem comparing the Christian life to riding on a tandem bicycle with Jesus. Ever since, that poem has hung over my desk because that metaphor captured for me the intersection between biblical teaching and my walk with the Lord in profound ways. That poem has been a servant to me, encouraging and deepening my faith through my imagination.

As the Bible tells us, we are fearfully and wondrously made. I thank God that he blessed us with imaginations that nourish our walk with him. ■

### Cautions

Christians have a history of being somewhat nervous about the role of the imagination in their walk with God (responses to the bestselling novel *The Shack* illustrate this ambivalence). It may be helpful to keep these cautions in mind:

- There is a crucial difference between using our imagination as a servant and forming an image that we worship. Our imagination points beyond itself to deeper realities, while an image becomes an end in itself, an idol. For example, our imagination helps us pray to God who is "our rock," but it does not lead us to worship rocks.
- Scripture uses so many different metaphors because even a thousand different metaphors could not express the fullness of God's being. As we use our imagination, we remember that it is a helpful servant that provides *partial* and *incomplete* descriptions of God and our walk with God.
- Our imagination builds on the testimony of Scripture. It's as if the Lord says to us, "Here is a book that will stimulate your imagination in ways that will deepen your love for me and your obedience in following me. Use it well!" But other voices around us declare, "Let your imagination run wild in whatever direction you wish, and it's all good."
- These cautions should not lead us to fearfully abandon our imaginations; they simply remind us of the need for wise discernment.

—Syd Hielema

**WEB Q'S** See discussion questions at the end of this article on *The Banner's* website: [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).



Dr. Syd Hielema serves as chaplain and associate professor of religion and theology at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario. He is a member of Ancaster Christian Reformed Church.

## Driving Lessons

**R**IDING IN THE CAR with my mother, I learned at least one thing—she did not want me to die.

Before seat belts, car seats, booster seats, rear-view baby mirrors, sun-blocking window screens, and other miracles of modern parenting, my mother had a failsafe protection system. Whenever she stopped quickly, she threw her right arm in front of me, ostensibly to save me from flying through the windshield. Certainly her forearm would prevail over the hurtling momentum of 8-year-old me going from 40 to 0 in one second flat.

I learned a few things from the rest of my family too. I learned that even with only two inches between us, my older brother's right hook could draw a pretty decent bruise. I learned that if I whined long enough on a family trip, eventually the candy bag would emerge from hiding. And I learned that the brakes of an old station wagon are not 100-percent reliable, especially when the car is loaded with six people, heading down a mountain, sporting a car-top carrier, and towing a pop-up trailer. (Thankfully, no serious damage was done.)

When my kids' school moved five miles further north, many parents were upset to learn that they would now be driving 20 minutes each way. Then one experienced mother spoke up, saying that she enjoyed time in the car. Since her kids tended to forget she was there, she learned more about them in the car than anywhere else.

Lately I've been wondering what my kids have learned over the past 11 years as I've schlepped them around town. Driving usually causes me to tune in—to a song, to NPR, to my own thoughts. Unfortunately, it's usually my kids I tune out.

What does that say to them? We now have a school bus (hallelujah!) and we



I wonder what my kids have learned as I've schlepped them around town.

finished preschool, so I have less driving time. Still, we spend a solid chunk of each week in our assigned seats in the minivan. Training up a child in the way he should go is not restricted to the house. So here are some things I hope they will learn, and I'm learning them too:

- Talking on the phone while driving is not a good or necessary thing, as it endangers others. I'm still working on that one.
- The story the kids want to tell me is more important than hearing the second part of the song "Poughkeepsie" by Over the Rhine. Really, it is.
- When other drivers cut us off or commit other outrageous crimes against us, we should be forgiving. I am learning to bite my tongue.
- We must tolerate one another—and one another's musical tastes. Sometimes

my young daughter needs to hear Raffi or Curious George, which does not always coincide with my older son's desires. Theoretically, this has taught him tolerance. Their interaction has certainly taught me tolerance. (It's also taught me that sometimes you just have to pull the car over to the side of the road. And yell. Loudly.)

- Eating from a drive-thru restaurant may be convenient, but it is also expensive, unhealthy, and environmentally unfriendly. Sadly, my kids may have to learn that lesson from someone else.
- We have to share. Yes, you must let your sister look out "your" window.

I want my kids to learn to love each other and the world we travel through. My brother and I did have some good times in the car. No one was ever seriously injured on our long-distance trips. And what I learned from my mother in the car didn't come from deep, emotional times of sharing. My mother's arm-throwing protection was not a conscious act; everything in her was ready to protect me without a thought.

What I learned was that she loved me. I hope my kids will learn the same. ■



Kristy Quist is editor of *The Banner's Tuned In* section and is a member of Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.



# Summer Boredom-Busters



## So it's summertime, and school's out. Are you BORED yet?

Well, did you know that boredom is all in your head? If you think creatively, you NEVER have to be bored. God has given us an amazing world, excellent imaginations, and a million interesting

things to do. (Plus, if you say you are bored, adults like to put you to work. You could end up folding laundry or cleaning out the cat's litter box.)

There are a TON of fun and interesting things to do in the summertime! Here are just a few ideas to get you started.



## Tornado in a Bottle

Summer is tornado season. Though tornadoes can be very scary, most people will never see a real tornado in their lifetime. But you can make one at home!

### Here's what you need:

- Two empty (and clean) 2-liter soda bottles
- Water
- Duct tape

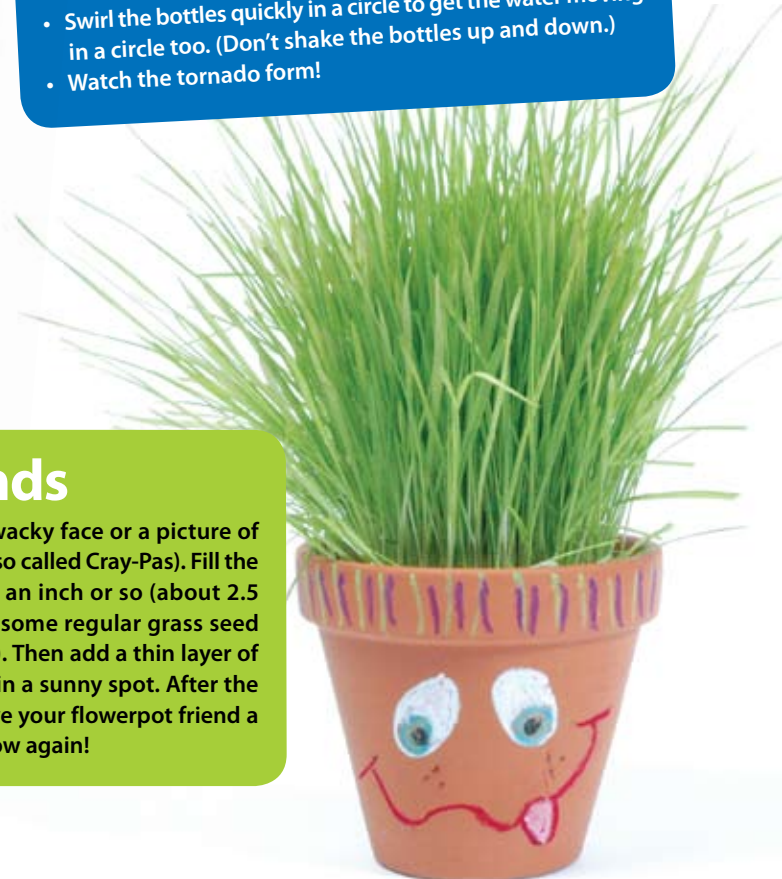
### Here's what you do:

- Fill one bottle about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with water.
- Put the second bottle upside down on top of the first bottle, with the open ends touching.
- Tape the bottles together with duct tape so that no water can leak out.
- Quickly turn the whole contraption upside down so the bottle with the water is on top.
- Swirl the bottles quickly in a circle to get the water moving in a circle too. (Don't shake the bottles up and down.)
- Watch the tornado form!

SCOTT HOLLADAY

## Flowerpot Friends

Take a plain clay flowerpot. Draw a wacky face or a picture of your own face on it with oil pastels (also called Cray-Pas). Fill the pot almost full with dirt—just leave an inch or so (about 2.5 centimeters) at the top. Sprinkle on some regular grass seed (wheat grass seed works even better). Then add a thin layer of dirt. Water the seed and put the pot in a sunny spot. After the grass grows a few inches, you can give your flowerpot friend a crazy haircut. Then watch the hair grow again!



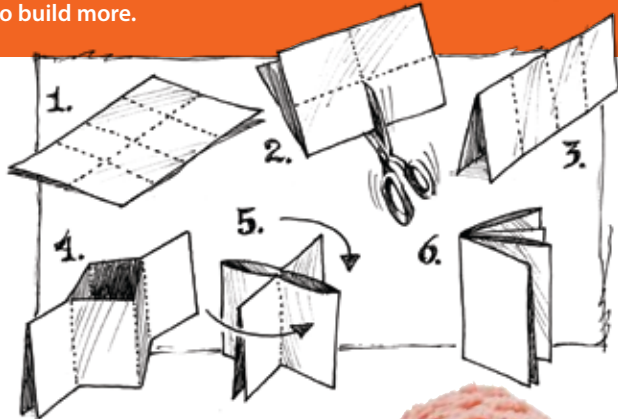
# Fairy Houses

Even though fairies aren't real, fairy houses are lots of fun to make!

First, find an interesting-looking spot in a park or in your yard or even in a large potted plant. Some great places to make a fairy house are next to tree roots or rocks, or underneath bushes.

To build your house, use whatever you can find: sticks, dried grass, leaves, stones, moss, flowers—be creative! Sticks are great for making frameworks for walls and roofs. Shells make perfect sinks or tubs. Challenge yourself to use only natural materials—nothing man-made.

Here's a fairy house that I built in my own yard from rocks, twigs, dried grass, shells, and moss. Kids, your parents might think they're too old to do this along with you, but once they try it, they'll want to build more.



## Make an Origami Book

Origami (oh-ri-GAH-mee) is the Japanese art of paper folding. In real origami, you're not supposed to use scissors, but this book only has ONE cut, so it's pretty close!

Making your first origami book might look a little tricky, but it's actually quite easy. Once you've made a few, you won't even need the instructions!

### Here's what you need:

- An 8.5 x 11-inch piece of paper (standard notebook size)
- Scissors

### Here's what you do:

- **Step 1:** Fold the paper in half the long way. Then fold it in half the other way two more times. Unfold the paper. You now have a paper with eight equal sections.
- **Step 2:** Fold the paper in half the short way so it makes an 8.5 x 5.5-inch rectangle. Cut from the center fold to the point where the other folded lines meet.
- **Step 3:** Open the paper again. Refold it in half the long way.
- **Step 4:** Push the ends toward each other until a diamond shape forms in the middle hole. Crease all folds so the diamond disappears.
- **Step 5:** Fold two flaps around the other two flaps to make a six-page book with a front and back cover.
- **Step 6:** Draw pictures or comics to make a storybook, or use your book for a scrapbook or a journal.

## Homemade Ice Cream in a Bag

### Here's what you need:

- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 cup half-and-half cream
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup salt (The bigger the granules, the better. Kosher or rock salt works best, but table salt is fine.)
- 1 sandwich-size zip-lock bag
- 1 gallon-size zip-lock bag
- Ice cubes (enough to fill the gallon-size bag about half full)
- Bath towel



### Here's what you do:

- Pour the sugar, the half and half, and the vanilla into the small zip-lock bag and seal it tightly.
- Put the salt and ice in the large zip-lock bag, then put the smaller sealed bag inside too. Seal the large bag and wrap it in the bath towel.
- Shake the bags for about 5 minutes until the half-and-half mixture thickens into ice cream! The longer you shake it, the firmer it will get. Take turns with a friend or family member if your arms get tired.
- Take the smaller bag out of the larger one, open it, and eat! This recipe makes one serving.

## More Things to Make and Do

STILL bored? Check out craft and activity books at your local library, or visit these websites for more fun boredom-busters!

[www.FamilyFun.go.com](http://www.FamilyFun.go.com): Tons of craft and activity ideas

[www.PBSkids.org/zoom](http://www.PBSkids.org/zoom): recipes, crafts, games, experiments, and more from the PBS show Zoom!

[www.puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/](http://www.puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/): This site helps you make your own crossword puzzles, word searches, and more! Make a bunch and trade them with siblings or friends.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/storystarters/storystarter1.htm>: If you want to write a story but are stuck for an idea, this site has a weird story starter machine you can use. Try it!



Sandy Swartzentruber works for Faith Alive. She's always looking for fun crafts to do to avoid folding laundry.



BY BRIAN AND CARMEN LOS

# that dreaded “e-word”

Why are we so afraid to talk about the environment?





**L**AST WEEK I unintentionally drove past Edmonton's dump. Surprised by a big hill in the usual flatness of our Alberta prairie capital, I recognized the dump by the countless garbage bags at the top being "worked in" by heavy equipment. Since this landfill site is almost filled to capacity, most of the heap has been properly landscaped—but the telltale blue, orange, and dark-green bags reminded me of what it is: a mountain of garbage (some of mine included).

If we could scratch the surface of our planet, how many of these piles would we uncover? We hide our trash, cover it, burn it, and even send it to other countries, this "effluence of our affluence" to quote Hubert H. Humphrey. As a thinking Christian person, I am ashamed of my own filth and embarrassed by the amount of garbage I see everywhere.

I encounter continual concerns about the environment (think *creation*) in the news, on the documentary channel, and in books. I hear many people wondering about crop failure, water shortages, violent weather, rising cancer rates, pandemics, global warming, poverty, pollution, and changing climates. Journalists, scientists, politicians, physicians, climatologists, and farmers are devoting themselves to dealing with the troubles they see. Even presidents and prime ministers are getting together to talk about the sustainability of our economies.

Yet when I go to church it's like stepping into a time warp.

All discussion of these issues ceases. No one dares to use the "e-word." Most of our pulpits remain silent about the environment, our newsletters and other publications are quiet, and we drink our coffee—sometimes fair trade, often out of Styrofoam cups—without an inkling that these questions trouble us in the rest of our living.

Does anyone else feel this way? Where is the church on issues of the environ-

ment? What about our Reformed worldview that all of life belongs to God? Why am I uncomfortable talking to my Christian friends about how we can do better for our world? Do we think that if we show concern about these pressing issues we aren't displaying enough trust in God? Or are we waiting for God to come clean up our mess?

What if, rather than debating the reality of climate change and its probable or possible causes, we simply asked if more pollution, more consumption, and more waste are good for this earth and whether living in a wasteful way is what God expects of us?

After all, who can make the case that mountains of garbage and rivers of pollution are pleasing to God?

## Who can make the case that mountains of garbage are pleasing to God?

### Remember When . . .

Less than a lifetime ago, when something broke we fixed it. When our big toe wore through the front of our socks, we darned them. When the fridge or television went "on the fritz," we called someone to repair it. And more often than not, we saved old, worn-out things to make into new things—real recycling.

How quaint and different from today.

Recently, while I waited to check out at a supermarket, the woman just ahead of me in line asked about replacing the battery in the watch she had purchased only a year ago. The cashier simply told her, "Oh, you can't repair that. It's cheaper just to get another watch."

How sad.

In my grandparents' day a wristwatch lasted a lifetime, a television at least 20 years, and a telephone almost forever.

Today our watches, radios, telephones, even televisions have become disposable items. When they break, or we tire of them when more capable models become available, we dispose of them and get new ones. Very few of us still know how to darn a sock, mend a torn shirt, fix a chair, or repair an appliance.

So our landfills pile up; the earth can barely provide enough petroleum to make all the plastic we demand, recycle, or throw away; and our air at times is so dirty that some of us have to wear masks and take steroids to breathe. Today our junk even reaches to outer space.

What have we been doing? Can we defend our behavior in light of our God-appointed task to care for the earth? Can't we—especially as Christian

congregations and individuals—do better for this planet?

Absolutely.

But where do we start?

### Now What?

Well, to point out the obvious, we need to bring the discussion into our circles—talk together about what concerns us and what we can do. Frankly, I'm tired of doing the small things. Like many of you, I've already changed all my light bulbs, and I recycle my paper, plastic, and glass. I use rain barrels and cloth grocery bags, clean without chemicals, and buy fair-trade and organic products when I can. Now I want to do something bigger and work with others.

Hesiod, a Greek poet who lived 700 years before Christ, noticed even at that time that "if you add a little to a little »

and do this often, soon the little will become great.” That still holds true today. Combining our individual efforts will bring bigger results. And wouldn’t it be great to work with the biggest community that I am a part of—my church?

Take, for example, the inspiring cookbook *More with Less*. Published by the Mennonite Church in the 1970s, it began as the idea of one person: Doris Longacre. With the global food crisis as her impetus, she set out to collect recipes that would challenge and help North Americans to eat less so that others could have more. She wrote to her friends around the world, asking for economical low-meat recipes that would help North Americans reduce consumption by eating less animal protein and fewer highly processed foods. Thousands of recipes and ideas flooded in, and the cookbook is now in its 47th printing—a singular effort that grew with the help of many.

As a church and Christian community we could make significant changes to promote a healthier and more sustainable environment by doing more with less. Consider, for example, opportunities such as the Eat Well Food Tour ([www.eatwell-foodtour.com](http://www.eatwell-foodtour.com)), a partnership between the Christian Reformed Office of Social Justice and *\*culture is not optional*, a non-profit organization encouraging all-of-life faith practice. This summer the free Eat Well tour will help local churches hold creative conversations about food and faith, discerning ways to purchase, grow, cook, share, consume, and think about our food in ways that honor God.

### What Worries You?

Here are a few other suggestions for ways to get creation-care conversations going:

- Ask children and young adults to tell what worries them about the future.
- Hold book clubs and Bible studies around books like *Earth-Wise* or *Living the Good Life on God’s Good Earth* (available from [www.FaithAliveResources.org](http://www.FaithAliveResources.org), 1-800-333-8300) that can get us talking and thinking.
- Ask deacons or another point person to be faithful in urging your congregation toward environmental stewardship.

## I’m tired of doing the small things.

### Heard Round the World . . .

The Christian Reformed Church is already going global with the biblical message of creation care.

For example, since poverty and environmental degradation go hand in hand, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee appointed an ongoing environmental stewardship task force that looks at how the ministry can better incorporate creation care into its programs worldwide.

Three ministry teams from CRWRC (East Africa, Southern Africa, and Asia) held Bible-based environmental stewardship training with their staff and partners this past year, reports Steve Michmerhuizen, a CRWRC program consultant in Tanzania who helped to facilitate the training. “This represents a serious step forward on the part of our fields to recognize that we, as Christians, have a particular call to stewardship,” he said. “And as Reformed Christians we recognize a call to stewardship of resources in order that those resources might be redeemed for God’s glory and move us closer to shalom and [God’s] coming kingdom.”

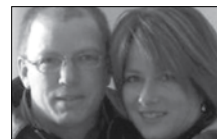
Christian Reformed World Missions partners with the Timothy Institute to train Christian leaders around the world. That curriculum, developed in cooperation with Calvin Theological Seminary, includes a unit on “Stewardship” with a creation care component. Joel Hogan, director of international ministries for World Missions, says it is having a significant impact in helping pastors and lay leaders understand the mandate to care for creation. The training is currently used all over Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

A new, expanded partnership with Mission India is expected to reach more than 1,000 church planters in India alone. “The impact of the teaching truly has global impact,” Hogan says.

- Request sermons that help us hear God’s Word on these subjects.
- Print articles in our congregational and denominational publications on issues related to the environment.
- Begin or join online discussion forums on creation care such as the one at <http://justiceseekers.ning.com>, created especially for Reformed Christians.
- Develop adult-education presentations about the impact of our consumerism on the developing world, taught by teachers from our colleges and universities.
- Learn from farmers and market gardeners in our midst about changes in world food production and the impact on world food supply.
- Learn from other experts who dedicate themselves to alerting us to these problems. (The CRC’s Office of Social Justice has a page on its site solely dedicated to creation care. See [www.crcjustice.org](http://www.crcjustice.org) and look under *Issues*.)
- Promote letter-writing campaigns to let politicians know our concerns.

I suspect that using the “e-word” freely in our times together will grow our faith and inspire our love for each other and for creation. There’s something so connecting about learning and working together on issues that affect life on this planet. Young and old, we share this place together. And as followers of Jesus we’re in partnership with the Sustainer of all life on earth. What an exciting way to participate in God’s kingdom work of redemption and restoration!

*Many Christian Reformed congregations are already doing a great deal when it comes to creation care. The Banner would love to hear your stories! Please contact your local news correspondent listed at the beginning of our regular CRC News section, or at [www.banner.org](http://www.banner.org).* ■



**Brian and Carmen Los** are members of West End Christian Reformed Church, Edmonton, Alberta.

Happy to live in a geothermal home, they enjoy learning about new ideas for living sustainably.

# FAQs

## Relationships

**Q I have a friend who takes advantage of my willingness to help her out. I really want to support her, but how do I deal with the conflicting roles of being a good friend to her while taking care of myself?**

**A** It is true that part of what it means to “take up our cross” is to spend time cultivating relationships that are not first of all designed for our own benefit. We are called to work for justice for the poor, share our own wealth, visit the lonely and the sick, help and encourage those knocked off their feet. This pouring out of ourselves for the sake of others is what we choose to do because we take seriously the command of our Lord to “do to the least of these” in his name.

