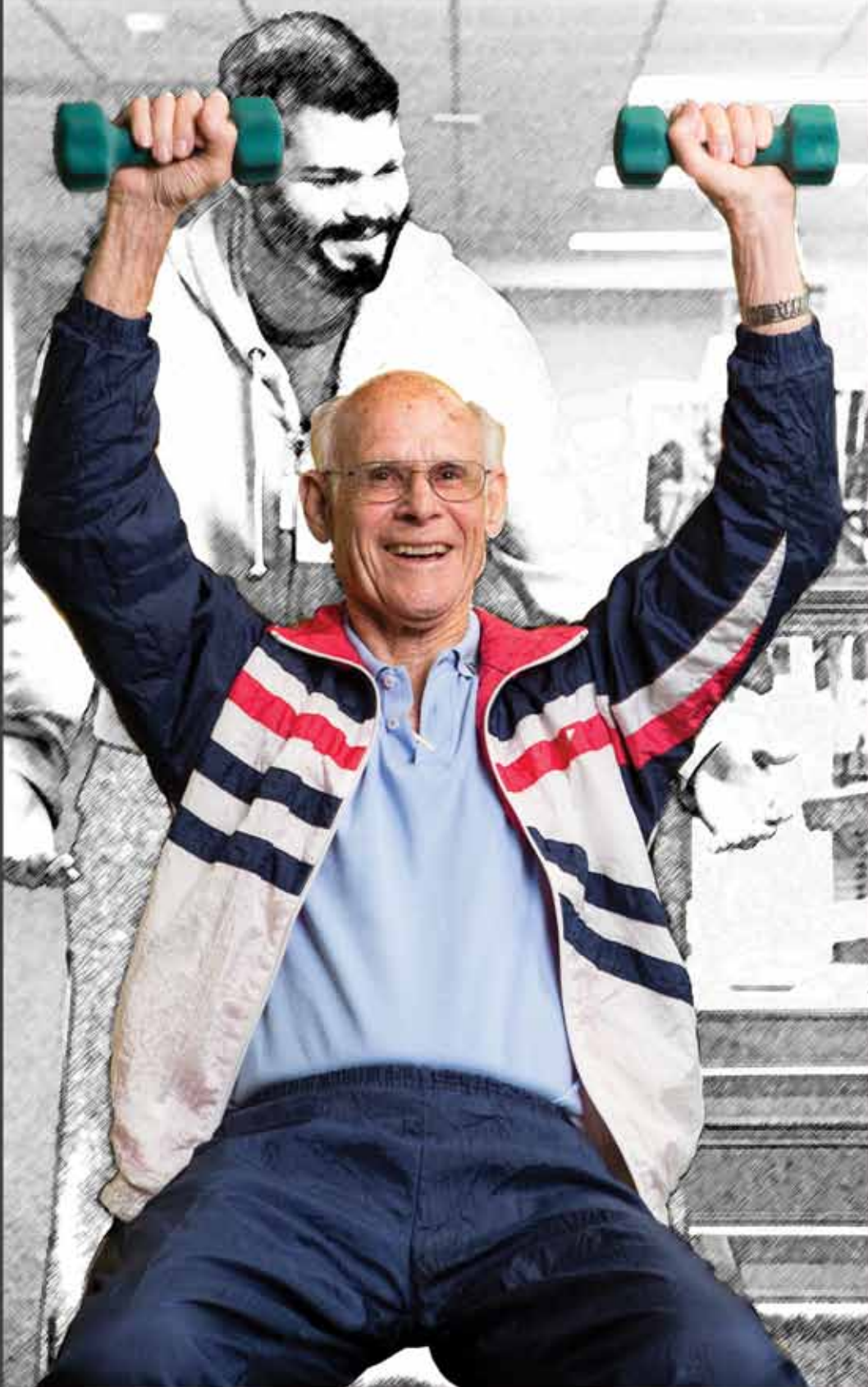


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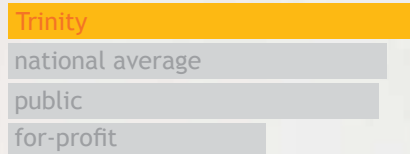
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BANNER

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Let's Get Picky About How We Choose

THE VOICE OVER THE PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM droned on as the votes were counted *in loco*: “Meyer” . . . “Meyer” . . . “De Moor” . . . “Meyer” . . . “Meyer” . . . “Meyer” . . . “De Moor” . . .