The challenge for us is to do this without taking on the responsibility of decision-making for others. When we do something for a person that we think they should and could be doing for themselves, we are fostering an unhealthy dependence and taking a burden of responsibility on ourselves when that burden belongs with the other person.

If you experience being “taken advantage of” in the relationship, the possibility exists that you are feeling responsible to help your friend change in order to improve her situation. If that is what you feel, it is time to step back.

Unhealthy dependence (in contrast to healthy dependence, for instance, of children toward their parents or of elderly parents toward their children) leads to care-giver burnout and does not characterize friendship. Being a friend means accepting another adult the way she is and allowing her to be responsible for the choices she makes. Part of your friendship may need to include a frank conversation about what you can realistically do by way of spending time or money to support your friend.

It is true that some people have very complex needs. If your friend needs help in many

different areas (financially, physically, emotionally, and relationally), then you might want to encourage her to broaden her friendship group to include both formal social services and informal community or church supports.

Organizations such as WrapAround involve the person requesting help in the decision-making process about what is needed and how that help is to be supplied.

In the end, give yourself permission to set limits on the support you provide. Loving your neighbor as yourself suggests that you create a balance between meeting others’ needs as well as your own.

—Judy Cook

*Judy Cook is a family therapist living in Hamilton, Ontario. She is a member of Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Ancaster.*

## Finances

**Q What advice can you give to parents who want to train their kids to handle money God’s way?**

**A** Kids need at least three things to experience the joy of honoring God with their money:

**1. Passion.** A couple of years ago, Beckie and I gave our kids \$100 each and asked them to take a week to decide how best to give the money away. They researched and prayed and after seven days came up with 18 needs and kingdom causes they wanted to give to. It was thrilling for Beckie and me to witness their excitement—putting the money they were entrusted with in envelopes (along with handwritten notes) and sending it to people and ministry organizations here and around the world. Their passion increased when they received updates and feedback from several of the organizations they gave to, including a newsletter that reprinted my daughter’s note, as well as a personal letter of encour-

agement to my son from the president of a global missions organization.

**2. Plan.** Each of our kids is on the 10-10-80 plan. It’s very simple. For every dollar that comes in, we suggest that they split it up three ways: the first 10 percent or more is their “God” money, given away to their church and to support suffering people. The next 10 percent or more is set aside for things they are saving up for down the road (recent examples include a new bike and a Laura Ingalls “Little House on the Prairie” dress). And the rest—80 percent or less—is to spend on things they “need” now, like ice cream, batteries, and Newsboys CDs.

**3. Principles.** The “glue” that holds the passion and plan together for kids is principles from the Word of God taught and modeled by Mom and Dad. Joshua 1:8 says, “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” If that’s true (and it is), then we parents need to spend regular time with our kids unpacking the Bible together and talking about how it applies to our financial lives. It can be as simple as taking a verse about money (there are over 2,000 of them!) and asking “What does this verse mean?” and “How can we live this out?” Another idea is to check out the Barnabas Foundation website ([www.barnabasfoundation.com](http://www.barnabasfoundation.com)) for a listing of some excellent resources to help parents train their kids and teens to handle money God’s way.

—Mike Buwalda

*Mike Buwalda ([mike@barnabasfoundation.com](mailto:mike@barnabasfoundation.com)) is a stewardship consultant to Barnabas Foundation.* ■



## Gifts for the Birthday Boy



BIGSTOCK PHOTO

**WHAT DO YOU GET JOHN CALVIN** for his 500th birthday?

Since he's obviously not available for a party or gifts, how about reading a book about him or buying one for a friend?

A spate of new volumes on Calvin has been appearing in a kind of predestined flurry. A great first choice, to get to know the man in his context, is Herman Selderhuis's *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life* (IVP Academic, 2009). Insightful and sympathetic, it makes Calvin profoundly human and wonderfully interesting.

To broaden and deepen your knowledge of the famous man, turn to some fine older studies: T.H.L. Parker's profound *John Calvin: A Biography* (Westminster John Knox, reprinted 2007); William J. Bouwma's rather psychologized *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (Oxford University Press); and Alister E. McGrath's excellent and expansive *A Life of John Calvin: A Study of the Shaping of Western Culture* (Wiley-Blackwell).

Another short, helpful, and accessible introduction is a collection of four lec-

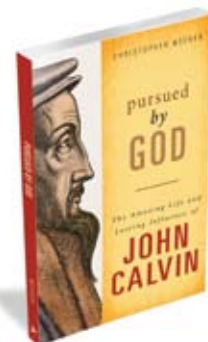
tures delivered by Robert Reymond and packaged as *John Calvin: His Life and Influence* (Christian Focus). It is better than John Piper's *John Calvin and His Passion for the Majesty of God* (Crossway), which is only a reprint from a chapter in Piper's earlier work, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy* (Crossway).

Sometimes it is helpful to overhear the conversations of a bunch of folks who reflect together like old friends. Such happens in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion, Doctrine, Doxology* (Reformation Trust), a diverse and slightly repetitive (but very readable) volume edited by Burk Parsons.

Of course, if you really want to know Calvin, his own words are still the best introduction. Although he wrote hundreds of letters and dozens of organizational manuals for churches, Calvin believed his only two publications of lasting significance were his exegetical sermons (collected as his commentaries) and his interpretive handbook, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. This latter work, especially in its McNeill-Battles edition (Westminster John Knox), is far more readable than many fear, and digging into it would most honor the great one on his birthday. And if you need a handbook to the handbook, Charles Partee has recently summarized its contents in *The Theology of John Calvin* (Westminster John Knox). ■



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



### Hot Off the Presses . . .

Just released by Faith Alive Christian Resources, our denominational publisher, is Christopher Meehan's *Pursued by God: The Amazing Life and Lasting Influence of John Calvin*. Starting a bit hesitantly (not much data on Calvin's early life, a little speculative), the book catches its stride by the third of 11 chapters and builds with energy and flourish through the rest of Calvin's life. An epilogue reflection on "Calvinism for the Twenty-First Century" is a journal article that detracts from, rather than adds to the book. Regardless, this book is eminently readable and interesting, it is a great first glance or profitable refresher on the man and his times.

—WB

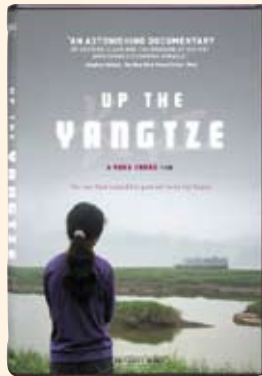
If you really want to know Calvin, his own words are still the best introduction.



## Welcome to the Welcome Wagon

by **The Welcome Wagon**  
reviewed by **Robert N. Hosack**

For those awaiting Sufjan Stevens's new release, here's the next best thing. Recorded, produced, and arranged by the indie star, The Welcome Wagon is Brooklyn-based Presbyterian pastor Thomas Vito Aiuto and his wife, Monique. Their debut of folk-gospel duets is laden with Stevens's orchestral flourishes. The duo's quirky repertoire reflects a rich history of sacred song traditions, drawing from 19th-century psalters and hymnals, while also offering pop-music covers from The Velvet Underground and The Smiths. The kitschy CD package's artwork celebrates the Sunday sing-along. Unabashedly Christian—a joyful noise indeed! (Asthmatic Kitty Records)



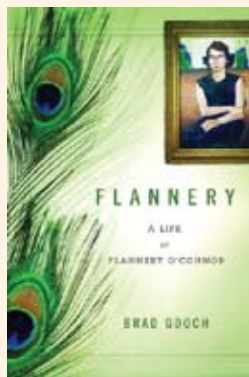
## Up the Yangtze

reviewed by **Ron VandenBurg**

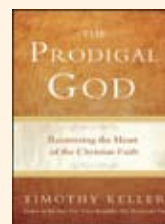
The largest concrete dam in the world—China's new Three Gorges Dam—stretches more than one mile across the Yangtze River and produces 18,000 megawatts of electricity. To make way, more than one million people living on the river's banks will have to move to higher ground. Aboard a "farewell cruise" for Westerners, a peasant girl, Yu Shui, struggles to earn wages as her family hovel gets swallowed by the expanding river. Her coworker, Chen Bo Yu, embraces modern China's plans and looks forward to his own future personal wealth. Through their experiences, Chinese-Canadian documentary director Yung Chang helps us get a glimpse of contemporary China. (Zeitgeist Films)

## Flannery: A Life of Flannery O'Connor

by **Brad Gooch**  
reviewed by **Robert N. Hosack**



For fans of O'Connor's macabre, comic, "Christ-haunted" fiction, Brad Gooch provides the first major definitive biography of her since she died of lupus in 1964 at age 39. Drawing on a recently unsealed cache of correspondence and an impressive array of interviews, Gooch meticulously mines these materials, contributing further to O'Connor studies—what he terms "a one-woman academic industry." The biography offers no real revelations but does excel in giving glimpses into and connecting her fiction to her real-life Southern, Irish Catholic roots. (Little, Brown)



## The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith

by **Timothy Keller**  
reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**

Keller's exploration of the parable of the prodigal son—he prefers to call it "the parable of the two lost sons"—reveals the essentials of the gospel for seekers and Christians alike. Portraying the Lord as the "God of Great Expenditure," Keller's astute analysis shows that "Jesus is redefining everything we thought we knew about connecting to God." In his final chapter, "The Feast of the Father," he compellingly spells out the implications the glorious gospel has for those who accept it. (Dutton)



## Fiction Family

by **Fiction Family**  
reviewed by **Elizabeth Gonzalez**

Multi-talented frontmen Sean Watkins of Nickel Creek and Jon Foreman of Switchfoot joined forces to form Fiction Family, a throwback to acoustic rock. While neither deserted his original band, they began exchanging tracks depending on who was on tour. This duo's musical maturity and skill are evident. The peppy "When She's Near" opens the album, sounding like the soundtrack for a relaxing summer's day. "Out of Order" lilts through the singer's questions about life priorities. Solid music and lyrics make Fiction Family ring with truth. (Ato Records)



## Synod Through My Eyes

**Q. What do you believe concerning the 'holy catholic church'?**

**A.** *I believe that the Son of God through his Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a community chosen for eternal life and united in true faith. And of this community I am and always will be a living member.*

**LORD'S DAY 21** of the Heidelberg Catechism ran through my mind several times during synod last month. Seeing the growing diversity and the ways in which God is using this denomination to shape and change lives all around the world made me proud to call the Christian Reformed Church my home.

I will never forget the experience of being seated on the floor of synod for the first time as an elder delegate. So much took place in order for me to be there. I was born in South Korea and adopted into a Dutch, Christian Reformed family when I was 4 months old. Pastors, teachers, and family members saw my gifts and encouraged me into ministry. Finally, I was keenly aware that this was only the second year female delegates have been part of synod. So many factors played into the uniqueness of my situation as synod's youngest delegate, I felt an incredible sense of awe and thanksgiving.

I listened a lot, said very little, and prayed much. Here are a few observations:

- I was amazed at how diverse the denomination actually is. I've often thought of my Washington, D.C., congregation as an exception in our striving toward racial diversity and unity. But I was encouraged to see representatives from churches just like ours and hear their stories. Racial reconciliation became one of the overarching themes of the week. The decision we made to continue studying the Belhar Confession helped emphasize that (see p. 32). Clearly, we are realizing the value of diversity.
- There has been a lot of hype lately about why 20- and 30-somethings are leaving the church. I find it somewhat offensive

because those of us who still attend are in some ways dedicated to the church more so than any other age group. I'd like to encourage the church to ask us directly about what attracts us. For example, I enjoy church because it's countercultural. It forces me to think on a deeper level than anything the media throws my way—to solve problems greater than who killed who on "CSI" last night, to put into practice something more important than my skills on "Guitar Hero." Church challenges me to think beyond myself and give rightful attention and homage to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. (Some comments I heard at synod upset me. There's a necessity for accountability and confrontation in the church, but I expected it to be handled in a countercultural way, addressed with love and compassion rather than irritability and skepticism.)

- In his "State of the CRC" speech, Jerry Dykstra challenged us all to build healthy congregations. If we want to shape this denomination that is reaching the world, we need to start on the congregational level—discipling and sending out agents of renewal to transform lives. This task belongs to each one of us. What are you doing?

This was my first and, I hope, not my last trip to synod. I would encourage all CRC members to attend someday if possible. It's wonderful to see firsthand how God's Spirit is moving. Synod showed me even more clearly why I love the church. Regardless of its flaws and shortcomings, I will continue striving to be a "living member" of this community. ■

**Katie Ritsema-Roelofs** grew up in Denver, Colo., and graduated from Calvin College in 2006 with a degree in music and worship. Ordained last year as a ministry associate, she currently serves as Minister of Music and Worship for Washington, D.C., CRC. She's also working on a master's in religion and theological studies from Reformed Theological Seminary. She and her husband, Brian, are expecting their first child in October.

NEXT



Synod showed me even more clearly why I love the church.



# Not Alone

## A FORMER STUDENT WROTE TO ME RECENTLY:

You know that I more than question my own worthiness. How more than alone I feel, and even unnecessary, maybe. Yeah, I do long to feel Jesus' truths and promises within my own being. I guess I just don't understand why the pathway of my life has just not been as it should be. . . . Why do I continue to find myself stuck on a dark path, feeling lost and so alone?

Of all the questioning, pleading cries I heard from young people during my years as a college chaplain, none were more frequent or urgent than these: "Am I alone in this universe? Do I matter? Can I be confident that I need not face my (sometimes difficult and heavy) life circumstances by myself?"

That's precisely why I was—and still am—eager to help my young friends both to learn and also to become confident, deep-down, of a central truth John Calvin has taught to me: The Holy Spirit is the presence and power of Jesus in life. The Spirit's presence can comfort us amid our beleaguering circumstances. His power can help us to endure as we somehow make our way through them.

## The **Holy Spirit** welds us unbreakably to Jesus.

As Calvin saw it, the Holy Spirit is anything but some junior partner within the divine Trinity. The Spirit's person and work are no less prominent and important than the Father's and the Son's.

Reformation scholars call Calvin "the theologian of the Holy Spirit." It's their way of acknowledging that in his thinking the Spirit plays a central and undergirding role in the entire divine drama.

According to Calvin, it is the Holy Spirit who was active in God's creating the world, in bringing Jesus to birth, in founding the Church, in inspiring the Bible's writers, and in so much more.

Nor did the Holy Spirit cease his work centuries ago. Still today the Spirit keeps prompting persons, amid the unique and fine-print detailed circumstances of their lives, to place their trust in Jesus, to believe that Scripture's promises and

commands are God's very Word to them, to be confident that baptism and the Lord's Supper transport them into Jesus' presence, and to use their (Spiritual!) gifts to serve and enrich others.

Given that many people nowadays feel so disoriented, alienated, and alone, I wish to underscore prominently one feature of the Holy Spirit's work. I want everyone, but especially my dear young friends, to learn what Calvin taught me: the Holy Spirit welds us unbreakably to Jesus. In a sermon on Jesus' suffering and death for us, Calvin pleaded with his listeners:

Let us know the unity that we have with our Lord Jesus Christ; to wit, that he wills to have a common life with us, and that what he has should be ours: nay, that he even wishes to dwell in us, not in imagination, but in effect; not in earthly fashion but spiritually; and that whatever may befall, he so labors by the virtue of his Holy Spirit that we are united with him more closely than are the limbs with the body.

Jesus is with us by his Spirit. Never need anyone feel orphaned and alone. Simply never. And with Jesus empowering us by that same Spirit, never need anyone feel himself without enough strength to endure life's circumstances. Simply never.

To become aware of Jesus' presence and power requires that we daily—sometimes hourly, sometimes by the minute—continue to declare our dependence on God, and to plead with God. Thus Calvin gave us these words to pray:

Almighty God and Father, grant unto us, because we have to go through much strife on this earth, the strength of thy Holy Spirit, in order that we may courageously go through the fire, and through the water, and that we may put ourselves so under thy rule that we may go to meet death in full confidence of thy assistance and without fear. . . . Amen. ■

**WEB Q'S** See discussion questions at the end of this article on *The Banner's* website: [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).



**Rev. Dale Cooper** is chaplain emeritus of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich. In honor of John Calvin's 500th birthday, he is writing a special series for *The Banner* this year on Calvin's central teachings.



The praise team from a new church plant, Living Hope Church in Palos Heights, Ill., leads worship at the Multiethnic Conference.



## Diversity Doesn't Come Easily

This year's Multiethnic Conference participants met with the theme "Embracing the Discomfort of Diversity," and attendees experienced both the joys of being a multicultural church and the disappointments that can come when some feel excluded from it.

This marked the 10th Multiethnic Conference, held mostly biennially since 1988, and always in conjunction with the meeting of synod.

Its purpose is to bring together people from all the cultures present in the Christian Reformed Church and provide them with an opportunity to network. It also gives them an opportunity to learn firsthand how synod operates.

This year's 104 conferees represented 14 different ethnic backgrounds.

Rev. Harry Lew, a campus minister from Grand Rapids, Mich., said he loved interacting with people from different parts of the church. He wished he'd had more time just to mingle, but the conference agenda was packed.

Indeed, from Friday night to Saturday dinnertime, there were

four plenary sessions and two opportunities to attend workshops that included topics such as ministering in an Islamic culture, the Belhar Confession, and understanding Navajo culture.

Sandra Williams came from Mississauga, Ontario, for the conference. It was her first time. "I'm really excited by the diversity of people, the speakers, the messages of unity," she said. "I'm much more conscious of the biblical meaning of diversity."

Rev. Dan Roels, from Holland, Mich., was attending for the second time. "Diversity is in my blood. I can't live without it," he said. "[The conference] feels like coming home."

Rev. Michael Wagenman, from London, Ontario, was another first-timer. "It was a refreshing opportunity to experience the ethnic diversity that is part of the CRC already," he said.

Faye Dundas, also from Mississauga, was at the conference for the third time. "I was so excited to see so many Caucasians and such a spread of gender and age," she said.

Rev. Esteban Lugo, the CRC's director of Race Relations, confirmed that 30-35 percent of

attendees were from an Anglo background. "We intentionally targeted all ethnicities—including whites," he said. "We wanted to be as inclusive as possible to enable participants to experience unity in the midst of diversity—to embrace the discomfort of diversity."

There was strong reaction on Saturday evening when the CRC's executive director, Rev. Jerry Dykstra, addressed the conference. He had been invited to share his vision for increasing diversity in senior denominational leadership after an administrative restructuring last fall meant that no longer did any person of color have a voice or vote in senior advisory settings. (See "Minority Voice Lost," June 2009, p. 13.)

Conferees hoped to hear him lay out a plan to bring ethnic diversity into the senior leadership of the denomination.

"I did not hear a plan," said Wagenman. "I wanted to hear the plan and how it would take institutional shape."

"I appreciated that Rev. Dykstra was vulnerable in sharing one of his first experiences with diversity," said Dundas. "When he said that old structures have to change, even if



The 104 participants in this year's Multiethnic Conference came from a multitude of ethnic backgrounds, including Samoan, Hispanic, African American, Jordanian, Native American, Anglo, Chinese, Korean, Ghanaian, Kenyan, Ecuadorian, Vietnamese, and Laotian.

people consider it going back 15 years, I thought, 'Oh, my, not again. Did he consider the repercussions of that?'"

Conference attendees met after the worship service on Sunday morning and approved sending a letter to Synod 2009, expressing lament about the administrative restructuring decision, and expressing sadness for those experiencing exclusion, alienation, and marginalization (see "Synod Requests Steps to Increase Diversity in CRC Leadership," p. 34).

However, many attendees still left with hope. As Delia Caderno writes in her conference diary (see "Dear Diary . . ."), "No matter what, God is still seated on his throne and is sovereign over his creation."

Sandra Williams echoed that sentiment: "I know there is hope. God is going to work things out. By God's grace we will come to the place of unity."

—Gayla R. Postma

## Dear Diary . . .



Delia Caderno

So I finally went to the Multiethnic Conference.

Funny, I've been involved in the CRC for about 10 years, but this was my first time at the conference. I'm not sure why I hadn't gone before, but I'm glad to have finally made it.

Although not every tribe and every nation was represented, it came pretty close. There were even representatives from "the tribe of the wooden shoe people."

I'm so appreciative of the hard work put forth by Rev. Esteban Lugo and the CRC's Office of Race Relations to bring about this conference. The diversity of the presenters and workshop topics made it a good learning experience.

In many instances the lessons were not new, but seeing them affirmed by many within the CRC structure was wonderfully refreshing. . . .

The conference started with dinner on Friday evening. During dinner a few of us started to talk about this year's theme, "Embracing the Discomfort of Diversity." We started listing the reasons why we sometimes experience discomfort. Fear and lack of knowledge about other cultures topped the list.

During that same dinner I learned that the word *Asian* is too small of a brush with which to paint a multitude of folks. I already knew that to be true about the words *Latino* and *Hispanic* but hadn't thought about how other cultures feel when people try to describe them with a one-word-fits-all description.

During the keynote address I learned that a phrase like "God is changing the color of the Church" brings joy to some and confusion to others. I confess that I was on the side of the confused ones, since in my opinion the problem with the church is not the color of the people but the condition of their hearts. . . .

On Saturday morning we heard about the importance of learning how other cultures understand what is sacred to them. If we do this, then we will be able to turn barriers into bridges for relationship.

We engaged in many conversations about diversity throughout the conference, but mostly we agreed that our diversity is the physical evidence of God's amazing creative power. We were encouraged to look at diversity as parts of a whole and to embrace the differences in those parts—after all what would the body look like if every part were a nose. It is *in* our diversity that we can fully experience God's love and acceptance. . . .

The conference had its high and low moments. Within the span of a few hours we experienced extreme joy (when the number-two spot in synod's leadership was filled by a woman of color) and extreme heartbreak (when many of us felt that the new leadership structure within the CRC will lack people of color, making years of struggle for equal representation by people of color seem for naught). . . .

All in all, it was a great experience. As my husband says often, "No matter what, God is still seated on his throne and is sovereign over his creation." So, as God's children of many colors (and yes, white is a color too), we would do well to find out and do God's will—and not just in the confines of our churches or ethnic backgrounds, but in our neighborhoods and broader communities.

So for me, coming back home to Miami—one of the most diverse cities in the United States—the question isn't how do I love my Haitian, Jamaican, African American, or Nicaraguan neighbors, but simply how do I love my neighbors, and, more importantly, how do my neighbors see my love in action?

Delia Caderno was born in Guantanamo, Cuba, and migrated to the U.S. with her family when she was 9. She moved from Chicago to Miami four years ago to create an intermediary organization to do Christian community development as a ministry partner of CRWRC. She is currently director of Partnership for Community Development.

It is *in* our diversity that we can fully experience God's love and acceptance. . . .



# SYNODIN OUR VIEW

## Stretching for Diversity and Unity Even When It Hurts

### Synod News Team

The Banner's coverage of Synod 2009 was provided by Editor Rev. Bob De Moor, News Editor Gayla Postma, and writers Dan Postma and Roxanne Van Farowe. All synod photographs were taken by Karen Huttenga.

Coverage for the CRC's Denominational Office, including synod news releases, media coordination, and webcasts, were provided by CRC Director of Communications Henry Hess, Chris Meehan, and Tim Postuma.

Synod 2009 was a real stretch. It took a lot of stretching to maintain unity while including so many diverse voices, so many differences of opinion. And sometimes that stretching hurt.

Synods have been stretching quite well lately. In 2007, delegates stretched to walk together whether or not they supported delegating women to synod. In 2008, male and female delegates on each side of the issue worked side by side for the first time with total graciousness.

### Delegate Diversity

This was one of the most diverse synods I've seen in 13 years of synod watching. There were 17 female delegates, fewer than last year's 26, but their presence didn't feel like a novelty even though it's only the second year they've been included.

There were 24 ethnic-minority delegates, more than ever before. There were also delegates with physical disabilities,



**Rev. John Alger: "Racism . . . is one of the deepest unconfessed sins of the church, and I believe the Belhar will help us to face this."**

representing a new kind of inclusion. And the age spread of delegates was probably the greatest it has ever been, from 25 to 82 years old. Throw in the youth observers and the spread grows even larger.

Right off the top, Synod 2009 set its sights on diversity, electing an executive inclusive of both youth and experience, black and white, American and Canadian (see p. 31).

The theme of the Synodical Service of Prayer and Praise held Sunday at Elmhurst (Ill.) Christian Reformed Church focused on the unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17, that all may be one (see p. 44). "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me," Jesus prayed.

That unity was visibly present at the worship service. Seeing our white synod president and our black synod vice president serve

**Rev. Paul De Vries: "The reality is that the position of people of color has been set back."**

communion to each other at that service brought tears to my eyes.

However, during that same opening weekend, while celebrating the ethnic diversity within the denomination, delegates to the Multiethnic Conference expressed disappointment regarding lack of inclusion of people of color in the denomination's senior leadership (see pp. 28-29, 34).

They had to stretch their patience to remain gracious despite their frustration. Rev. Paul De Vries, Classis Thornapple Valley, acknowledged that when he told synod, "The reality is that the position of people of color has been set back."

### Theological Diversity

Theological differences also required stretching. The discussion on the Belhar Confession showed a wide range of opinions. While many expressed appreciation for its themes on racial reconciliation and unity, delegates remained far apart about whether the Belhar should be given full-fledged confessional status in the CRC or adopted as a testimony or as an ecumenical confession (see p. 32).



# It's a big job to include and enfold everyone.

Rev. John Algera, Classis Hackensack, saw the Belhar as a tool for unity. "I believe that racism and prejudice is one of the deepest unconfessed sins of the church, and I believe the Belhar will help us to face this," he said.

Delegates, CRC Board of Trustees members, and senior denominational leaders all stretched to find common administrative

of denominational administration that caused so much discussion throughout synod. But by the time Executive Director Rev. Jerry Dykstra explained the restructuring, delegates thanked him for his work and gave him a prolonged standing ovation. As Elder Tobias Lewis, Classis Atlantic Northeast, told him, "It must be daunting to have more than 180 micromanagers."

At the same time, Synod 2009 did instruct the Board of Trustees to develop guidelines on how to involve the broader church community, through synod, when significant structural changes are being considered.

Synod tried to stretch far enough to include deacons in future synods, but didn't quite get there (see p. 39). Synod did stretch far enough to bring young people into the room, but not quite far enough yet to have their voices heard (see pp. 6 and 43).

## Are We There Yet?

We clearly have not yet arrived at a place of both unity and diversity. Discussions over the next three years about the Belhar Confession will, one hopes, move us forward. A strategy for including people of color in denominational leadership, which synod requested, would represent good progress.

How will we know when we've arrived? Well, when the number of ethnic-minority delegates more closely matches their representation in the denomination (presently about 1 in 4) and when the number of women delegates is equal to their representation in the denomination, we'll be a lot closer.

When deacons are delegates (or at least advisers) to synod, we will have the kind of word and deed representation seen already in many classes (regional groups of churches).

And if young people can be given full advisory status so that a hugely important part of today's church is represented—well, that

will put a real bounce in our step.

It's a big job to stretch far enough to include and enfold everyone. I think the CRC is up to it.

Gayla R. Postma is news editor for *The Banner*.



**Elder Tobias Lewis: "It must be daunting to have more than 180 micromanagers."**

ground regarding what the Board of Trustees may do on its own and what it must bring to synod for approval first (see p. 34).

The new Network for Congregations, already up and running, ran into some questions and confusion in an advisory committee, so Rev. Michael Bruinooge, interim director of the Network, was asked to better explain it to delegates (see p. 46).

Some delegates expressed concerns about the restructuring



**Synod 2009's executive, from left: Rev. Sheila Holmes, Rev. William Veenstra, Rev. William Koopmans, and Elder Don Dykstra.**

## An Experienced, Diverse Executive

When Synod 2009 elected its officers, it covered just about all the bases.

As president, Rev. Williams Koopmans (Classis Chatham) brought relative youth at age 50. He is the youngest synod president in recent memory, and only the third Canadian ever to serve as president. This was his seventh synod and his second time on the executive.

Vice president Rev. Sheila Holmes (Classis Hackensack) brought ethnic and gender diversity as the first African American woman to serve on a synod executive. This was her second time delegated to synod. She also served previously as an ethnic adviser.

First clerk Don Dykstra (Classis Illiana) brought 81 years' and 13 synods' worth of experience. This was his fourth time as clerk.

Second clerk Rev. William Veenstra (Classis Hamilton) was at his fifth synod and previously served as synod's vice president. Also a Canadian, Veenstra balanced the executive evenly between Canadians and Americans.

—Gayla R. Postma

# SYNOD DENOMINATIONAL LIFE

## Synod 2009 Proposes Adopting the Belhar

**T**he Christian Reformed Church is, for the first time in its history, proposing the adoption of a new confession: the Belhar Confession.

If adopted in 2012, the Belhar would join the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort, the newest of which is nearly 400 years old.

Second only to Scripture, those three Reformed confessions, together with the ecumenical creeds, have guided the Christian Reformed Church across every generation.

In the latter part of the 20th century, the CRC adopted *Our World Belongs to God*, but as a “Contemporary Testimony,” not as a full-fledged confession.

Drafted by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa (now merged into the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa), the Belhar was

written in 1986, emerging from a context of acute racial tension in that country’s apartheid era.

Rev. Motlalentwa Godfrey Betha came to Synod 2009 from the South African church that produced the Belhar. “In considering the implications of the Confession of Belhar for the CRC,” Betha urged synod, “you are being challenged to confirm once again that reconciliation is the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and thus that justice and unity are the indispensable public duties of the church in this divided world and terrifying time.”

The confession focuses on themes of unity, justice, and reconciliation. It is the only confession ever received from the Southern Hemisphere by the worldwide Reformed community.

Synod’s debate about the Belhar was passionate. “What holds us together as Christians is confession in Jesus Christ,” said Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen of Classis Toronto. “I appreciate the Belhar Confession, but I don’t find in it the same wonderful statements of salvation that we find in our other confessions.”

Some delegates preferred to adopt the Belhar as a testimony or an ecumenical confession, rather than give it full confessional status.

“What is Reformed about the Belhar Confession?” asked Rev. Ronald Meyer of Classis Zeeland. “We’ve always made the distinction between those things that are ecumenical and those things that are Reformed. Our three creeds are ecumenical; our three Reformed standards are strongly and uniquely Reformed. I see the Belhar Confession as being very strongly ecumenical.”



**Rev. Sheila Holmes: “I believe that God wants to do a new thing in the Christian Reformed Church.”**

Some studies and commentators have linked the language of the Belhar—particularly its fourth article, where it states “God . . . is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged”—to liberation theology. Liberation theology is a radical reinterpretation of Scripture emphasizing social justice and political activism, often at the expense of the Christian gospel as it is traditionally understood.

“Does [this] mean that black liberation theology is the basis of this confession? There is nothing to prove or disprove this either way,” said elder delegate Jose Rayas of Classis Arizona. “But if this is the connection that is being drawn in the newspapers, in the blogs, and in the websites, it would serve us as the church best not to raise the Belhar Confession to the same level as the three Forms of Unity, for the sake of the unity of the church.”



### Walk Softly, Carry a Germ-laden Stick

Synod 2009’s sergeant at arms was Rev. Archie L. Vander Hart from Classis Lake Superior. Despite being felled by the flu early in the week, the sergeant at arms returned with a vengeance, ensuring all delegates were shepherded—voluntarily or not—to their seats quickly after breaks. Synod president Rev. William Koopmans warned delegates, “His virus is all over that cane. If he comes anywhere near you, run for your seat and take your place in the assembly.”

—Dan Postma



**Rev. Ronald Meyer: “What is Reformed about the Belhar Confession? I see the Belhar Confession as being very strongly ecumenical.”**



## Resources for Studying the Belhar Confession

*Unity, Reconciliation, and Justice* is a study guide with nine study group lessons about the Belhar Confession, originally produced by and for members of the Reformed Church in America.

The book also includes directions for group leaders, readings, songs, and worship materials.

The study guide is available from Faith Alive Christian Resources (1-800-333-8300; [www.faithaliv-eresources.org](http://www.faithaliv-eresources.org)). It can also be downloaded free at <http://images.rca.org/docs/aboutus/BelharGuide-Complete.pdf>.

For a report from the CRC's Ecumenical Relations Committee that includes a statement of introduction to the Belhar and the text of the confession, please see [http://www.crcna.org/site\\_uploads/uploads/resources/synodical/IRC\\_Appendix\\_-\\_Belhar\\_Confession\\_Report.pdf](http://www.crcna.org/site_uploads/uploads/resources/synodical/IRC_Appendix_-_Belhar_Confession_Report.pdf).

That report was also included in its entirety in the *Agenda for Synod 2009*, available in print or to download from [www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org).



**Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen:** "I appreciate the Belhar Confession, but I don't find in it the same wonderful statements of salvation that we find in our other confessions."

But several delegates spoke in favor of adopting the Belhar and giving it full confessional status. "We are narrowing our understanding of racism," said Rev. John Tenyenhuis of Classis Toronto. "I can't understand why we think this is just a small ethical problem that could be talked about in terms of a testimony. The other three confessions never kept any of us from the racism that we participated in so deeply and for so long."

Victoria Gibbs, elder delegate from Classis Grand Rapids East, has been promoting and teaching the Belhar Confession at work-

shops and gatherings for several years. "One of the most surprising things for me as I've stood in front of people is that the ability to even have cross-cultural conversation is so diminished that it's frightening," she said.

Vice president of synod Rev. Sheila Holmes, of Classis Hackensack, told delegates she believes God wants to do a new thing in the Christian Reformed Church. "He wants to open us up, wants us to be vulnerable, wants to expose us," she said.

According to the Church Order of the CRC, a decision of this magnitude must be made by two separate synods. Synod 2009 proposed adding the Belhar Confession as a fourth confession, and it will now be up to Synod 2012 to adopt the change.

In preparation for synod's discussion of the Belhar in 2012, and to engage the churches in that historic process, Synod 2009



**Rev. John Tenyenhuis:** "The other three confessions never kept any of us from the racism that we participated in so deeply and for so long."

gave the denomination's Ecumenical Relations Committee the task of promoting intense study of the Belhar over the next three years.

—Dan Postma



At age 82, Frank De Boer was synod's oldest delegate, for the second year in a row. The retired chemistry professor was an elder delegate from Classis Illinois.

Synod 2009's youngest delegate—and the youngest delegate ever—was Katie Ritsema-Roelofs, 25, an elder from Classis Hackensack. Ritsema-Roelofs can also safely claim to be the first pregnant delegate to synod—she is expecting her first child in October.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

### OUTTAKE

**Synod president Rev. William Koopmans:**

“There is a higher than what would be expected number of illnesses, especially considering that debates on the floor haven't even started yet.”

# SYNOD DENOMINATIONAL LIFE

## Synod Requests Steps to Increase Diversity in CRC Leadership

### Better Safe Churches than Sorry

Are our churches safe enough? Synod 2009 heard that only 20 of the CRC's 47 classes (geographical regions) have assembled Safe Church Teams.

Classis-based Safe Church Teams provide abuse-prevention education and support, connect alleged victims with an advocate, and also form a fact-finding advisory panel when an adult claimant brings an allegation of misconduct against a church leader.

Some classes are too small to offer enough trained panelists for a hearing process.

Delegates decided that to ensure an advocate and an advisory-panel process are available to every church member, advisory panels could be regionally based, encompassing more than one classis, to fill in gaps between and across classes.

These regional panels will only conduct hearings and will report to the church to which the alleged offender belongs. Education and support services will continue to be provided by the classis.

Synod also heard that the newly renamed Safe Church Ministry, formerly the Office of Abuse Prevention, will train its volunteer advocates across the denomination to begin including restorative-justice techniques in their work with alleged victims.

—Dan Postma

Responding to a "strong message of concern and pain," Synod 2009 instructed the denomination's Board of Trustees to come up with a strategy to increase multiethnic representation in the denomination's leadership.

The message came to Synod 2009 via a letter from participants in the CRC's Multiethnic Conference held at the same time as the opening days of synod (see pp. 28-29).

They wrote regarding a restructuring that took place last fall in denominational leadership that excluded the only person of color who had a voice and vote on a senior advisory team (see "Minority Voice Lost," June 2009, p. 13).



Rev. Dan Ackerman: "[This is] insulting. . . . We're going pre-2000."

Elder Victoria Gibbs: "[This is] not even close to where we could have been."



The conference's letter was ruled not legally before synod, but its contents were discussed in an advisory committee.

CRC Executive Director Rev. Jerry Dykstra said the restructure had "put us in reverse rather than ahead on nonwhite participation" but added "the restructure was not done with that in mind."

Some delegates expressed a desire to know exactly what message the letter from the Multiethnic Conference conveyed. "They took significant energy and concern to communicate something to synod," said Rev. Thomas Dykman. "I am concerned that we do not know what that concern was." Delegates who had reviewed the letter said they had done their best to represent its concerns.

Although the letter did not come to synod through the normally prescribed channels, Rev. Peter Borgdorff, executive director emeritus, said there is historical precedent for synod receiving communications from the Multiethnic Conference over the years.

He explained that because the conference meets at the same time as synod, there isn't time for the prescribed channels but that synods receive the communications as a matter of cultural sensitivity.

Synod 2009 instructed the Board of Trustees to be "relentless and faithful advocates in promoting multiethnic communication, dialogue, and leadership development at the denominational, classical, and congregational levels."

"We believe the current structure of denominational leadership does not adequately address the fundamental concerns regarding advancement of people of color," read the statement adopted by synod.

Elder Victoria Gibbs, Classis Grand Rapids East, advocated for

#### OUTTAKE

Elder Jeffrey Heinen, Classis Wisconsin, during a lengthy debate on the Belhar Confession:

Since I'm not a pastor, I will be able to be brief.



the mandate but added that she was disappointed with the current leadership situation.

"This [mandate] gets us close to where we were five years ago, but not even close to where we could have been," she said.

Rev. Dan Ackerman, Classis Grand Rapids South, said he found the need for the directive "insulting," considering the years of work that people of color have done to create racial sensitivity in the denomination.

"When actions are taken by staff to eliminate positions occupied by people of color, and the Board of Trustees met and said they didn't have to look at it, we're going pre-2000," he said.



**CRC Executive Director Rev. Jerry Dykstra: "[The restructure] put us in reverse rather than ahead on nonwhite participation. . . . [It] was not done with that in mind."**

"It's been very unfortunate that it happened not only at the denominational office but at a number of places where people of color were working in strategic positions and have been bumped out," said Rev. John Hoekwater, Classis Northern Illinois.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## Executive Director Explains Structure Changes

**O**n the last day of Synod 2009, a request from a delegate resulted in the denomination's executive director, Rev. Jerry Dykstra, giving a detailed explanation of the restructuring of senior denominational leadership that took place last fall. (See "Is CRC Decision-Making in Too Few Hands?" June 2009, p. 12).

The request came from Rev. Martin Dam, Classis Hamilton. It followed a debate two days earlier about the fact that the restructuring left persons of color without a voice on the denomination's senior administrative council. (See "Synod Requests Steps to Increase Diversity in CRC Leadership," p. 34.)

Rev. William Veenstra, also from Classis Hamilton and synod's second clerk, supported the request for an explanation, expressing concern that the CRC is "becoming increasingly focused on efficiency and effectiveness but is losing its ecclesiastical quality."

After Dykstra described and explained the new structure, delegates had an opportunity to respond, and they had many questions.

"You said you have a plan in motion [for increasing multiethnic



**Rev. Emmett Harrison: "You said you have a plan [for increasing multiethnic representation], but we haven't had any specifics."**

representation], but we haven't had any specifics. What assurance do we have?" asked Rev. Emmett Harrison, Classis Lake Erie.

Veenstra raised concerns about what is happening to the Canadian identity within a bi-national denomination.

The questions became more heated until Tobias Lewis, an elder from Classis Atlantic Northeast, said, "We need to trust our executive director. It must be daunting to have more than 180 micromanagers."

The restructuring and the creation of the Network for Con-

gregations by the Board of Trustees also generated discussion about what decisions require approval by synod before being implemented.

As a result, Synod 2009 instructed the board to develop guidelines on how to involve the broader church community, through synod, when significant structural changes are being considered.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



**Rev. William Veenstra: The CRC is "becoming increasingly focused on efficiency and effectiveness but is losing its ecclesiastical quality."**



Shashi DeHaan (left) and Rev. Andrew Woja Henry served Synod 2009 as ethnic advisers. Ethnic advisers serve synod unless there are at least 25 delegates from ethnic-minority backgrounds. In 2009, that number reached 24, so only two ethnic advisers were appointed.

—Dan Postma



# SYNOD DENOMINATIONAL LIFE

## A Reformed Response to Third Wave Pentecostalism

### Guidelines for Retiring Pastors

As baby-boomer pastors retire, many are opting to remain in the community of the congregation they formerly served. So Synod 2009 adopted guidelines to help retiring pastors and their congregations define their future relationship.

The guidelines state that pastors and church councils should “become informed of the prevalence and types of problems that can arise when a former pastor does remain [in the congregation].”

Those problems can include

- undefined boundaries between the retiring pastor and parishioners.
- pastor candidates being leery of a call to that congregation.
- difficulty for the new pastor in defining his or her place, because that place is still occupied by the former pastor.

To avoid these problems, the guidelines advise pastors and councils to “view the decision [of whether the retiring pastor should stay] as having weight similar to that of the decision to originally call the pastor to this church.”

If the former pastor does remain, the guidelines state that the church should develop a written agreement to ensure that appropriate boundaries are understood by all involved.

The CRC Office of Pastor-Church Relations developed the guidelines at the request of Synod 2007. That office can be contacted at 616-224-0837 for sample agreements and other resources.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

To define a Reformed way to engage so-called “third wave Pentecostalism,” Synod 2009 recommended two reports to Christian Reformed churches.

A main report describes and critiques modern charismatic teachings on prayer, spiritual warfare, prophecy, healing ministries, and more.

A second report was added by those who wanted a more cautious approach in these areas.

“We thought there was value in letting the denomination see that there is not one answer to this third wave phenomenon,” said Rev. Leonard Riemersma of Classis Lake Erie. “The third wave is very fluid, and there are so many different ways to interpret many of its components.”

The counsel to churches includes:

- warning against “any tendency to make dramatic emotional or miraculous experiences the center of the Christian life.”
- gratitude that God performs miraculous healing, while noting that sometimes in his



Rev. Leonard Riemersma, Classis Lake Erie: “We thought there was value in letting the denomination see that there was not one answer to this third wave phenomenon.”