Time: Synod 1989 (synod is the denomination’s annual leadership convention made up of delegates from across the continent).

Place: Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Occasion: Election of a new *Banner* editor.

Runaway winner: Galen Meyer.

Hiding under his chair: Yours truly.

Misery loves company. At that synod several other pretenders to denominational positions sought me out to voice their condolences. They too had endured an hour-long synodical interview punctuated by that publicly-tallied communal response.

Synods were more fun then—except for those in my shoes. But we knew the gig and got over it well enough.

Today our denomination uses a selection process that’s easier on the applicants’ egos but, I fear, not so good for the church.

What got me thinking about this was the election of Pope Francis—an event scrutinized around the world, at least until Msgr. Marini yelled “*Extra omnes*” (“Everybody out”) and the doors to the proceedings fell shut. It *had* to have integrity.

Francis was chosen by the many.

Those who did the choosing were readily known to all.

Those who chose had many to choose from and were not presented with a virtual *fait accompli*.

Granted, our denominational leaders carry nothing like the responsibility a pope is burdened with. But they still need our collective confidence, as does the process by which we choose them.

These days, for most senior positions in our denomination, synod doesn’t do the choosing anymore. Delegates get to vote on just a single nomination—a person already approved by the Board of Trustees, which also receives only a single nomination from a search committee appointed, no doubt, by good folks—but they are folks not known to the vast majority of the Christian Reformed faithful. And the search committee itself is “advised” by a top denominational functionary who has much at stake and lots of say (though no vote).

The problem with this process is that trustees and synodical delegates are understandably reticent to vote down a single name. Doing so would show disrespect to those vetting the candidate and require a whole other year to go through the process yet again.

Not gonna happen.

So a few people, known only to a few, actually choose our denominational leaders. And only those few know, and will ever get to know, the reasons why capable folks were screened out of the process.

The public drubbing I took at Synod 1989 wasn’t fun, but it was actually quite good for my soul. And if that process gives our churches more say and better ownership of the proceedings, then that’s worth an emotional lump or two.

We believe we have important stuff to teach our Roman Catholic sisters and brothers about church leadership. Maybe so. But we have a lot to learn from them as well. ■



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

Hiding under his chair: yours truly.

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Wonderful

I **TOOK A FRENCH** language class last year. That's because in my wildest dreams I see myself spending a week in Paris eating croissants at a little neighborhood café and awkwardly practicing my French as I greet shopkeepers: "Bonjour, madame! Bonjour, monsieur!" This is probably a pipe dream, but I thought I'd try to prepare myself just in case.

My French teacher told me that music is a great tool for learning language, so I bought two French CDs, one of them of children's songs. I laughed out loud at many of the songs but was particularly drawn to one called "Wonderful." It surprised me because it was sung in a light, lyrical way but dealt with such a complex subject. The singer sings, "I wish I were wonderful . . . so that you may finally appreciate me." Ah, I said to myself, I can relate to that!

If you're anything like me, you may suffer from some insecurity and feel, at times, that others don't value you. Perhaps you feel that you're not good enough or smart enough or successful enough or

charming and likable enough—or "normal" enough.

I've tried for many years to be wonderful but I just can't seem to get the hang of it. So when I read the book *The Awakened Heart* by Gerald May I was consoled. May says, "Functional people are organized and disciplined, and able to get what they want out of life. . . . I'm so dysfunctional, I can't even figure out how to become functional. And it is alright."

All right?? May goes on to say, "It has been more my failures than my successes that have opened me to love. . . . Grace is love happening, love in action, and I have seen so much grace in the midst of so much brokenness in myself and others that I know we are all in love. We are in love, within love, as fish are in the sea and clouds are in the sky."