- sovereignty God does not heal yet still manifests his love.
  - warning against misuses associated with healing ministries.
  - advice for churches to engage in scripturally sound deliverance ministry with discernment and caution.
- The one issue that didn’t find full agreement between the authors of the two reports was on prophecy—specifically, whether

the gift of prophecy is still in use today.

One report said prophecy is a gift the church no longer has or needs “because we now have the Scriptures in all of their perfection.”

The main report said, instead, that “prophets in the Old Testament were replaced by apostles in the New Testament. We are basically following a new understanding of prophecy.”

Elder Tobias Lewis, Classis Atlantic Northeast, said that he appreciated the report because “it didn’t put the Holy Spirit in a box.”

### Faith Alive Director Introduced

Mark Rice introduced himself to Synod 2009 as someone who loves Jesus, loves the church, and loves books and publishing.

Rice is the new director of Faith Alive Christian Resources, the publishing ministry of the Christian Reformed Church.

“We face a future where loyalty [from churches] is earned, not assumed,” Rice said. “We need fresh vision and fresh insight into what it means to be a Christian publisher.”

Rice joined Faith Alive (formerly CRC Publications) in September 2008.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Mark Rice, director of Faith Alive Christian Resources



**Elder Tobias Lewis, Atlantic Northeast, said he appreciated the third wave report because “it didn’t put the Holy Spirit in a box.”**

A survey by the report authors found that almost 40 percent of CRC pastors have engaged in training in areas associated with the third wave movement.

Perhaps the third wave’s strongest influence on the denomination, according to the report, is the Alpha study course, which 36 percent of churches use—many of these in Canada.

The Alpha course includes a section of teaching on the Holy Spirit and was written by Nicky Gumbel, who was mentored by one of the third wave’s key leaders.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## Listening to Local Churches

In a “State of the Church” address to Synod 2009, CRC Executive Director Rev. Jerry Dykstra told delegates that the economic downturn is a “difficult situation for the denomination and its agencies, and even more so for local churches.”

However, “I am convinced that God will use this time in the history of our churches and the CRC to make us stronger, not weaker,” he said. “In hard times we have opportunities to really evaluate what it is that God has called us to do.”

Dykstra said he has made a point to listen carefully to what churches need. “We as a denomination need to hear what it is that the local churches need because we are the CRC—it is not an office,” he said.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



**CRC Executive Director Rev. Jerry Dykstra: “I am convinced that God will use this time . . . to make us stronger, not weaker.”**

### OUTTAKE

**Delegate:**

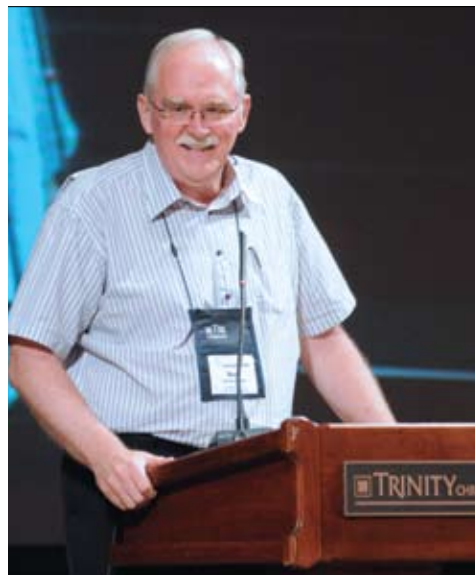
👉👉 **In a sense I’d like to call for the question.”**

**President:**

**“You may not make a speech and then call for the question.”**

**Delegate:**

**“I would like to, but I didn’t.” 🗨️🗨️**



## Interim Home Missions Director Introduced

Ben Vandezande introduced himself to Synod 2009 as someone who is “working together to move the mission forward in a fresh, common way.”

Vandezande began his two-year appointment as interim director of Christian Reformed Home Missions last fall. He was previously Home Missions regional team leader for Eastern Canada.

Vandezande shared “the four chambers of [his] heart”: starting new ministries, multiplying leaders, coaching churches, and accomplishing unexpected new things.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

**Ben Vandezande: Let’s work “together to move the mission forward in a fresh, common way.”**

# SYNOD ECUMENICAL LIFE

## Synod Hears Caution on Belhar

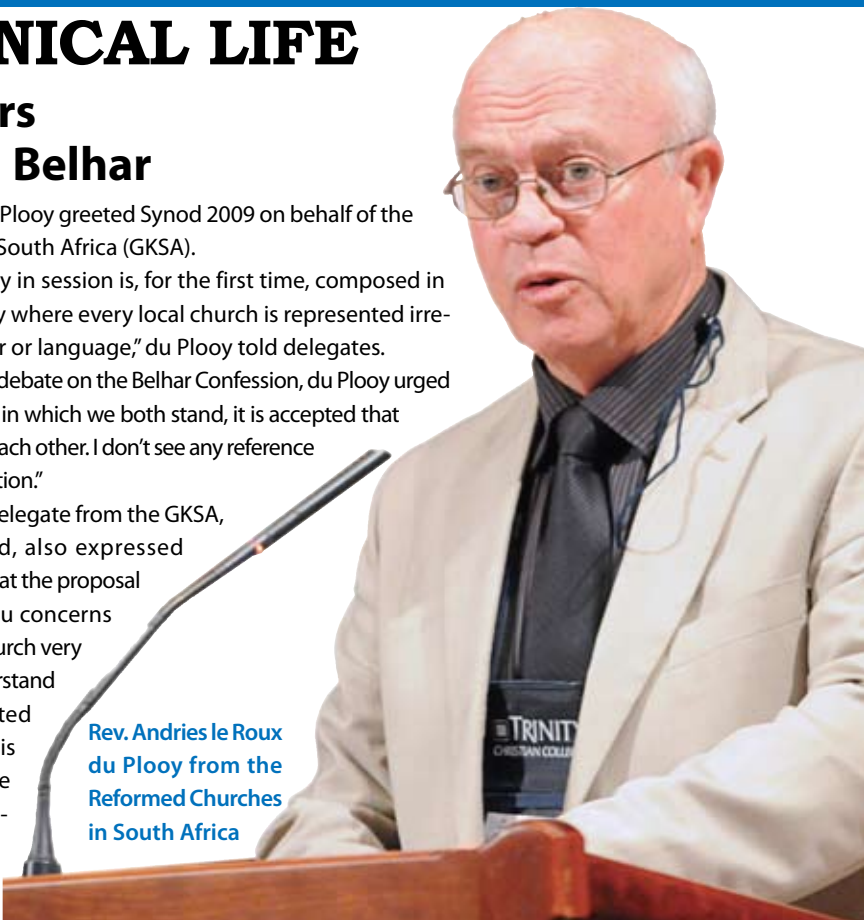
Rev. Andries le Roux du Plooy greeted Synod 2009 on behalf of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA).

“Our synod currently in session is, for the first time, composed in a new, restructured way where every local church is represented irrespective of race or color or language,” du Plooy told delegates.

Later, during synod’s debate on the Belhar Confession, du Plooy urged caution. “In the tradition in which we both stand, it is accepted that we should consult with each other. I don’t see any reference in the report to consultation.”

A second fraternal delegate from the GKSA, Douw Gerbrand Breed, also expressed concern. “We all know that the proposal you have in front of you concerns the Dutch Reformed Church very much, directly. As I understand it, [they] were not invited to send delegates to this synod. . . . Wouldn’t it be wise for you to first consult this church?”

—Dan Postma



Rev. Andries le Roux du Plooy from the Reformed Churches in South Africa

## In Step with the RCA

Rev. Harold Delhagen brought greetings to Synod 2009 from the Reformed Church in America (RCA).

“When you are in a relationship with a sister church,” he told delegates, “you don’t get to choreograph how it’s going to go. You live, walk alongside, and go together where God is taking you.”

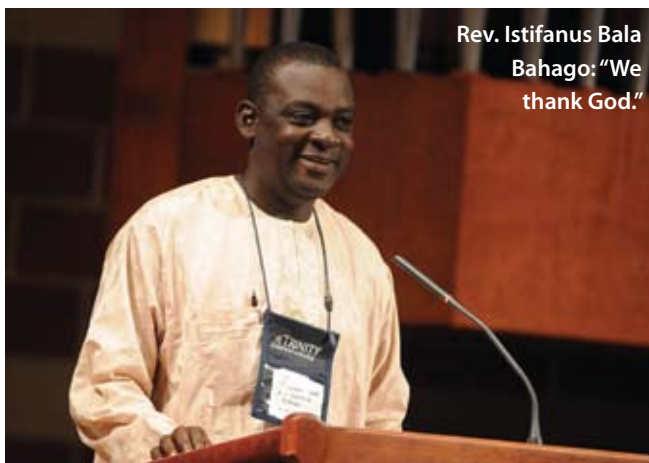
Delhagen participated in a discussion panel on the Belhar Confession for synod, and described the RCA’s journey with the Belhar as very similar to the CRC’s own path. “Congregations in the RCA are, for the first time in a long time, having classes on all the confessions. The Belhar has really perked up some significant interest.”

—Dan Postma

## OUTTAKE

Second clerk Rev. William Veenstra, verifying names of all those who were still ill:

Are you sure that I missed everybody who is absent?



Rev. Istifanus Bala Bahago: “We thank God.”

## Growing Unity in Nigeria

“We thank God and the sacrifices of our founding Reformed fathers who gave their lives to serve God in the jungles of Africa.”

With that, Rev. Istifanus Bala Bahago again brought greetings to Synod 2009 from the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN), as he did in 2007 and 2008. He rejoiced at the growth of the CRCN, and asked delegates to join him in thanking God for newfound unity in the Reformed church in Nigeria.

In April 2009 the church staged its first National Conference in more than 50 years, with an average attendance of 15,000 worshipers on each of the four days.

—Dan Postma





## Ministerial Candidates Approved

Approving and welcoming new candidates for ordained ministry in the CRC is always a highlight of synod, and this year was no different.

Forty-eight new candidates were declared eligible for call.

Rev. Duane Kelderman, vice president of administration at Calvin Theological Seminary, told the candidates, "Your calling is one of the most fulfilling out there. You have a front-row seat on the mission of God. How much better can it get?"

An additional 18 ministers joined the CRC from 12 other denominations, while 13 individuals had their candidacy eligibility extended.

"Love the church more than you love your own dreams for the church," Kelderman challenged

them. "You can commit a multitude of clerical sins, but your church will forgive you when they know that you love them."

—Dan Postma



## No Deacons at Synod Yet

Synod 2009 turned down a request (overture) to appoint deacons as advisers to future synods, despite the fact that several delegates said they liked the idea.

"Deacons have been treated as second-class officebearers," said Rev. Adam Barton, Classis Holland. "We've been convinced in our district that there is a fundamental equality"

"We had a great deal of sympathy for [having deacons at synod] but we did not feel it was worded correctly," said Rev. Paul De Vries, reporter for the advisory committee that responded to the overture. "Speaking for myself, I would love to see classis or individual church councils continue to develop this idea."

Rev. John Hoekwater, Classis Northern Illinois, agreed. "I hope that we will continue this work so that we can move

**Rev. John Hoekwater: "I hope that we will continue this work [on the idea of sending deacons to synod] so that we can move past this separation that we make between word and deed."**

past this separation that we make between word and deed."

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## Synod by the Numbers

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Oldest delegate:                         | 82  |
| Youngest delegate:                       | 25  |
| Average age of minister delegates:       | 51  |
| Average age of elder delegates:          | 60  |
| Percentage of first-time delegates:      | 49% |
| Percentage of female delegates:          | 9%  |
| Percentage of ethnic minority delegates: | 13% |

—Dan Postma

## Synod Online

Watching Synod 2009 live via the Internet was popular again this year. The live web-cast was visited by more than 1,000 people, with total viewings nearing 5,000.

The most viewers at one time were 118, on Wednesday evening when the Belhar Confession was discussed.

Traffic to the synod news pages on the [crcna.org](http://crcna.org) website increased more than fivefold, from an average of 2,200 visits in a regular week, to 12,000 visits during synod.

E-mail news service for synod had 2,700 subscribers, 600 followers used Facebook, and another 125 received synod news via Twitter.

—Gayla R. Postma

## How Our Dollars Support CRC Ministry

Ministry Share Breakdown for 2010\*

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| ● Back to God Ministries International | \$43.97 |
| ● Calvin College                       | \$31.60 |
| ● Calvin Theological Seminary          | \$35.91 |
| ● Faith Alive Christian Resources      | \$12.49 |
| ● Home Missions                        | \$44.24 |
| ● World Missions                       | \$59.93 |
| ● Denominational Services              | \$34.46 |
| ● Network for Congregations**          | \$2.56  |
| ● Sustaining Congregational Excellence | \$10.00 |
| ● Specialized Ministries***            | \$31.01 |
| ● Special Assistance Fund****          | \$1.36  |

**Total Per-Member Assessment \$307.53**

The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee receives no ministry share.

\*These amounts represent allocation for the \$307.53 ministry share for the 2010 fiscal year budget.

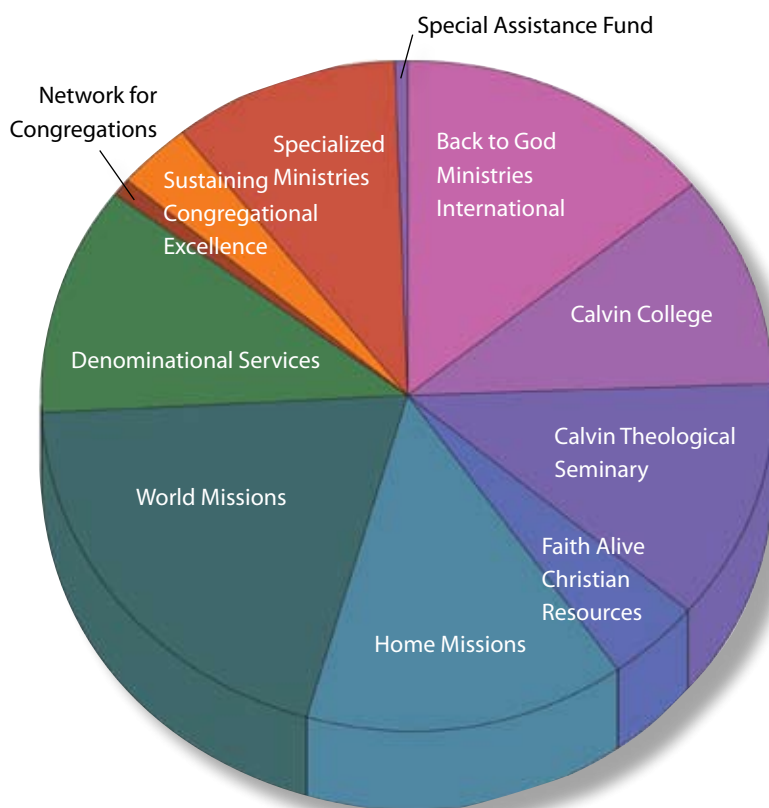
\*\*A new denominational structure set up to connect and network congregations. (See story, p. 46.)

\*\*\*Safe Church Ministry, Chaplaincy Ministries, Ministries in Canada (Aboriginal Ministries, Committee for Contact with the Government, ServiceLink), Pastor-Church Relations, Race Relations, Social Justice and Hunger Action, Restorative Justice.

\*\*\*\*A fund that provides assistance to cover the cost of a pastor's final move at retirement, as well as special needs of retired pastors or their surviving spouses.

## Ministry Share for 2010

Synod 2009 adopted a ministry share of \$307.53 for calendar year 2010, per active, professing CRC member age 18 and older. This amount is unchanged from the current year. Ministry share is one important way in which local congregations provide grassroots support for the worldwide work of the CRC. This reduces the need for expensive fund-raising campaigns.



## Keep Ministry Share System

For many years the Christian Reformed Church has pooled some revenue from its more than 1,000 local congregations to bring shared ministry to the ends of the earth. The money collected from congregations is called ministry shares.

In recent years ministry shares have not been received at the rate assessed, so Synod 2007 appointed a task force to study whether the ministry-share system is still the best way for the churches to share in ministry together.

The task force recommended, and Synod 2009 agreed, that the ministry-share system is still the best method to fund denominational ministry but that congregations and members need to know more about how it works.



**Rev. Bruce Persenaire: "Ministry shares are a good way to make ministry work."**

So in addition to sticking with the current system, delegates voted to allocate up to 1 percent of the denomination's annual receipts toward educating church members about the ministry-share model.

According to John Bolt, the CRC's director of finance, ministry shares fund only a portion of the work of the denomination. However, those dollars are raised at almost zero cost.

"If we use that 1 percent of ministry-share revenue to educate people, we'll be spending about \$240,000 to help raise the \$24 million projected for ministry shares," he said. "That's tough to beat."

Fundraising for what are termed "above ministry share gifts" that fund the rest of the budget costs 10 times that amount to raise similar dollars.

"Ministry shares are a good way to make ministry work," said Rev. Bruce Persenaire, Classis Central California. "There may come a time when we have to abandon the system, but now is not that time."

—Dan Postma





**Rev. David Kromminga:** "There are a lot of people in the CRC who cannot imagine making \$100,000-per-year salaries."

## Executive Salaries Discussed

Salaries of senior denominational executives were briefly discussed when a delegate questioned the pay range offered.

The top six pay levels exceed \$100,000 in compensation per year at their maximum points.

"There are a lot of people in the CRC who cannot imagine making \$100,000-per-year salaries," said Rev. David Kromminga, Classis Grand Rapids East.

John Bolt, the denomination's director of finance, defended the grid as adopted by synod. "While these numbers may look large to some, in the marketplace they are quite small," he told delegates. "They represent a fair but humble position for our pay levels."

—Dan Postma

## No Pension Break for Small Churches

Smaller churches will not be getting a break on their contributions to the Ministers' Pension Fund.

Classis Chatham asked Synod 2009 to address inequities in participant church assessments, arguing that standardized, minimum contribution assessments penalize smaller churches and make it "very hard for smaller churches to meet other ministry obligations."

Synod decided not to reconsider pension assessments. One delegate, however, proposed a different solution for smaller churches. "Why is it that pastors are never asked to contribute to their own pensions?" asked Rev. John Tenyenhuis, of Classis Toronto. "We get a decent pension, but we're never asked to share the load."

Rev. Bruce Persenaire, of Classis Central California, disagreed. "Often, though not always, pastors from smaller churches are asked to share the load, by means of a lower salary," he said.

—Dan Postma



**Rev. John Tenyenhuis:** "Why is it that pastors are never asked to contribute to their own pensions?"



Elder Dirk Jasperse (left) and Rev. Neil Jasperse

## Family Reunion

Rev. Neil Jasperse of Classis Grand Rapids North and his brother Dirk Jasperse, an elder from Classis California South, served together at Synod 2009. "It was a treat," said Neil, age 51. "We usually only see each other once or twice a year or less." Dirk, 54, had to leave synod early due to a death in the family.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## OUTTAKE

**Rev. Joel Ringma, Classis British Columbia North-West, in his first comment to Synod 2009:**

👍👍 Mr. President, I'm a first-time caller, longtime listener. I do love your show. 🗨️🗨️



# SYNODNEWS

## Synod in Sickness and in Health

**S**ynod 2009 was barely underway when a gastrointestinal illness known as a norovirus started felling delegates and staff with surprising speed.

Over a four-day span, 80 people associated with synod were afflicted with the bug, the most common symptoms being severe stomachaches, vomiting, and diarrhea. Some people also experienced fever and headaches. An additional 25 people—Trinity Christian College staff and others—were also affected.

The work of synod carried on despite empty delegate seats, and as the week wore on, those who fell ill early began to return.

Within hours of the outbreak, Trinity staff put in place a myriad of precautionary measures, from volunteers pressing drink-dispensers with napkins in the cafeteria to security staff peri-



**A delegate gets attended to after collapsing during synod.**

**Paramedics were called to the campus twice when delegates collapsed.**



odically checking on each reported ill person in the Trinity dorms. Bottles of hand-sanitizing lotion appeared everywhere, people were encouraged to wash their hands often, and handshakes and hugging were practically placed off limits.

Two delegates were taken to a nearby hospital, one after collapsing following Monday evening's plenary deliberations.

The Cook County Health Department was informed immediately of the outbreak. As a result, the Trinity dining facilities were inspected to make sure the illness wasn't food-related, and the college received a near perfect report for its food service.

Trinity staff were lauded with a standing ovation by delegates at the closing service. "I can't say enough about their response to the situation they found themselves in," said Dee Recker, the CRC's director of synodical services. "It was phenomenal; they did an unbelievable job."

Pete Hamstra, Trinity's vice president for admissions and marketing, said that once synod wrapped up, Trinity staff faced the daunting task of bleaching and cleaning the entire campus, right down to individual pens in the bookstore.

The synod office developed a comprehensive report on the week's developments for the health department and will work to supplement the CRC's protocol for situations of this nature in the future.

—Dan Postma



**Elder Ron Donkersloot helps himself to the ubiquitous hand-sanitizer lotion.**

## Ministry Associates Get Job Protection

Synod 2009 approved a change in policy that gives ministry associates a measure of job protection.

Ministry associates—who fill such jobs as youth pastor, worship minister, evangelist, or even pastor in some cases—must be approved by a classis (regional group of churches) when hired, but before now they could be let go at will.

Under the new policy, a church must "seek the concurrence of the classis in which the approval was given" when seeking to dismiss a ministry associate for whatever reason.

The change "continues to raise the level of appreciation for and status of ministry associates," said Rev. Dan Ackerman, Classis Grand Rapids South, who chaired the advisory committee dealing with the matter. "The ministry associate is now on par with ordained ministers in this matter."

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## CRC Offices Renamed

Two CRC offices are getting new names this summer. The Office of Abuse Prevention is being renamed Safe Church Ministry, to more clearly describe its mission to create safe churches and thus prevent abuse.

Similarly, the church's Interchurch Relations Committee has seen the denomination's relationships with other churches broaden enough to necessitate a new, more reflective name. The committee's new name will be the Ecumenical Relations Committee.

—Dan Postma

## No New Debate on Women in Office

Discussion on ordaining women as ministers in the Christian Reformed Church made a brief return at Synod 2009.

Classis Minnkota asked synod to correct what it judged to be two biblical interpretation errors in the language of the report on women in office that was delivered to Synod 2000.

However, Synod 2009 decided not to revisit and retroactively deal with the report as Synod 2000 had adopted only the report's recommendations, not the report itself.

Appreciation was expressed for Minnkota's overture, and synod was reminded that the CRC endorses two different positions on the issue of whether women are allowed to serve as elders, ministers, and evangelists (ministry associates).

—Dan Postma



## A Youthful Perspective on Synod

With the average age of synod delegates hovering around 55, synod has never been considered a young person's activity. Until this year.

Synod 2009 had six "youth observers," students between 18 and 24 years old who watched the entire proceedings of synod, including sitting in on advisory committee meetings.

The day before synod ended, synod leaders sat down for dinner with the students to get their perspective on the weeklong meeting.

"The friendliness of the pastors to one another was really good to see—people just loving one another," said Mariana Aviles of Chicago.

"It felt like we were being celebrated," said Sarah Vanderkooy of Belnan, Nova Scotia. "So many people were glad that we were here."

The youth observers expressed a desire to share their opinions on the synod floor.

"Especially during the discussion on faith formation and the future of the church, we weren't asked at all [for our opinions]," said

Amy Vander Vliet of Alexandria, Virginia. "It felt odd to hear people talking about us without even asking us."

"We don't have all the wisdom that you do, but I do think it's important that you realize that we do have an opinion," said Vanderkooy.

Youth observer Jonathan Baelde of London, Ontario, said he was one of the most outspoken people on the committee he served. When asked for his opinion, he had some probing questions for denominational leaders.

"How much of what we do is informed by our own personal study of Scripture, not by what is passed down to us?" Baelde asked. "And what are the strengths of denominations versus partnerships with people of like mind?"

**Youth observers at Synod 2009: (back row, l-r) Paul DeWeerd, Jon Baelde, Peter Keep; (front row, l-r) Sarah Vanderkooy and Amy VanderVliet. Missing from the photo is Mariana Aviles.**

Dee Recker, the denomination's director of synodical services, drew up the proposal for having youth observers.

She said she was pleased with the young people's reaction to their time at synod. "They seem so happy to be here," she said. "They really are energized about this. It's been a lot of fun."

Recker also would like to see the youths in an advisory role in the near future. "We can learn from these young adults, the future leaders of the church," she stated.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## Reaching Out to India

Back to God Ministries International, the broadcast media ministry of the Christian Reformed Church, is making plans to broadcast the gospel in northern India in the Hindi language.

"We will link with a host of organizations to bring something of a transformation center to northern India," director Rev. Robert Heerspink told delegates to Synod 2009.

Partners in the endeavor include Christian Reformed World Missions, the Reformed Church in America's Words of Hope ministry, the Timothy Institute of Calvin Theological Seminary, and Good Books Educational Trust.

—Roxanne Van Farowe





The Synodical Service of Prayer and Praise at Elmhurst (Ill.) CRC.

## Worship Focuses on Unity

**T**his year's Synodical Service of Prayer and Praise was hosted by Elmhurst (Ill.) Christian Reformed Church, the convening church of Synod 2009.

Delegates, staff, and many others joined to participate in a liturgy that presented and celebrated Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17—where Jesus prays for himself, for his disciples, and for all believers.

The communion service seamlessly blended traditional and contemporary worship elements and included dramatic recitations and even a rap video that summarized the successes and failures of 2,000 years of church history.

In his message, Rev. Bert DeJong, Elmhurst's pastor,

pointed out that "there are a thousand reasons why unity will not happen, and only one reason why it will: Jesus prayed it for us." He asked whether the holy Trinity itself might be the model for our unity.

DeJong continued that "complete unity produces witness." That happens not when "we pull out of the world into little groups, but the prayer of Jesus will be answered when we pull out of little groups into the world."

DeJong left listeners with three questions:

1. "Can you believe that deeper understandings of God will bring us to greater unity? Then go for it, scholars!"
2. "Can you agree that if we prayed like Jesus prayed, the



Synod president Rev. William Koopmans (left) and vice president Rev. Sheila Holmes serve communion to each other.

unity of the church might be advanced?"

3. "Is it possible we draw closer together when we admit there's an inseparable bond between unity with Jesus and unity with believers?"

—Bob De Moor



## A New Model for Study Committees

In the past, when synod appointed a committee to study an issue, the committee would toil away in isolation for two to three years, then come back to a future synod with a report and specific recommendations to be either adopted or rejected.

But the mandate that Synod 2007 gave to the Faith Formation Committee has, in effect, created a new kind of study committee for synod—one that interacts with the churches throughout the process.

The Faith Formation Committee was appointed to clarify church policy on infant baptism, children at the Lord's Supper, and public profession of faith.

Within the CRC there is a great diversity of practices, so the committee was struck to provide guidance, be a resource for discussion,

Rev. John Witvliet: "The insights we need for our work [come from] the congregations."



and provide material and advice.

"The idea is that these topics . . . are not just a motion on the synod floor but a matter of having churches deepen their practices," said Rev. John Witvliet, the committee's chair. "The insights we need for our work and the ultimate impetus don't happen at synod itself, but in the congregations."

Another unique feature of the Faith Formation Committee is that it reports to synod five years in a row. This allows for a more gradual, communal growth process.

"We're very grateful for the very strong responses that we've received from congregations, so it's going very well," Witvliet said.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

### OUTTAKE

Second clerk Rev. William Veenstra reading requests to have negative votes recorded:

👉👉 Here's a signature that I can't make out. . . . It's a nice signature . . . but I can't read it. 🗨️🗨️

## Draft Faith Formation Document Available

The CRC's Faith Formation Committee gave synod delegates a copy of its first draft document, titled "Affirming Baptism and Forming Faith." The committee is encouraging churches to read it and respond.

The document "articulates an overarching vision of baptism, profession of faith, and the Lord's Supper," committee chair Rev. John Witvliet told *The Banner*. "It is based on the input of a lot of people."

Witvliet also reported on his committee's survey of churches, which he said gave "strong messages to work patiently with great caution—and to move as quickly as possible. We're struggling with the best way to listen to both of those voices," he said.

"This denomination is much broader and more diverse than I realized it was," said Rev. Martin Dam, Classis Hamilton. "My hope is that your group can show us at what point do we move into practices that are consistent with what it means to be Reformed."

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Rev. Carl Bergman: "Make every effort to hold synod on Canadian soil."

## Not in Canada, Eh!

Synod 2010 will not be held at The King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta, as originally planned.

As a cost-saving measure, Synod 2009 voted to hold next year's synod at Trinity Christian College in Illinois once again. Additional airfare costs alone for Edmonton would total \$70,000, according to the CRC's Board of Trustees.

Several delegates expressed their disappointment. "I really would like to see synod held in Canada," said Rev. Carl Bergman, Classis Atlantic Northeast. "Be stewardly, but make every effort at the first opportunity to hold synod on Canadian soil."

"Out of respect for one another and the diversity we all care about, it's worth spending the \$70,000," said Rev. Jack Gray, Classis Central Plains.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## The Banner, Reformed Worship Win Awards



*The Banner* and *Reformed Worship* garnered several awards recently from the Associated Church Press (ACP) and the Evangelical Press Association (EPA).

The ACP awarded a second-place Award of Merit to *The Banner* for its “Just for Kids” pages produced by Sandy Swartzentruber and Joanne De Jonge.

“This entry shows how to use color generously without cluttering the makeup,” the judges said.

Third-place (honorable mention) awards from ACP for *The Banner* included

- Convention or Meeting Coverage: “Synod 2008” by Gayla Postma (July 2008)

- Devotional/Inspirational: “Of Death and Grace” by Jacob D. Eppinga (September 2008)

- Illustration: “Perfect!” by Scott Holladay (September 2008)

- Poetry: “Psalm 139: Alzheimer’s Version” by Richard J. De Waard (December 2008).

The EPA awarded *The Banner* fifth place for “. . . Also Many Animals” by Rev. Leonard Vander Zee (April 2008).

*Reformed Worship* received two second-place Awards of Merit from ACP:

- Magazine Design, Entire Issue: Dean Heetderks, Frank Gutbrod, designers. “The overall design is clean and readable

and provides a logical flow that makes reading comfortable and enjoyable,” the judges said.

- Personally Useful Article: “A Music Director’s Dilemma: Practical Advice for Working with Instrumentalists” by Phillip M. Hash (September 2008). The judges wrote, “The article offers sound advice, in depth rather than length, and is designed to make a difficult job easier and doable without rancor.”

EPA gave *Reformed Worship* a second-place award for poetry for “Needlecraft” by John Terpstra.

ACP has 109 member publications, and EPA has 300.

Both *The Banner* and *Reformed Worship* are produced by Faith Alive Christian Resources, the CRC’s publishing ministry.

### OUTTAKE

Rev Richard deLange, Classis Chatham:

“I think we’ve just heard from two [medical] doctors, and they’ve cut straight to the heart of the issue.”

## Congregational Network Introduced



Rev. Michael Bruinooge: “The Network [for congregations] is a way of adding value to the structure we already have.”

Delegates to Synod 2009 had a chance to hear about the CRC’s new plan to better connect member churches with the denomination and with each other.

It’s called the Network for Congregations and will “serve as the connection point for discipleship, prayer, spiritual formation, youth engagement, small group ministries, and similar resources presently scattered throughout denominational offices, ministries, and agencies,” states the report to synod from the denomination’s Board of Trustees.

“What is a network?” asked Rev. Michael Bruinooge, interim director of the network. “It is multiple connection points sharing a common purpose—in this case the vitality of the local church. The Network is a way of adding value to the structure we already have.”

The new office will provide a “proactive communication network to link the workings of the church with the local congregations,” said Keith Oosthoek, chair of the Board of Trustees. “Many of our congregations are designing programs and structures that have already been built or tried in other churches, unaware of the work that’s already taken place.”

—Dan Postma

Synod president Rev. William Koopmans, checking with the John Calvin bobblehead doll for a response: "John Calvin says yes."



## Koopmans' Comebacks

**S**ynod debates can be long and intense, so it's important for synod's president to occasionally inject some humor and break the tension. It takes an agile mind and a quick wit, and Rev. William Koopmans showed he has both. Here are some outtakes:

**Koopmans:** "Synod got off to a great start when you elected Road Runner [during the warm-up practice vote]. Things may slow down after that."



**Rev. Richard deLange, Classis Chatham:** "If I'm incorrect, I suppose Dr. [Henry] De Moor [of Calvin Seminary] will let me know."

**Koopmans:** "Even if you're correct, Dr. De Moor will let you know."



On the final day of synod, when Executive Director Rev. Jerry Dykstra was asked to respond further to some touchy questions:

**Koopmans:** "When would you like to give your report, Jerry?"

**Dykstra:** "I was thinking about next Tuesday."

**Koopmans:** "Um . . . uh . . ."

**Dykstra:** "Actually, Mr. President, I was thinking around coffee time."

**Koopmans:** "You mean when the delegates are all gone drinking coffee?"



Koopmans' irrefutable logic while defending delegates who wanted their negative vote recorded on a key motion: "How can it not sound negative when it's a negative vote?"



**Rev. Bruce Persenaire, Classis Central California,** comparing the ministry-share system to the internal combustion engine:

"Its days are numbered, but now is not the time to replace it."

**Koopmans:** "This is a combustible motion. . . I hope it won't come back to burn us."



By Thursday Koopmans knew the delegates better than they might like: "Seven names on the speaker list . . . I look at those names and can speculate how long each one is going to speak!"



**Koopmans to a delegate:** "Yes, you have the right to speak on the 'Sermons for Reading

Services Committee Report,' as long as it's not a whole sermon."



When three motions came and went without a single speaker, Koopmans noticed that the electronic speaker list had failed: "The system isn't working; no wonder things were going so well."



After an assertion that only friendly amendments may be entertained:

**Koopmans:** "You're bound and determined to get at least one amendment passed."

**Rev. Martin Mobach, Classis Alberta North:** "I just want to appear friendly."



**Koopmans,** when delegates complimented the Belhar Confession while having their negative votes recorded in the minutes:

"I can't remember being at a synod where so many negative votes were written so positively."

—Bob De Moor



# SYNODSNAPSHOTS

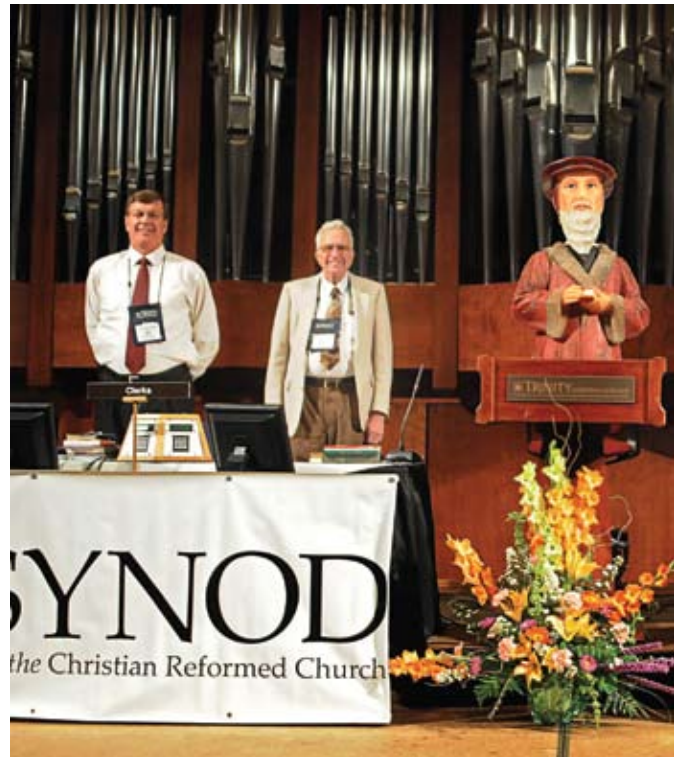
▶ Rev. Bert De Jong, pastor of Elmhurst (Ill.) CRC (this year's convening church), welcomes delegates to Synod 2009.



◀ Rev. Gregg DeMey gave a dramatic presentation of Jesus' high priestly prayer at the Synodical Service of Prayer and Praise.



▲ Rev. Calvin Aardsma, Classis Illiana, with his son-in-law Joshua Benton, a candidate for ministry.



▲ Rev. Sheila Holmes, vice president of Synod 2009, chaired part of the meeting.

▼ In honor of John Calvin's 500th birthday, delegates received a piece of birthday cake.



More than 10 technicians worked full-time throughout synod to keep the audio, video, projection, voting, and computer systems working properly. Audio engineer Jay Bridgewater ran the sound system with the help of dedicated Trinity Christian College employees.

▶ In the heat of debate, even John Calvin could lose his head.







In a very real sense, John Calvin “presided” over Synod 2009 as he has over so many earlier synods. Calvin’s view of church office, order, and structures were followed in so many ways. And in the debates so were his interpretation and application of Scripture, as God’s Word illumined the many and complex issues with which synod dealt.



◀ Youth observer Peter Keep

▼ Trinity Christian College welcomed delegates to Synod 2009. Synod 2010 will also be held there.



▲ Karissa Postma (with daughter Lydia) and Ingrid Zomeran wait for the candidates for ministry to be introduced, including their husbands Albert Postma and Andrew Zomeran.



Call it a candidacy powerhouse: Geneva Campus Christian Reformed Church in Madison, Wis., saw three of its members declared candidates for ministry by Synod 2009. Rev. Mike Winnowski, pastor of Geneva Campus, traveled to synod to celebrate with his protégés. From left: James T. Kirk, Winnowski (called “Super Winnowski” by the candidates), Timothy Wood, and Anthony J. Curran.



▲ Ida Mutoigo, director of Christian Reformed World Relief Committee-Canada, presents a report to synod.



◀ In an attempt to contain the spread of a norovirus at synod, Rev. Tom Dykman, Classis Rocky Mountain (left), and Rev. Andrew Narm, Classis Central California, use the new “synod handshake.”





# CHURCHATWORK



## Answers to Prayer in the Philippines

by Kristen deRoo VanderBerg

“Be careful what you pray for,” cautions Eli Toribio. “You just might get it.”

Toribio, a long-time diaconal ministry coordinator with the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines (CRCP), prayed in 1989 that God would send him as a missionary to Africa, even though his denomination had few international missions and none in Africa.

His prayer was answered when God led him to a position with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. Today he serves with CRWRC in Zambia.

The denomination that cultivated Toribio in his faith and prepared him for service is itself an answer to many people’s prayers.

The roots of the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines are deeply tied

to the Christian Reformed Church in North America. CRCNA missionaries Vicente and Lucy Apostol started the first Reformed outreach in the Philippines when they were sent in 1961 by Christian Reformed World Missions.

The Apostols formed a small Bible study with a group in the town of Pulupandan in 1964. Four years later, 20 adults confessed their faith in Christ and were baptized.

While early missionaries worked to meet spiritual needs, they often felt overwhelmed by the poverty and physical needs they saw around them. That’s when others stepped in.

### Meeting Other Needs

In 1964 a typhoon followed by floods caused extensive damage in the Pulupandan area. Through CRWRC, Christian

**A Christian Reformed Church in Pulupandan, where CRC missionaries started a Bible study in 1964.**

Reformed churches in North America sent food, blankets, and clothing and provided emergency medical aid.

In 1969 the CRC missionaries asked for additional support. The *Acts of Synod 1970* explain that while missionaries “faithfully preached the Word, they were painfully impressed with the recurring instances of families unable to meet emergencies caused by medical needs and food shortages. The area is mainly dependent on a single crop—sugar cane—and offers little encouragement to those seeking stable employment for the support of their families.”

The missionaries asked that CRWRC support them in “upgrading the community and agricultural conditions.”



## While early missionaries worked to meet spiritual needs, they often felt overwhelmed by the poverty and physical needs around them.

In June 1970, Fred Schuld of Blenheim, Ontario, arrived as CRWRC's staff person in the Philippines.

Schuld worked in the areas where CRWM missionaries were planting churches. His early "self-help" programs focused on introducing livestock and poultry flocks to families that had relied on sugar-cane production for their living. Soon CRWRC had also introduced health and nutrition classes for mothers and a feeding program for preschool children.

People in the pews of Christian Reformed churches across North America provided prayer and financial support. By 1976 the answer to their prayers was becoming evident: three strong worshiping congregations now existed in Pulpandan, Bago City, and Bacolod City, along with church plants in Manila and Ilo-ilo.

In addition, CRWRC staffed a family-assistance program in a community on the outskirts of Manila, feeding nearly 1,000 children every day and supervising livestock and agriculture programs throughout the regions where the churches were located.

### Birth of a Church

Those efforts received good cooperation from the local churches, so much so that in May 1976 CRWM missionaries turned the leadership of the churches over to Filipino leaders, establishing the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines.

World Missions continued to work with the leaders of this new denomination by mentoring pastors, training leaders, and providing theological education and

missions development. CRWRC assisted in setting up diaconal outreach programs so that churches could meet the needs in their communities.

"The CRC in North America has done wondrously in building the capacities of deacons and other church leaders," Toribio says. "For me, this is their key contribution."

CRCNA staff and supporters prayed that the young denomination would grow, *continued on p.53 »*

### Tour Celebrates 40-Plus Years of Ministry in the Philippines

This year marks the 40th anniversary of CRWRC's involvement in community development in the Philippines. To celebrate the occasion, former CRCNA-Philippines staff as well as supporters of the Philippines ministry are invited to attend a 14-day Discovery Tour in the Philippines in October. Participants will spend time visiting project sites and talking with staff and community members involved in ministry through CRWRC, CRWM, and Partners Worldwide. Participants will hear and experience what God has done and is doing in this country. For additional information or to register for the tour, please visit [www.crwrc.org](http://www.crwrc.org) and look for Discovery Tours under Get Involved.

—Kristen deRoo VanderBerg

## Reaching People Via Media

Christian Reformed Church outreach in the Philippines began in the mid-1950s when Synod 1954 instructed The Back to God Hour Radio Committee (now Back to God Ministries International) to investigate "foreign broadcasting."

The first international broadcast began in 1955, when the radio program was aired worldwide over station HCJB from Quito, Ecuador. Letters came from all over the world, including the Philippines.