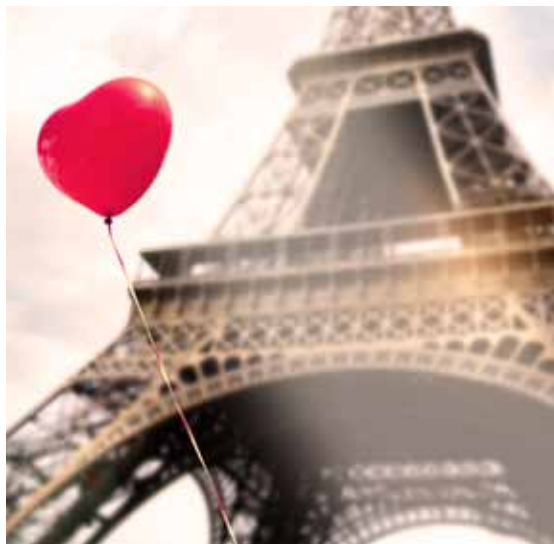
By focusing on what I thought my culture expected of me—a "successful" life—I concluded that there was nothing I could do to make things whole or healed but to do my best, be honest about my failures, practice forgiveness and tenderness toward myself and others, and yield to divine providence.

I am increasingly convinced that I am living in love despite my failures because God "has loved me into existence." I still don't consider myself charming or successful, but I am now more at peace with my own life, more accepting. And gratitude is growing inside of me like some kind of wild bush planted in rich soil. I feel like I'm in good company with other "dysfunctional" people like Jacob, Sarah, Jonah, and the woman Jesus met at the well—people without an ounce of efficiency to bail themselves out of terrible spots but who ended up on their knees, bowing before the great love that engulfed them.

So now I roll down the windows in the car and practice my French by singing with gusto, "Je voudrais être extraordinaire pour qu'enfin tu me considères." You never know what the future holds. But I'm sure that no matter where I find myself, love holds me. ■



Joyce Kane is editorial assistant for *The Banner*.




We are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love.

— WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes, Virginia, There Is a Holy Spirit

LEE

OPINION



Are we a church that has mislaid the Holy Spirit?

WITHIN OUR DENOMINATION there seems to be considerable confusion about the Holy Spirit. In fact, at the CRC's first-ever Prayer Summit held last April, I heard a church leader stand at the podium and make a disturbing claim: "The Christian Reformed Church has historically not made much room for the work of the Holy Spirit." Or has not been known for the Holy Spirit. Or something to that effect.

Come again? Are we a church that has mislaid the Holy Spirit? Have we neglected the Holy Spirit? Is the CRC somehow remiss and in need of redirecting? No. Without the Spirit of Christ actively working in our midst, there would be no church to complain about!

No room for the Holy Spirit? Then there would be no gospel to proclaim. There would be no preacher to preach it. No ear to hear. There would be no Reformation because there'd be no "holy catholic and apostolic church." Christ would not have been raised. There would be no incarnation. No God-breathed Scripture. No calling of Moses. No beautiful tabernacle in the wilderness. No law of God. No calling of Abraham. No Eve. No Adam.

Without the Spirit brooding over the deep, there wouldn't even be a lifeless corpse in the garden waiting for God's breath.

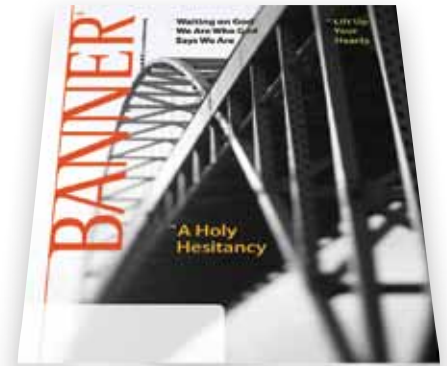
In fact, everything we do in church depends on the Holy Spirit. In the Nicene Creed, we testify that the Spirit is "the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified. He spoke through the prophets." Obviously we need to consider these words more often.

But when we do we must be cautious. Because when the Spirit is active, then Christ—not the Spirit—is exalted. Theologian Dale Bruner calls the Spirit "the shy member of the Trinity." The Holy Spirit leads us to Christ. He teaches us the words and works and desires and goals of Jesus. The Spirit applies the redemption Christ accomplished. Whenever there is a focus on the Holy Spirit, we must question whether the Holy Spirit is truly active. Jesus was clear about the Christocentric ministry of the Spirit: "He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you" (John 16:14).