This broadcast opened the door for Filipino families to request the *TODAY* devotional booklet. Ernie Saron from Bulacon used *TODAY* to disciple others. "It is perfect material for new believers," he told BTGMI staff.

In the past, nearly 1,000 Filipino families and individuals received *TODAY*. BTGMI continues to send *TODAY* in bulk to a number of churches in the Philippines, but due to the recent economic crisis it no longer mails the devotional booklet internationally to individuals at no cost. Readers overseas can receive the *TODAY* free via e-mail or online at [www.ThisIsToday.net](http://www.ThisIsToday.net).

BTGMI broadcasts the English-language "Back to God Hour" radio program over FEBC into four cities in the Philippines. "Spotlight," a simplified English program produced in partnership with Words of Hope, reaches Filipino listeners on its broadcasts over HCJB, as well as its website [www.SpotlightRadio.net](http://www.SpotlightRadio.net).

Web ministry is a cost-effective and powerful tool for sharing the gospel. Children in the Philippines have access to the "Kids Corner" program at [www.KidsCorner.net](http://www.KidsCorner.net) and to the popular HisKidsRadio network. Back to God Ministries International reports that each month an average of 296 people from the Philippines visit the "Kids Corner," "Spotlight" or [BackToGodRadio.net](http://BackToGodRadio.net) websites.

— Nancy VanderMeer, *Back to God Ministries International*

## Beyond Relief: Rebuilding from the Inside Out



**T**hree years ago, Typhoon Reming destroyed a thriving community in the Philippines. More than 1,000 people were killed, and hundreds of thousands of people were displaced by the flooding and mudslides.

Hardest hit was the region of Bicol, where some communities were completely wiped out. But that is not the end of the story. Through the work of the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines and CRWRC partners, communities are rebuilding and have become even stronger than before.

In the wake of the disaster, CRWRC partners BBK and KABALIKAT worked with the Disaster Response Team of the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines to meet the needs of hard-hit communities.

During the first phase, CRCP deacons packed kits of emergency food supplies and distributed them through local churches. The next phase involved distributing housing

**Filipino families received emergency food packed by the deacons of the CRCP.**

repair materials, particularly roofing supplies.

“CRWRC’s partners took the time to work with the community to design housing. Implementation of the program was done in collaboration with the community,” said CRWRC intern Andrew Vanstee.

This created a sense of ownership that transitioned well into the third phase of the response. At that point, instead of handing out money or supplies, CRWRC’s partners helped community members form small savings groups.

“Helping them organize themselves equipped the people in many ways,” said CRWRC-Philippines staff member Lem Rossellon. “There were different savings groups. One was even composed of all widows who wonderfully supported each other. In these groups of five to 10 people, they saved funds,

thought together, learned together, and planned together.

“CRWRC’s partners then introduced simple livelihood projects. For instance, in one workshop a group of housewives made rice cakes. Later, some participants were selling with confidence and earning income from their rice cakes, setting their savings aside.”

To people like Vangie Cordora who were struggling in hard-hit villages, the programs were invaluable.

“Many months after Typhoon Reming I was eager to earn a living and operate my small flower shop again,” said Cordora, “but I felt financially helpless and hopeless. I almost resorted to borrowing from lenders who charge extremely high interest rates. Thankfully, I was invited to this savings group where I met people from different walks of life.

“Our group was composed of farmers, variety store owners, pedicab drivers, and public school teachers. Belonging to our savings group gave farming and livelihood another chance. We were given hope!

“Seeds were provided to the farmers, livelihood training for everyone, and capital for small enterprise. Each of us got back to business. Today, business is good. My flower shop is thriving and blooming.”

Not only did the savings groups provide an immediate network of support, they also formed the basis for long-term community strengthening. In July 2008, 28 small savings groups joined together and formed a cooperative called Kasama-Ka (which means “you belong”).

Today, Kasama-Ka is a registered cooperative with the Philippines government and has opened a savings account with a Filipino bank.

“CRWRC, together with our partners, celebrates this new cooperative and the changes in the community brought by the programs in



**Through savings groups and small loans, people were able to rebuild businesses and support their families.**

Bicol,” said Rossellon. “We celebrate restored livelihoods and renewed hope in the lives of the Bicolanos.” ■

—by Lem Rossellon and Kristen deRoo VanderBerg

thrive, and be able to support its own ministry in the Philippines and beyond. God has answered those prayers.

The CRCP now consists of 46 organized churches and 27 church plants in six classes (regional groups of churches). Deacons are equipped to respond to needs in their communities and are working on projects such as peace building, micro-finance, and education. They've also been successful at organizing and responding to natural disasters, with only financial support from CRWRC.

Eight years after the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines was



**Eli Toribio (center) is a missionary sent from the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines to serve with CRWRC in Zambia.**

born, it sent its first missionaries overseas to Indonesia. Today it supports numerous outreach workers within the Philippines as well as Eli and Evelyn Toribio in Zambia, Chitse Magaspang in Cambodia, and Rev. Benny Maligalig in Thailand. World Missions has continued to plant new churches in Tacloban, on the island of

Leyte, and in Cagayan de Oro, on Mindanao, which are in the process of being enfolded into the CRCP.

Toribio said, "Someone once wrote, 'When man works, man works—but when man prays, God works.'"

That is certainly true in the Philippines. ■



**Kristen deRoos VanderBerg is Communications and Marketing Coordinator for CRWRC.**

### The Philippines at a Glance

**Location:** The Philippines is one of the world's largest archipelagos, consisting of more than 7,100 islands. Lying southeast of mainland China, the islands of the Philippines stretch for 1,000 miles between Taiwan and Borneo.

**Population:** The 72 million people of the Philippines are a mixture of many ethnicities and nationalities, including Malaysian, Indonesian, Chinese, Spanish, and American. Roman Catholicism has influenced the Filipinos since Spanish priests came to the islands in 1521. Many Filipinos still practice animism—a belief in and fear of spirits—mixed with Catholic Christian beliefs. Protestant missionaries first came to the Philippines in the early 1900s. About 7 percent of the people are Protestant today.

**First CRC contact:** 1955 radio broadcast by Back to God Ministries International

**First CRWM missionaries:** Rev. and Mrs. Vicente Apostol in 1961

**First CRWRC missionary:** Fred Schuld in 1970

**Start of the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines:** May 1976

**Number of CRCP churches today:** 46 organized churches, 27 church plants or emerging churches

## Ending Poverty Through Partnerships

The Philippines is one of 20 countries in which Partners Worldwide works to strengthen Christian businesses, create jobs, and end poverty.

In 2001 Partners Worldwide and CRWRC worked together to establish an organization called Evangelical Businesspeople and Entrepreneurs for Social Transformation (e-BEST).

E-BEST was set up as an international affiliate of Partners Worldwide, with a stated mission to provide Christian fellowship, mentoring relationships, and access to capital for small businesses. By June 2005 it had seven chapters with about 200 members. The following year it had grown to 17 chapters with about 400 members. After overcoming a series of growing pains and reorganizing management, e-BEST is making significant strides.

Partners' executive director, Doug Seebeck, comments in the new book *My Business, My Mission: Fighting Poverty Through Partnerships* on his recent visit to e-BEST. "We came back from our trip to the Philippines with memories of creativity, giftedness, commitment, and competence. We also returned with the sense that e-BEST still has a bright future and the best is yet to come."

E-BEST is currently working with businesses through cell group mentoring, access to affordable capital, and business training. As evidence of its continuing growth, e-BEST hosted the Partners Worldwide Asia Business Conference in April 2009, which drew more than 160 business leaders from the surrounding region.

To learn more about opportunities to serve in the Philippines, contact Greg Matney at [gregm@partnersworldwide.org](mailto:gregm@partnersworldwide.org). To order your copy of *My Business, My Mission*, see [www.mybusiness-mymission.com](http://www.mybusiness-mymission.com). ■

—Andrea McLurg, Marketing Coordinator for Partners Worldwide





## A Church of Living Color

In the early morning, as I look across the quiet stillness of the lake, I see reflections of the trees, the clouds, the sky, the sunrise—all appearing as in a mirror on the surface of the water.

What I see is not the clarity of the direct vision, but a somewhat distorted reflection of the skyline. It is not reality, yet in that reflection reality is easily seen.

So it was with Synod 2009. What we saw was not the whole of the church, but a clear reflection of what the Christian Reformed Church is and is becoming. As one speaker suggested, we see the “already” and the “not yet” of the church of Jesus Christ.

The worship theme of “unity in diversity” permeated the week. During Synod I have the privilege of sitting on a slightly raised platform with the officers of Synod. From my vantage point I see a sea of faces. This year, as I looked over the gathering of delegates and advisers, I was reminded of television.

I can still remember when my parents brought home our first television when I was a child. I was mesmerized by the images and soon became a regular fan of everything from “Romper Room” to the “Lone Ranger.”

What I never really noticed, though, was that the world of television was a monochromatic one, black and white. It was only several years later, when I encountered my first color TV, that I realized how much brighter and more beautiful the world of television could be.

I had a similar experience at Synod. The monochromatic CRC of the 1950s has become a church of living color. While we still reflect our deep and rich Dutch roots, we’ve blossomed into a church of beautiful color and diversity.

No one would suggest that this denomination has become the church of Revelation 7, but neither can one deny the growing diversity so evident at Synod this year.

In our diversity we seek unity—no small task. As the Christian Reformed Church becomes more and more diverse, we will be challenged by the very diversity we desire. Language, culture, and customs can and do become challenges to communication and understanding. We can no longer talk about



ISTOCKPHOTO

us and them; rather, we now speak of how together we can move the church forward.

We hear the discussion about the Belhar Confession not only through the ears of the dominant culture, but through the ears of those who have experienced the effects of injustice and unfairness in our communities and in our congregations. Our eyes are opened to our own prejudices and presuppositions. We now must face the reality of past sins and past injustices. We come face to face with racism and the damage it has done and, sadly, continues to do in our churches, families, and lives.

As we continue, over the next few years, to engage the Belhar Confession, we will find ourselves facing our future as a church. We will discover what it means to become “God’s Diverse and Unified Family” in fresh and new ways. Such conversations will likely lead us to places we have never been. The questions raised will touch places in our hearts that until now have been hidden from us. It will be a difficult but rewarding journey.

Facing such realities is not easy. It is, in fact, quite painful. At times, I would prefer to step away—even run away—from the pain of such encounters. Yet I cannot. We cannot.

If we are to experience the joy of diversity, we must be willing to endure the pain of repentance and restoration. It will not be easy; however, it will be necessary for the church of Jesus Christ to flourish.

I welcome the opportunity. I am grateful that God has placed me in a church and among people who are willing and able to confront the past, seek God’s forgiveness, and take steps toward a future where people of every nation, every tribe, and every language worship God in unity. ■

“We will be challenged by the very diversity we desire.”



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

## Hundreds attend Coffee Break conferences

Two simultaneous Coffee Break conferences in the U.S. and Canada this spring attracted 1,500 women who gathered to celebrate God's grace and listen to moving testimonies.

Nearly 700 women gathered in Oakville, Ontario, for *The Amazing Race*, the 14th annual Ontario Coffee Break Women's Conference sponsored by Christian Reformed Home Missions. The women, reflecting on the race of life they are called to run, focused on God's amazing grace. Those attending included Coffee Break leaders and participants as well as friends and neighbors.

The same day, thousands of miles away in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 800 women packed a hotel for the 15th annual *Morning of Joy, a Gathering for Women*. That conference was sponsored by the Home Missions North Central U.S. Ministry Team.

*The Amazing Race* began with worship led by Ruth-Ann Schurringa and the worship team from Immanuel CRC, Brampton, Ontario. Opening devotions encouraged the women to surrender the things they are troubled about and take the opportunity to sit at the feet of Jesus.

A drama called "The Plate Spinner" humorously set the conference's theme in motion, as a woman worked at spinning the various "plates" in her life.



The crowd at "The Amazing Race" conference

One of the conference's main speakers was Barb VanGiessen. She and fellow speaker Coby Hogendoorn coached women with God's Word through a series of clues, road blocks, and detours. Throughout the "race," women were challenged to make new commitments to spend time studying the Bible and connect with others who will support and encourage them along life's journey.

The *Morning of Joy* conference was highlighted by several heartbreaking stories about finding God's peace during times of incredible loss. A Minnesota couple told of losing their three daughters, who died in an automobile accident on the way to their brother's wedding. The couple shared how God brought them comfort and encouragement through the Bible in the face of this terrible tragedy.

The conference attracted women from South Dakota, Iowa, and Minnesota. Attendance was more than double the previous conference, making it the largest group to ever attend a *Morning of Joy* gathering in the region.

Coffee Break, part of Home Missions' small groups ministry, is an outreach-oriented small-group Bible study for women. Using an informal, low-key approach, Coffee Break encourages women to discover for themselves what the Bible says and means for their lives. Thousands of people have come to know Christ through Coffee Break. ■

—Ben Van Houten, *Christian Reformed Home Missions*

## Celebrating John Calvin, talking about predestination

Celebratory events are occurring throughout the year and around the world in honor of the 500th birthday of John Calvin on July 10.

Some think that Calvin himself would not approve of all the attention. Others, however, say that his impact on church and society has been enormous and ought to be acknowledged.

Calvin's birthday was honored at Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) in April when the Calvin Studies Society hosted a conference titled "John Calvin: Myth and Reality." Topics included Calvin's teachings on theology, worship, prayer, church discipline, the political order, women, and the doctrine of predestination.

The latter topic—predestination—was the focus of an evening panel discussion that drew a capacity crowd to the seminary chapel.

Richard Muller, P.J. Zondervan Professor of Historical Theology at CTS, spoke about Calvin's views on predestination in relation to other theologians of his time. Laura Smit, associate professor of religion at Calvin College, spoke of her gradual move toward accepting the doctrine of predestination through her teaching of it.

Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, noted that Calvinism was recently listed in *Time* magazine (March 2009) as one of the big ideas affecting the world today, but was not portrayed in a very positive light.

Western Theological Seminary professor John Hesselink said that predestination is a doctrine of comfort because, regardless of how we feel about our salvation, we can be certain of it, even in the darkest night of the soul. ■

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



### CRC joins Hindi ministry

**W**hen a Hindu Brahman couple stood up at a church meeting in northern India and announced that they were followers of Jesus Christ, it started a ripple effect that brought many people in their village to Christ.

And now Synod 2009 has given approval for Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) to expand ministry in the Hindi language, partnering with Good Books Educational Trust in the broadcast ministry that brought this couple to the Lord. Synod's decision opens the door for the Christian Reformed Church to begin a direct mission in the Hindi language.

There is a deep need for holistic ministry to those who speak the Hindi language, reports Rev. Bob Heerspink, director of BTGMI. "We are excited about being able to provide that through this new partnership with Good Books [based in India] and Words of Hope [based in Grand Rapids, Mich.]."



**This Brahman couple came to faith through the ministry of BTGMI.**

Headed by Stephen Paul, a native of northern India, Good Books began by establishing Christian bookstores. It expanded to provide Christian radio programming and publications.

"This partnership with Good Books presents a strategic opportunity for BTGMI to expand its media reach in the Hindi language," Heerspink says.

"Rapid changes in media present the potential of additional ministry streams in India—Internet, CD distribution, cell phone texting. There is a need for pro-

grams reaching children and youth as well as programs that teach Scripture from a redemptive-historical perspective. BTGMI brings its strengths and experience in these areas to the table." Christian Reformed World Missions and

the Timothy Institute are also potential partners in this ministry.

The former Hindu Brahman couple said they had been listening to BTGMI's radio program for several months. "We thought we were following the right way, but your program touched our hearts and changed our perspective."

Now this couple from India's upper class worships in their village, sitting side by side with 250 people from all caste levels. Their story has brought many others to faith in Christ. ■

—Nancy VanderMeer, *Back to God Ministries International*

### Professor of the year: Cal Jen

**F**or probably the first time ever, Calvin College's student-chosen Professor of the Year award is going to a professor named after the institution.

Business professor Cal Jen, the son of Chinese immigrants, was born the year his father graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary.

"So that is how I got named Cal. I got named after this place," said Jen. "My three siblings all have biblical names, so I am the only one with a non-biblical name. But in Reformed circles, it's almost better."

The Professor of the Year is selected by a vote of the graduating class. Jen is the 12th winner.

Jen taught architecture for eight years before switching to business at the invita-



**Business professor Cal Jen: "I'm always thinking about how I can make every class period memorable."**

tion of his friend Dave Cook, chair of the business department. Cook asked Jen to teach an introduction to business class to help students better correlate theory with practice.

"God has always given me a heart for college students," said Jen. "I am not entirely sure why, except that I recognize it."

Jen grew up in Taiwan, where his parents were missionaries. He spent two years at Calvin College as a student before earning his bachelor's degree in science and his master's degree in architecture from the University of Michigan.

After finishing his education, Jen held several positions in the business world.

He worked as an architect for Domino's Pizza, rising to the rank of senior vice president of real estate and human resources. He also taught part-time at the University of Michigan.

He started his own architecture firm in Ann Arbor in 1992. When he relocated to Grand Rapids in 1994, he began teaching at Calvin College.

Jen, who sold his interest in his firm in 2007, said the award is a confirmation that he is where God wants him to be for now.

"The award will encourage me to figure out how to reach students even more, deeper, to teach them adequately, to make it fun, to make it enjoyable," said Jen. "I'm always thinking about how I can make every class period memorable. How can I draw each student closer to God?" ■

—Matt Decker, *Calvin College communications and marketing*

**Advertising Information**

**Deadlines:** August 2009 issue is 7/6/09. September issue is 8/3/09. Visit [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org) for complete details.

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

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

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

**Denominational and Classical Announcements**

**Available for Call**

**Eligible for Call** Classis Chatham, in regular session on May 12, 2009, in accordance with Church Order Art. 17-c, release Rev. William Steele from ministry as missionary in Guinea (due to persistent health concerns for his wife), with concurrence of the Synodical Deputies. Calvary CRC, Chatham heartily declares Rev. Steele eligible for call. Council of Calvary CRC, Chatham, ON, Canada.

**Meetings of Classis**

**Classis Columbia** convenes on Saturday, September 26 at the Yakima Church. The agenda deadline is August 25.

Howard B. Spaan, Stated Clerk

**Classis Holland** will meet in regular session September 17, 2009 at 3:00 pm at Calvary CRC, Holland, MI. Agenda items are due August 7, 2009 and should be sent to Rev. Tony Louwerse, Stated Clerk, 272 E. 26th St., Holland, MI 49423. Fax: 616-494-6054 or email: [louwerse@macatawa.org](mailto:louwerse@macatawa.org).

**Classis Illiana** will meet in regular session on Wednesday, September 16, 2009 beginning at 9:00 am at Trinity Christian College, 6601 W. College Dr., Palos Heights, IL 60463. All materials for the agenda should be sent to Robert Jipping, S. C. 1212 Blue Bell Trail, Schererville, IN 46375 by August 5, 2009. Email: [bandajipping@aol.com](mailto:bandajipping@aol.com).

**Classis Yellowstone** will meet Friday, Sept. 11, in Bozeman CRC, MT. Printed material for the Agenda should be received by July 24.

Del VanDenBerg, Stated Clerk

**New Email**

**New Church E-mail** Greene Road Church (formerly Goshen Christian Reformed Church) in Goshen, Indiana has a new e-mail address: [greeneroadchurch@gmail.com](mailto:greeneroadchurch@gmail.com)

**Congregational Announcements**

**Church's 50th Anniversary**

**50th Anniversary:** South Bend CRC will celebrate its 50th year as an organized church July 26. Friends and members from the past and present are invited to a special morning worship followed by lunch and festivities. Please RSVP so we can plan on you! E-mail [lindambolt@comcast.net](mailto:lindambolt@comcast.net) or call 574-272-8424.

**Church's 25th Anniversary**

**Unity CRC, Prinsburg, MN** will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary and dedicating its new building the last weekend in August. There will be a special service of Celebration and Dedication on Friday, August 28 at 7:00 p.m. and another special service on Sunday morning, August 30, at 10:00 a.m. There will be a Banquet on Saturday evening, August 29 at 6:00 p.m. followed by a Variety Program at 7:30 p.m. Friends and former members are invited to join us! For more information or to order banquet tickets please e-mail us at [info@unitycrc.org](mailto:info@unitycrc.org) or call 320-978-4300.

**Retirement**

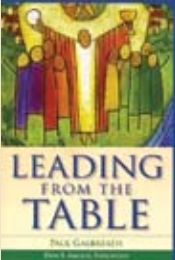
**James Vander Slik** has retired after 22 years in the ministry of the CRC. In June, Modesto CRC celebrated Jim and Marge's ministry in CA and this milestone in their lives. Contact them at [JiMargeVDS@gmail.com](mailto:JiMargeVDS@gmail.com).

**Pastor Rod VanderLey** is retiring after 36 years of faithful service to God at Tacoma Christian Reformed Community Church. We will celebrate and honor him and his wife, Judy, on August 1 & 2. For more info email: [tacomacrc@comcast.net](mailto:tacomacrc@comcast.net) or phone: (253) 838-5276

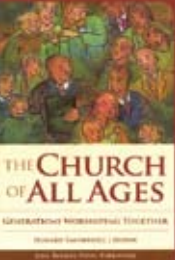
**CALVIN INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP**

*for the study and renewal of worship*


**Resources for promoting vital and faithful worship**



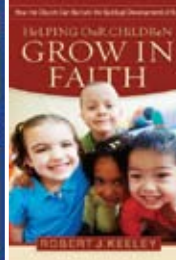
**Leading from the Table**  
(Alban Institute, 2008)  
by Paul Galbreath



**The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together**  
(Alban Institute, 2008)  
ed. by Howard Vanderwell



**Abraham Kuyper: Our Worship**  
(Eerdmans, 2009)  
edited by Harry Boonstra



**Helping Our Children Grow in Faith: How the Church Can Nurture the Spiritual Development of Kids**  
(Baker, 2008)  
by Robert J. Keeley

For more publications & over 2000 pages of worship resources, visit

[www.calvin.edu/worship](http://www.calvin.edu/worship)

publications



## Announcements

**HOLLAND RETIREMENT COMMUNITY:** Resthaven Maple Woods is a gracious yet affordable community with deep Christian roots located in Holland, Mich. As a Christian non-profit, we stand beside you should

your needs change. Visit us online at [www.resthaven.org](http://www.resthaven.org) or contact Judy at 616-796-3700.

### Conferences

**After 500 years:** John Calvin for Reformed Churches Today presented by the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary; 1st CRC Byron Center, MI Sept. 3-5, 2009 - 500yearsocalvin.org

## Birthdays

### 100th Birthday

**Catherina Vink**, formerly of Edmonton and currently residing in Calgary, will be celebrating 100 years on July 30. God has been gracious through your 100 years. Happy birthday, Grandma. Love your grandchildren.

## Church Positions Available

**Trinity Christian Reformed Church** of Edmonton, Alberta is looking for a SENIOR'S PASTOR to minister to the elderly of Trinity CRC and the growing aging community of northeast Edmonton and area. If you have a strong passion for this type of ministry and are ordained please email Clint Schenk at [candjschenk@shaw.ca](mailto:candjschenk@shaw.ca)

**New Hope Community CRC**, Kincheloe, MI, is seeking a pastor. We have an exciting, diverse congregation with a passion for community outreach. We have strong ministries in place, and there is the potential for more to be developed. We are a small rural community in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Our current membership is about 40 member families. To obtain more information or a church profile please contact Joni Andary at 906-478-3205 or [jandary@centurytel.net](mailto:jandary@centurytel.net).

**Orangeville CRC** in beautiful Orangeville, Ontario, is seeking a full time pastor with strong leadership skills as well as a passion for evangelism and community outreach. The ideal candidate is a gifted speaker, able to apply sound biblical preaching to daily life, and is comfortable leading both traditional and contemporary worship styles. Orangeville is a growing rural community of 30,000, located within one hour of the cultural delights of downtown Toronto as well as outdoor activities such as skiing, hiking, boating, camping, etc. Please contact John Oorebeek at 519-928-9796 or [jmoorebeek@sympatico.ca](mailto:jmoorebeek@sympatico.ca) for more information.

**Burdett CRC**, a small but gifted congregation on the prairies of Alberta, is seeking a full time pastor who will lead us in God's Word, encourage and challenge the youth, provide leadership in the church's spiritual journey and develop a small group ministry. D. V, we will celebrate our 100 Year anniversary in 2011! If you feel God's leading please contact Jos @ 403-833-2299 or [solanumt@shockware.com](mailto:solanumt@shockware.com)

**Georgetown CRC**, in Ontario, is looking for an energetic, committed full-time Youth Pastor to join our ministry team. For more information please contact us at 905-877-4322 or at [gccrcrecruiter@live.ca](mailto:gccrcrecruiter@live.ca).

**First Christian Reformed Church** of Visalia, CA is seeking a full-time Director of Music and Worship. A job description is available on our website: [www.visaliafirstcrrc.org](http://www.visaliafirstcrrc.org). Please send inquiries to [kenzylstra@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kenzylstra@sbcglobal.net).

**Maranatha CRC** Pastors, our congregation is actively praying that God will soon bless our search for a new pastor by working in the heart of the person we believe He is preparing to lead us in ministry in our community. Are you that person? If you feel led by the Spirit to inquire about this position, we ask you to contact us by mail or e-mail. Inquires should be mailed to Bob Schippers, Pastoral Search Team, Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, 918 Central Ave, Holland, MI 49423, or e-mailed to Bob Schippers at [rwschippers@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rwschippers@sbcglobal.net). Maranatha CRC ([www.maranathachurch.info](http://www.maranathachurch.info)) is a church of over 300 professing members celebrating over 50 years of service in God's kingdom.

**LaGlace Christian Reformed Church** is seeking a full time pastor. The hamlet of LaGlace is located in North Central Alberta. A church profile is available from the search committee by emailing [natashavan-dellen@hotmail.com](mailto:natashavan-dellen@hotmail.com) or by calling Nick (780)568-3906 or John (780)568-4141.

**SENIOR PASTOR** Are you looking to lead God's people? We are on a journey to seek His will in our lives. We are a family of God in need of a leader. We are Maranatha, a diverse church of 300 members in Lethbridge Alberta. Interested Pastors please contact Darren Milne chair of the calling committee (403)320-1365 or [milnefamily@shaw.ca](mailto:milnefamily@shaw.ca)

**Grace CRC** in Kalamazoo MI is seeking a senior pastor who will powerfully proclaim "Thus saith the Lord" in traditional worship, compassionately shepherd our church family, and creatively guide us to reach our community. Send inquiries to: [johnjvanderploeg@charter.net](mailto:johnjvanderploeg@charter.net) or 269-217-4683.

**Great opportunity in the NW** The Tacoma Christian Reformed Community Church in Tacoma, WA seeks a senior pastor to serve a vibrant, committed and diverse congregation. The ideal candidate will be a gifted communicator, with a heart for pastoral care and a desire to serve the community alongside a team of devoted staff and volunteers. We are a supportive and united congregation of 250 members that combines diverse backgrounds with CRC values and traditions. Please send inquiries to Stan Vander Pol at [PastorSearchTacomaCRCC@comcast.net](mailto:PastorSearchTacomaCRCC@comcast.net).

**Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church** in Whitinsville, MA, a dynamic church with a rich and solid heritage, is located on the edge of a large metropolitan region that stretches from Boston through Worcester. We are diversifying in denominational background, ethnicity, and life experiences. We seek a SENIOR PASTOR who is an engaging and compelling communicator of the Gospel, a nurturing and stimulating pastoral caregiver, and a visionary leader passionately committed to reaching and enfolded all in our community whom God would draw to himself through our ministry. If your heart is stirred by the challenge God has laid upon us, please visit our website: [www.pscrc.org](http://www.pscrc.org) and contact our Search Committee Chairperson: Hugh Leahy, (508-876-6942), e-mail: [HughLeahy@comcast.net](mailto:HughLeahy@comcast.net).

**Youth Pastor / Director** Second CRC in Fremont, MI is seeking an individual to lead our congregational and community youth into a close relationship with Jesus Christ. This full-time position will focus on developing the faith of middle-school, high-school and post-high youth. Our hope, with God's leading, is to bring a gifted individual to join our church staff and community by August 2009. For more information contact Mark Wyn at 231-924-1083 or by email at [wyns@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wyns@sbcglobal.net). Please send a letter of interest and resume' to Second Christian Reformed Church, 600 Apache Dr., Fremont, MI 49412. 231-924-1083

**Pastoral Candidates Wanted** First Christian Reformed Church of Salt Lake City, Utah, seeks pastor who offers dynamic and applicable preaching; interpersonal skills to minister to people in their everyday lives; and help us continue to develop effective children's ministry and community outreach. Contact Search Committee Chair Mike Vyfvinkel (801) 580-9618 for more information.

**Pastor of Congregational Life:** Faith CRC in Elmhurst, IL, a suburb of Chicago, is seeking an ordained minister to work with the Senior Pastor in a large range of pastoral responsibilities at our 900 member church. For more information please call the church at 630-279-1776 or email Scott Smits at [s.smits@comcast.net](mailto:s.smits@comcast.net)

**Pastor of Outreach and Congregational Life:** Providence CRC of Cutlerville, MI is seeking an ordained minister with strong leadership skills and passion for outreach and congregational life. This gifted man of God will work under the supervision of the Pastor of Worship and Leadership as a vital part of our ministry Leadership team. Providence is committed to equipping our members to grow in Christ and to share His life with those who have not met Him.

Therefore, the ideal candidate will have strengths in leading the outreach ministry to our community, equipping our members, building positive relationships, caring and teaching. Responsibilities include preaching twice monthly. To view our church profile, visit the Christian Reformed website. Please submit inquiries to search committee chair Ron Stuursma at [rnstuursma1@att.net](mailto:rnstuursma1@att.net) or call (616) 608-3978 (h) or (616) 560-9045 (c)

**Lead Pastor** Immanuel CRC of Ripon, California, is seeking a Lead Pastor to work as a member of a team ministry with our Youth Pastor (Bret Lamsma) and our Coordinator of Ministries (Lauri Howard). We are looking for an individual who is passionate about preaching and sharing God's Word. As our pastor, you will encourage and develop leaders in the church, challenge us to deepen our faith, and partner with us in reaching our community. Immanuel's purpose is to love God above all, to care for each other, and to serve the world. If you are interested in learning more about our congregation of over 700 members, please contact Jeff Miller, Chair of Search Committee, at [jmkmiller@charter.net](mailto:jmkmiller@charter.net), or see our website at [www.immanuelcrrc.org](http://www.immanuelcrrc.org).

**Youth Director** Clinton CRC seeks a dynamic and energetic leader for our youth and young adult ministries. We are praying for a person that has a love for Christ, a passion for youth, good interpersonal and leadership skills. Working with an advisory committee you will develop a relational ministry from a reformed perspective. For a complete job description, send resumé's to Clinton CRC, P. O. Box 697, Clinton, ON NOM 1L0 or email to [clintoncrrc@tcc.on.ca](mailto:clintoncrrc@tcc.on.ca) and we will send the description to you.

**The Wright Christian Reformed Church** of Kanawha, IA is seeking a Pastor who is grounded in God's inerrant Word. One who loves to preach God's word, and provides pastoral care, and loves those who are lost in the community around us and strives to bring them in to a relationship with Jesus. One who would lead weekly our Youth Ministry of 20+ kids from the community. Contact Byron Ruter Clerk at 641/762/3797 or email at [sbruter@comm1net.net](mailto:sbruter@comm1net.net)

Are you looking for a rewarding experience in an outreach ministry that is making a difference for Christ? Join Community's staff as the Minister of Administration. Ordination is not required. You will assist, equip and encourage staff and volunteers so that our ministry will be organized, efficient and effective to God's Glory. We need your help for our next steps! Join **Community Christian Reformed Church**, where we Celebrate Christ; Restore Community. Send your resume to [ccrcroselawn@yahoo.com](mailto:ccrcroselawn@yahoo.com). For additional information on the position and CCRC visit our website: [www.cccrcroselawn.com](http://www.cccrcroselawn.com)

**Trinity Christian Reformed Church** of Edmonton, Alberta is looking for a LEAD PASTOR to shepherd a congregation of 300+ members. We are looking for an ordained minister who is passionate about God's Word and is comfortable leading blended worship services. As our pastor you will cultivate a close relationship with God; and through effective preaching, worship and encouragement you will help to nurture our spiritual growth and deepen the fellowship among our members. Your gifts should also include the ability to engage our youth and inactive members. If you have any questions or wish to view Trinity's church profile or to submit your resume and profile please email Clint Schenk at [candjschenk@shaw.ca](mailto:candjschenk@shaw.ca)

### 98th Birthday

**Agnes Timmerman** of 3820 N. Big Springs, Grandville, Mi. 49418 celebrated her 98th birthday on June 29. Her family and many friends are thankful for God's blessings, her example of faith, and the love and joy she brings to all.

### 95th Birthday

**Lula Ringerwole** (Artz) 6248 Summerhill Dr, Hudsonville, Mi 49426 celebrated her 95th birthday on June 17. Her daughter, Joan, thanks God for her long life of faith and sharp mind.

**Ralph Vander Zee**, Meadow Greens, Apt. #204, 301W. Homestead Blvd. Lynden, WA, 98264, formerly of South Holland, IL, will celebrate his 95th birthday on July 27. His children and all his family members praise and thank God for his strong faith, and love shown to us and others.

### 90th Birthday

**REV. JOHN A. PETERSEN** 368 S Wilma #11, Ripon, CA 95366, was joyously celebrated by the Modesto CRC and also by family for his 90th birthday, May 7. (John's wife Suzanna is with the Lord.) Children: Carl (Lisa), Phillip (Aileen), Margaret (Ted) and 5 grandchildren.



**Rienna Timmer**, 2121 Raybrook SE, Rm 109, Grand Rapids, MI 49546, celebrates her 90th birthday on July 13, an open house will be at Raybrook Manor, Friendship room July 18, from 1-3:30 PM. Her brothers & sister give God thanks for her life and the many years she could spend

working for Bethany Christian Service, CRC Home Missions & ARO.

### 80th Birthday

**Grace Antoon**, 614 Spring LN, Holland, MI 49423 will celebrate her 80th birthday on July 31. Her children, Jerry and Diane Antoon, Ann and Peter 'tHoen, Marge DeVries, and Melissa and Will Starbuck praise God for His faithfulness.

**Rev. G. Bernard Dokter** (2038 Woodshire Dr., Grand Rapids, MI) will be celebrating 80 years of life with an open house at the Christian Reformed Recreation Center in Grand Rapids, MI, on Saturday July 25, 2009 from 2-4 pm. Celebrating Bernie's life of faithfulness to the ministry of God are his wife, Lydia, children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Thanks be to God!!

**Meindert (Mike) DeVries**, 10827 Williams Way SW, Lakewood, Washington, 98498 is celebrating his 80th birthday on June 29, 2009.

**Dorothy (Wigboldy) Miersma**, 12480 Cedar Ave., Chino, CA 91710 will celebrate her 80th birthday on July 18. Here entire family praises God for her life of faith and love. Happy Birthday, Mom. We love you!

## Anniversaries

### 65th Anniversary

**Vos Clarence and Jeanne** (Bokhoven), 2105 Raybrook St. SE #2033, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 celebrated God's love and faithfulness with thanksgiving at their 65th anniversary June 1. Their children are Timothy and Mary Vos, Paul and Kerri Vos, and Carol and Jeff Bremmer. 5 grand children (1 deceased).

### 60th Anniversary

**Arnold, Dr. Harry & Kay** (De Nooy), 2426 Hemlock, Portage, MI 49024, celebrated 60 years of marriage on June 27 by visiting Midland Park, NJ, where they first met and married. Their children are Becky (Bob) Furlong, Tom (Cathy) Arnold, Sarah (Bob) Douma and Steve Arnold. We thank God for blessing our family.

**Huysier William & Alvina** (Sjaardema), 4220 Redbush S. W., Grandville, Mi. Celebrated their anniversary June 3, 2009. Congratulations and love! Mark & Sally, Tom & Paula, Dave & Betsy, Steve & Linda, Rick & Faith, 9 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren

**Ponstine Lambert and Kathleen** (Mulder), 2437 Avon Ave SW, Wyoming, MI, 49519; celebrating 60 years of marriage on July 8. Congratulations and love from your children: Jim and Judy, Jack and Kris, and Rick; your grandchildren: Mark and Laura, Scott and Betsy, Mark and Lisa; and your three great grandchildren: Hannah, Abi, and Isaiah. May God continue to bless you.

**Schutt Andrew and Marilyn** (Ellerie) of Worth, IL; will celebrate 60 years of marriage on July 1. Praise be to God for his continued blessings & faithfulness

**Vanden Bosch Al & Rose**, 330W. Rock River Dr., Edgerton, MN. 56128 celebrated 60 years of marriage on June 17. Congratulations from your children Lynn & Russ, Laurie, LeAnn & Nico, 6 grandchildren, 1 great granddaughter. We love you & thank God for you.

### 50th Anniversary

**Baas Owen & Eileen** (Boeve) are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary with their children & grandchildren this summer. Congratulations may be sent to: 26685, 383rd Ave. Stickney, SD 57375.

**Bosman, Ben & Lois** (Rottschaffer); will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on July 24. We thank God for this union that has given us our family! Congratulations and lots of love from your children, grandchildren and great grandchild.

**Dykema Dale and Marian** (Keizer), 13665 Garden Plain Rd. Morrison, IL 61270, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on July 11. Praise God for His many blessings.

**Katte Dick & Lorraine**, Denver, CO will celebrate 50 years of marriage on July 3. Children: Keith, Jamie & Stue Winkelman, Shelly & Tom Hansen, Laurie & Dale Sanderson, 11 grandchildren.

**Lobbess, Kenneth and Ruth** (Hommess), 2204 DeLange SE, Grand Rapids, MI, celebrate 50 years of marriage on June 26, 2009. Children: Jon & Heidi Erwood (Amanda, Rebecca), Ken Jr. & Kristen Lobbess (Matthew, Courtney), Michael Lobbess, Tim & Tracy Lobbess (Anna, Ian), Jeffrey Lobbess. Thank God for many blessings.

## This book will make you feel better

As you read the true stories of hilarious pranks you will learn that laughter is truly the best medicine. Of all God's creatures only human beings have the gift of humor and laughter. You will discover how it has helped the author reduce stress, escape bankruptcy and survive Multiple Sclerosis for nearly 40 years.



### Order directly from Publisher-Pay later

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone : \_\_\_\_\_

Your book will be mailed with invoice enclosed for \$12.95 plus \$2..95 postage & handling  
Mail to **Exxel Publishing Co. 323 Telegraph Rd. Bellingham, WA 98226 USA**  
Toll free 877-939-1999 [www.sidbaron.com](http://www.sidbaron.com) E-mail [sietze@msn.com](mailto:sietze@msn.com)

## A PRISON MINISTRY FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN

In response to Synod 2005 recommendations regarding restorative justice, Crossroad Bible Institute will train you to disciple men and women behind bars through safe and secure correspondence Bible studies.

To learn more, call, write or visit us online. 800.668.2450

**CBI UNITED STATES**  
P.O. Box 900  
Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900  
[www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org](http://www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org)

**CBI CANADA**  
P.O. Box 5037  
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8  
[www.crossroadbibleinstitute.ca](http://www.crossroadbibleinstitute.ca)





## YOUR INVESTMENT ADVISOR IS YOUR ADVOCATE!

### Does Your Advisor...

- Manage your portfolio risks?
- Tithe to your favorite charities?
- Quarterly rebalance your portfolio?
- Triple your portfolio's diversification?
- Reduce total investment costs by 30%-50%?
- Eliminate commissions and surrender penalties?
- Use the ONLY Nobel Prize winning investment strategy?
- Integrate your core values with your Investment Philosophy?
- Teach 23 classes on Modern Portfolio Theory, Life Coaching, and Whole Life Stewardship?



Phyllis J. Veltman Wordhouse  
Maria J. Kuitula

**If not...** check out these websites:

[www@WordhouseWealthCoaching.com](http://www@WordhouseWealthCoaching.com) and [www.MyMatix.cc](http://www.MyMatix.cc)

CALL 616-302-9049 or 800-615-0435 & request our July Special, a FREE *Unique Holdings Analysis* on your current portfolio.

### WORDHOUSE WEALTH COACHING, LLC

Every financial decision is a spiritual decision  
Members of Kingdom Advisors and The Stewardship Alliance

**Steensma** James and Judith of Campbellsville, KY, will celebrate 50 years of marriage on July 15, 2009. Congratulations and love from your 4 children and their spouses, 8 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

**VAN HEMERT** Rev John/Jean 1101 Terrace Dr Lynden WA 98264 June 27, 5 children 4 spouses 11 grandchildren. Thanks be to God for His faithfulness and continued blessing! Prov 3:5-6

### Obituaries

**DeNeef** Geertruida H (Trixie); aged 83; May 13, 2009; 2015 Mallard S. E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546; She was the daughter of Hermina and Chris Hengeveld from Hilversum, the Netherlands. She will be missed sadly by William, her husband of 62 years; children: Herma, Elly, and William; 8 grandchildren; 2 great grandchildren; 3 sisters in the Netherlands.

**De Roo**, Hilda (Bruins), 86, March 5, of Hawthorne, NJ. Preceded in death by husband Clarence. Children: Tom (Jacqueline) De Roo, La Center WA; Curtis (Cathy) De Roo, Grosse Point Park MI; Judi (John) Bosloper, Hawthorne NJ; Paul (Donna) De Roo, Crownsville MD; Karen (Dirk) Iwema, Cincinnati OH; Roger (Maureen) De Roo, Ann Arbor MI. 9 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. Sister, Bertha Jacobs.

**Eisenga**, Johanna (DeLeeuw), age 91, of Marion, Michigan, went to be with her Lord on March 20, 2009. Preceded in death by her husband, Jake. Survived by her children: Bruce (Freda Gertrude), Jean (Marlin) Venema, and Nelson (Kathy); nine grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren, several nieces, nephews and in-laws: Ben (Pearldean) Eisenga, John (Gertrude) Eisenga and Agnes Johnson

**Heetderks**, John, of South Lyon, MI went to his heavenly home on Feb. 25, 2009. He was a loving husband to Joyce and father to David (Jane) Heetderks and Heidi (Joel) Postma and 7 grandchildren. He is also survived by mother Kathleen and sisters Ruth (Kent) Worley and Carol Dykman.

**Holtvluwer**, Leona E., aged 93, of Jenison, went home to be with her Lord on Saturday, May 30, 2009. She was preceded in death by her husband of 67 years, J. Henry Holtvluwer in 2006; and daughter-in-law, Mary Holtvluwer. Leona was a member of Ridgewood Christian Reformed Church. She will be lovingly remembered by her children, Jim and Rachel Holtvluwer, Doug and Milly Holtvluwer, Curt and Nancy Holtvluwer; grandchildren, Jay and Anne Holtvluwer, Rev. Marshall and Tammy Holtvluwer, Brenda and Doug Vander Ploeg, Gwen and Troy De Long, Mark and Wendy Holtvluwer, Betsy and Jack Vander Ploeg, Bryan and Theresa Holtvluwer; 14 great-grandchildren; brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Kenneth and June Holtvluwer; and several nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held Tuesday 11:00am at Matthyse-Kuiper-DeGraaf Funeral Home in Grandville, MI. Interment Woodlawn Cemetery. Those who wish may make memorial contributions in her memory to Hudsonville Christian School or Unity Christian High School Building Fund.

**Huizing**, Mr. William; aged 89; May 10, 2009; 2121 Raybrook SE, DeVos Center #165, Grand Rapids, MI 49546; He is survived by his wife of 65 years: Evelyn; son: William and Pat Huizing; daughter: Laura (Laurie) and Bob Petroelje; grandchildren: Kerry Huizing, William A. (Julie) Huizing, Mark Petroelje, Elizabeth Petroelje Stolle (Greg); 5 great grandchildren; sister: Dorothy Gnade.



**Jansen**, Henry, passed into the presence of his Lord on April 20, 2009, aged 85. 4105 Verdon Way, Abbotsford, B. C. V4X 1X3. He will be deeply missed by his wife of 50 years, Jennie, his children, Steven (Bonnie), Judy (Jim), Tim (Heather), David, and his grandchildren, Stephanie, Kyle, Mairin,

Taya, Kassi. He is also survived by brothers and sisters, Dena Dykshoorn of Lethbridge, AB, (Marie), Marie, Len (Jackie), Gert DeJong of Grimsby, ON, Tony (Henrietta), Herman (Leida) of Armstrong, BC, and many nieces and nephews. Henry was predeceased by his sister, Alice, and brothers, Steven, Patrick, John, and sister-in-law Denie and brothers-in-law Dick Dykshoorn and Rev. John DeJong.

## Christian Leaders Institute

*Online Ministry Associate training  
for Article 23 church planters,  
evangelists and pastors*

*Avoid relocation and debt accumulation  
Full-tuition Scholarships*

*CLI maximizes the advantages of home  
study using internet technology*

*CRC ministers are needed for mentors.  
Check out [www.clicrc.org](http://www.clicrc.org) to find out more!*

*Now partnering with Bible League Canada*

[www.clicrc.org](http://www.clicrc.org)

*Enroll now for next semester!*

6645 West Steger Rd  
Monee, IL 60449  
708-925-3517



Dr. Voddie Baucham Rev. Steve Elzinga

*All professors  
have planted  
churches*



**Molendyk**, Martha H. (Visser), age 99, Zeeland, MI, went to be with her Lord on February 21, 2009. She was preceded in death by her husband John, daughters Jennie, Martha, and Henrietta (Wilson), daughter-in-law Gladys, and granddaughter Cathy. She is survived by her children Hermena and Allan (Vanden Berg), Adrian and Beatrice, Robert and Sharon, John and Donna, son-in-law Charles Wilson, 14 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren, sisters-in-law Aplonia Frey, Kathryn Molendyk, and Shirley Molendyk, nieces and nephews.

**Moorlag** John, age 85, went to be with his Lord, April 10. 923 Aaron Dr. Unit 105, Lynden, WA 98264. Wife: Edith (Smit). Children: Gary (Beth), Ron (Joy), Kathy (Doug) Lankhaar. 7 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

**Plooy**, Lena, age 100, May 29, 2009. Ripon, California. Preceded in death by her husband Henry, sons John and Hank. She is survived by her children Jeni and Dennis Hoekstra, Helen and Douglas VanderWall, and Tom and Sandy Plooy, 17 grandchildren, and 38 great-grandchildren.

**Price** - Gary Robert, age 62 of Denver, CO. After a hard fought battle with cancer, Gary entered into glory on April 9, 2009. He will be deeply missed by his wife Sharon (Jeltema), children Alison & Craig Van Ens and Jeff & Katie Price, grandsons Jacob and Andrew Van Ens and Brekston Price; sisters Barb (Arnie) Munk Stolte and Deb (Randy) Veltkamp and brother, Dean (Karen) Price and many nieces & nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents Robert and Nellie Price

**Rottschafer**, Dr. Ronald, age 75, Lombard, IL. May 2, 2009. He is survived by: his wife, Ruth; children: Rhonda (David) Sherwood; Rachel (Bret) Quigley; Robin (John) Norkus; Jennifer (Phil) Sikkenga; George (Melissa) Van Denend; 14 grandchildren; brother, Dr. Bruce (Randa) Rottschafer; and, sister, Trudy (Dr. Jacques) DeLormier.

**Stob**, Edith J.; aged 86; May 23, 2009; 2111 Raybrook SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546; She was preceded in death by her husband Gerald and son Kenneth W. Stob. Surviving are her children: Mary and Roger Bouwma of Grand Rapids, Barbara and Ross Gates of Norton Shores, MI, Sharon and Ken Racke of Carmel, IN; daughter-in-law: Gracia Stob of Hopkins, MI; 10 grandchildren; 5 great grandchildren; and sisters: Helen and Karl DeHaan and Jean Van Daalen.

**Tameling** Benjamin Tameling, age 92, went to be with our Lord on Feb. 2, 2009. 90 S River Rd, Des Plaines, IL 60016. Husband of Kathleen, nee Vanderleest. Father of Bernard (Gretta) Tameling, Judy (Russ) Erffmeyer, Ken (Janice), Calvin (Marcy) Tameling, and Ginger (the late Butch) Swierenga. Grandfather of Chad (Connie) Tameling; Dave (Maddy), Randy (Karen), Rob (fiancée Renee) Erffmeyer; Christine (James) Breuker; Joel (Rhonda), Micah (Kim), Jesse (Julie), Lucas (Tara) Tameling; Joshua, Kimberly, Michael, and Kaitlin Swierenga. Great-Grandfather of 14. Brother of Henry (Marie) Tameling, Ida (the late George) Mulder, Hattie (the late John) Voss, Jen (Tom) Oldenburger, the late Sadie (the late Peter & the late Dirk Weidenaar) Cook, the late Nicholas (the late Bess), the late Herman (the late Helen) Tameling and the late Alice (Ray) Oldenburger.

**Van Der Dyke** Helen R. Van Der Dyke, nee Boerman, went to be with our Lord on May 13, 2009. 633 S Euclid, Villa Park, IL 60181. Wife of Allen J. Mother of Sandra (Glenn) Binstein, Michael (Victoria) Van Der Dyke, Barbara Van Der Dyke, Kathy Van Der Dyke and Donna (Robert) Goedeke. Grandmother of Amy, Jenna, Joy, Brian, Samantha, Jeremy and Andrew. Sister of Alvin (Joan) Boerman and preceded by 1 sister. Sister-In-Law of Alice (the late John) Van Tholen. Aunt of many nieces and nephews. Memorials to CRC World Missions or the Ebenezer CRC Appeal Fund. 630-932-1500

**Zykstra**, Judith, age 64, 4/22/09, 505 W. 1st St, Pella, Ia 50219, wife of Claude, mother of Janet, Tom & Tim. 641-628-1636

## 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 Elissa at 616-243-7080 or Elissa@

vangels.com or visit our website at [www.vangels.com](http://www.vangels.com) and complete an online application.

**Youth Coordinator:** Classis Heartland seeks a part-time Youth Coordinator to help Youth Groups and Sponsors find materials, plan events and service projects. 15 hours a week, computer and communication skills required. Youth experience a plus. Contact Pastor Norlyn Van Beek 712-278-2220.

## Real Estate: Sales and Rental

**San Clemente, Ca.** 3bd/3ba condo. 1bd/1ba. Ocean View, 200 yd to beach. Near Disney Land, San Diego Zoo [www.vrbo.com/196251](http://www.vrbo.com/196251) (949) 413-6241 Night, Week or Month

**2BR/2BA** rental units on the Atlantic Ocean in beautiful New Smyrna Beach, FL - Daily, Weekly, Monthly rates available. Call 1-800-874-1931 or check out our website at [OBCRENTALS.COM](http://OBCRENTALS.COM).

**Kissimme home for rent** New, 6 bedroom, 4 bath, fully furnished home with private pool, 3 miles from Disney. [www.floridavacahome.com](http://www.floridavacahome.com). 708-372-2586

**Mobile Home** Mobile Home Dbl wide on lg lot, attached garage. Betmar Acres, Zephyrhills, FL. Many extras, completely furnished. Visit us at <http://betmarrealty.com/36824%20Kimela%20Ave.htm> for description and inside/outside pictures. Call Debbie at (813)788-3114 or 616-957-4604.

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

**South Ft. Myers, FL** 2 bedroom/bath ground floor condo, sleeps 6, pool, cable, close to beaches, and airport. Rent by week or month. Call 610-853-1151 or [enhoman@rcn.com](mailto:enhoman@rcn.com)

**Maui condo** on the Kaanapali Beach. email: [agdendulk@cv-access.com](mailto:agdendulk@cv-access.com), [www.vrbo.com/94024](http://www.vrbo.com/94024) (209) 883-2608. Sleeps six.

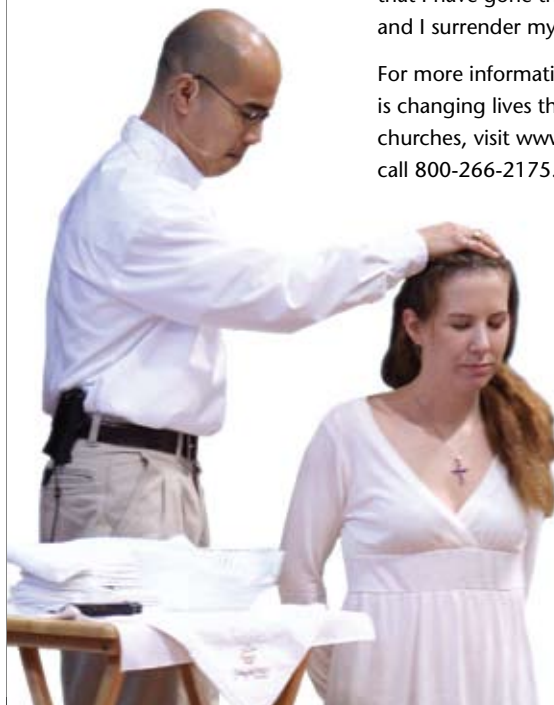


## "I am becoming a child of God"

*Living Mosaic Church*, a Home Missions-funded church in Burlington, Ontario recently baptized eight people during a Sunday service. Here is an excerpt from the testimony of Kelly, one of the people baptized that day:

"... when you sang the song 'Who Am I?', God filled me with hope and faith. . . . I am becoming a child of God so that I can help others who are going through the things that I have gone through. God is with me and I surrender my faith to him."

For more information about how God is changing lives through Home Missions churches, visit [www.crhm.org](http://www.crhm.org) or call 800-266-2175.



[www.crhm.org](http://www.crhm.org)



Christian Reformed  
Home Missions

Following Christ. In Mission Together.

**Maine oceanfront cottage**, in Bar Harbor, near Acadia National Park. Available May through Oct. \$600 May, June, Sept. and Oct. - \$700 July and Aug. 603-964-8788 or brentaverill20@yahoo.com.

**Weekly Rental:** Douglas/Saugatuck, MI: Walk to the beaches of Lake Michigan from this Newly remodeled Vacation Home, 7Br, 4Ba—comfortably sleeps up to 14. Very close to downtown Saugatuck & Douglas. Call 630-268-1531 or email Groenjk@aol.com for info & reservations.

**Cottage for Rent Weekly;** Hess Lake, Newaygo, Michigan. 4 bed/4 ba, sleeps 12, sandy beach, newer home, \$1200/week. Call Lonnie at (616) 942-0048.

**Summer cottages** on Selkirk Lake, 30 min. south of Grand Rapids, MI. 2-3 bedrooms, 600-700/week. 616-335-5202.

**Lake Michigan Cottage** Rent lakefront, private beach, deck, remodeled, sleeps 6. Walk to CRC Conference Grounds. Walk beach/ bike 4mi to Grand Haven. 616-878-0622.

**SUMMER FUN!** 2BR Holland, MI cottage located near Holland State Park \$750/wk or 2BR waterfront condo on Silver Lake in Mears \$875/wk. 616-786-0199 or dykert@charter.net.

**Cottage for Rent:** Lake Missaukee, Lake City Michigan. Two bedroom, w/ extra sleeper sofa. Located on a dead end black top street, ending at a city beach on the East side of Lake Missaukee. One lot from beach, w/ attached garage & cement drive. Cozy knotty pine interior, fully equipped, very clean. \$350/week. Call for open weeks 231-839-4544 or ddeboer@voyager.net

**House Fort Myers Beach** 3 bed 2.5 bath, pool, lanai, on canal, dock boat lift, beach, restaurants close. Monthly May-Dec. Pics and rates prandx@yahoo.com

**Lake Michigan Home For Sale** 3-4 bedroom - 2 bath home/cottage in Private Association on Lake Michigan between Muskegon and Grand Haven, MI. Asking \$295,000. Go to www. TomEllens.com for more details

**House For Rent/Sale** 2.8 Miles from Calvin College, 2BR, 1 Bath, Garage, Just remodelled. Please call 616-366-2982 for more details.

**Grand Rapids Home for Rent** — 3-4 bd, 2 bath; Alger Heights; Quiet street. 1 YR: \$600/mo. 9 mos: 800/mo. Contact: vpselles@yahoo.com 205-981-6746

**For Rent** Radcliffe Circle condo near Calvin College. 2bd/2 ba, full basement, new appliances, garage, main floor laundry, A/C. \$800/mo includes cable TV. Email: karenkania@comcast.net or call 616-940-9189

**Hudsonville, MI** 2 BR apartment with basement & yard; perfect for retired or newly married couple. Great price, only \$450/month. Call 616-340-1734

**condo for sale \$87,900** Radcliffe Village. 2235 Radcliff Circle SE. 2BR, 2 BA Entry, Kitchen, Eating Area, LR/DA, Master Bedroom/bath, Bedroom, Bathroom. Down: Unfinished. Patio. All appliances included. 616-706-5701

**HOME-RENTAL** Cooper/Plainwell Schools \$850 & utilities/ non-smoking/no pets/ 3 bdrms/2baths/porch/ walkout bsmt, C/A, WS, 2 car garage w/opener 269-342-0704

**For Rent** 3/4 bedroom house. Calvin College/Sem students. Available Aug. 1. \$1000/month + utilities. Mark 616.690.6959

**Rent:** Cadillac area cottage, Rose Lk access. Golf-8 courses w/n 20 miles, 3 BR, 2 BA, clean, sleeps 12, fully equipped. \$350 wkns/600 wk. 231-651-9157

**Beaufort, N. C.** 2 - 1 br cottages for rent in historic coastal town, near beach, fully furnished, w/d, tv, internet, bikes, grill; July 1-Sept 7 - \$560/wk; Sept 8 - Nov 30 - \$460/wk; www.theshellcottage.com; 252-504-6262

**Kiawah Island, SC - Rental** 3 bedroom villa, on Kiawah Island for fall /winter/spring rental, weekly \$700 or monthly \$1850. Swimming pool, close to ocean, near Charleston SC markw.barnes@gmail.com 708-331-1571

## Travel

**Alpine Pleasure Tours for 2009** Oct 5-12-MS & New Orleans. Visit Graceland, Miss Chr Fam Serv, Cary Chr Center, Natchez, New Or! both beautiful and devastation. Many fabulous attractions. \$1325.00-Oct 16,17- Ladies only shopping- call for details Nov 19&20- Fireside Christmas, fantastic dinner & show, also Reiman Pub Center (Home of Coun Living & Taste of Home) \$299.00 NewYear's eve- 12-31,1-1-Dinner and show Shipshewana, Triumphant Quartet, plus more. \$197.00 Prices pp, dou occu. Call or write for res. 616-791-4334 or tollfree 888-922-4334 Cliff & Helengene Doornbos, 3074 Richmond NW GR, MI 49534

**Journeys of Paul** Join Pastor Kirby Williams of New Hope CRC Ft. Lauderdale on a 15-day Journeys of Paul & Churches of Revelation. 10/8 - 10/22/09. For info call Ken VanderKodde 1.866.974.1964



**DISCOVER GREECE AND TURKEY!** Experience ancient culture and learn about the seven churches of Revelation. Hear how God is reaching people for Christ through Back to God Ministries International. Join Director Bob Heerspink for the Oct. 2009 Tour with a Purpose. For more information

contact Corrie at 888.588.3388 or cmulder@crna.org.

**Christian Tours** Contact Ken Vander Kodde at 1 866 974 1964 or visit us at www.kvk-travel.com



**Holiday In Holland** in our self-contained cabin or suite. We also offer vehicle rentals and tours, www.chestnutlane.nl

## Products and Services

**Tree Trimming** and removal—neat, clean, and expert service; insured; free estimates. Call Grand Rapids, 616-245-9449. Bartlett Tree Experts.

**Absolutely Best Prices** paid for religious books. Contact Credo Books, 1540 Pinnacle East SW, Wyoming, MI 49509, ph. (616) 249-9291. garyvds@mail.com

A. A. Professional Air Duct Cleaning - Providing superior air duct cleaning for 7 years using the latest equipment and technology. For a free estimate call 616-534-6710 or 616-887-7925.

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

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



**Wedding receptions** Engaged? We have the ideal setting for your reception plus lodging. Consider the Haworth Inn at Hope College in Holland, MI. Seating to 350. haworthinn.com/800-903-9142 Alcohol/ smoke free facility.

**PIANO LESSONS** Teacher with over 20 year's experience. Member MMTA. Please call Vickie at 455-6468.

## Miscellaneous

**Wanted To Buy** -standing timber in Michigan only. Cutting on sustained yield policy. Write or call Burt Moeke Hardwoods Inc., PO Box 500, Mancelona, MI 49659; ph. (231) 587-5388. moekeoffice@torchlake.com.

**FOR SALE:** Two cemetery plots for sale - Chapel Lawn, Schererville, IN. Selling for \$2,500 total. Contact Seller at Sarah0877@aol.com for more information.

**Compelled by His Spirit**  
*to go, grow, teach, learn, tell and love*

www.crwmm.org

Helping Christian Reformed Churches to fulfill the Great Commission

Christian Reformed World Missions



# Punch Lines

## Grace and Gratitude— Your Stories

*The following is not a joke—we simply wanted to place it where we know you'd read it!*

How has God been specifically at work in your life during this time of economic and global unrest? For what help, challenge, encouragement, or comfort are you giving thanks? *The Banner* wants to hear your stories with a view toward printing them as part of a reflective Thanksgiving article this fall. Please keep them as succinct as possible (100-300 words), so we can print as many as possible. Send them to [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org), with "Thanksgiving" in the subject line. Or address them to *The Banner* at 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560. Please also include your contact information and church membership. Thanks!

**The deadline is Aug. 28.**

**O**verheard: When the John Calvin bobbleheads first arrived in the Calvin College Campus Store, William Spoelhof, Calvin's former president who passed away in December 2008, wandered in and picked one up. He shook it a bit, noting how its beard interferes with its bobble, then said, "Isn't that just like John—saying no more than yes?"

—Brenda Hoeksema

**I**signed up for an exercise class and was told to wear loose-fitting clothing. If I HAD any loose-

fitting clothing, I wouldn't have signed up in the first place!

—George Vander Weit

**T**he teacher asked the class, "What is your dad doing?" Johnny raised his hand and said, "MY dad graduated from the cemetery and now he is talking about it in our church."

—G. Lieuwen

**A** few years ago we were watching the Fourth of July parade in Ada, Mich., and a little girl only a few years old kept asking her father, "When is Santa coming?"

Her father tried several times to explain to her that this was "a different kind of parade" and that "Santa won't be coming in this one."

Then she spotted me, with my "mature" blond hair and beard, and asked, "Is that Santa's daddy?"

—Julius Kuiper



History records that John Calvin was often afflicted with stomach trouble. His visit to Synod 2009 was no exception. Eighty other attendees were also stricken with a norovirus and found themselves "talking to the John."

Are you a fan of the bobblehead? Check out his creator's Facebook page under "John Calvin Bobbleheads," where you can post your own pics! In the meantime, once he's fully recovered, John plans to continue his 500th-birthday trip around the world.



Synod 2010

God created the sun  
and there was light and energy.

# DORDT COLLEGE

## You're called.

God created silicon  
and gave it crystalline structure.

God calls.  
Are you ready to serve?

God calls people to create with what he's made  
so engineers design solar collectors.

Monique Lieuwen  
Lethbridge, Alberta  
Junior engineering major



*Find your place in God's world.*

498 4th Avenue, N.E. ▪ Sioux Center, Iowa 51250-1606  
712-722-6020 ▪ [www.dordt.edu](http://www.dordt.edu) ▪ [advancement@dordt.edu](mailto:advancement@dordt.edu)