So yes, Virginia, there is a Holy Spirit. The Spirit is here . . . and has been all along. ■



Jay Knochenhauer is pastor of Third Christian Reformed Church, Zeeland, Mich.



Valentine's Embrace

John Lee's article "A Valentine's Embrace" (February 2013) tells about his love for his friend Matt that allowed Matt to express his secret. The difficult conversation, however, is the one that follows, which the church needs to address.

It is clear from reading the Bible that homosexual activity is a perversion. We as a church need to tell the truth about this perversion ("They exchanged the truth about God for a lie") with consequences both temporal and eternal for those who actively embrace the lifestyle to which they are drawn. We need to support those who strive to live without expressing their unnatural feelings. In so doing we will show God's love evidenced by a Savior who came "to seek and to save the lost," as Lee says in his article.

—Lynne Postma
Grand Rapids, Mich.

The idea that Jesus loves everyone unconditionally and that we should just give everyone a hug no matter their sexual orientation ("A Valentine's Embrace") remains incomplete as a biblical response to openly sinful lifestyle choices. Yes, Jesus loves us despite our sinful nature, but he lovingly tells us to leave that life of sin (John 8:11).

—Willem De Vries
Brantford, Ontario

TTERS

“A Valentine’s Embrace” speaks of helping people drawn to homosexuality to know that God still loves them and that we love them too. Those are definitely proper biblical sentiments that ought to be expressed and encouraged. But there is no mention of the equally proper (and absolutely essential) duty of Reformed believers to help people who are tempted by homosexuality to resist that temptation, recognize the sinfulness of homosexual behavior, and submit to God’s righteousness.

Where are the articles about the proper biblical view of homosexual behavior? Let’s have a serious conversation based on the Word of God, not one catering to the whims of society or popular scientific “knowledge.”

—*Dan Winiarski
Jenison, Mich.*

Calvin Football?

Reflecting on Lloyd Rang’s “Pain Versus Gain” (February 2013), I hope the expression “Calvin football” becomes an oxymoron.

The glorified mayhem exhibited in professional football often leads to debilitating injury, including brain damage. Any possible financial benefit to Calvin College gained from adding this sport should be anathema. Rather let them continue to strive for “a sound mind in a sound body.”

—*Tom Posthumus
London, Ontario*

“Stealing” Sermons

I really enjoyed the thought-provoking article “I Think the Pastor Stole That Sermon” (February 2013). I didn’t realize how applicable it was until I read “The View from Here” article “Always Keep On Praying.” The story about the standard railroad gauge is the same story I read some time ago in a technical magazine.

It would have been good for the author to have read “I Think the Pastor . . .” prior to writing his own so the proper sources could have been cited.

—*Kirk Oosting
Hudsonville, Mich.*

The article “I Think the Pastor Stole That Sermon” saddens me because it further fractures the community. It arms critical people and may deny others something they need to hear. If I believe that my pastor’s job in the pulpit is to equip me to live this life, then I do not care if he borrows another’s work.

Neither Jesus nor Paul cared that the message was being brought by unbelievers; they apparently celebrated that the message was being brought. How about a balancing article on how few of our ideas are our own, how the words and the phrasing we use are pretty much all borrowed from our interactions with others, and how we are advised that we are to use these to build up the body and not destroy it?

—*Tim Jasperse
Hudsonville, Mich.*

Church Order

I respectfully disagree with Larry Van Essen’s IMHO “Do We Need to Change the Church Order?” (February 2013). For starters, the main purpose of Sunday worship is not evangelism, but the worship of God. Second, sermons should focus on God’s Word with the purpose of teaching believers, reproving, correcting, and training them in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16) for the work of ministry—including evangelism. That evangelism to the lost happens in the world outside the fellowship of believers on Sunday.

—*Maurice Harting
Burnaby, British Columbia*

GMO Food

“How Should We Then Eat?” (January 2013) caught my attention. Interested in food, I purchased *Demystifying Food from Farm to Fork* and read eagerly. Author Maurice Mladik ranges easily and widely across the farm and food scene. He includes several references to Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) crops and their cost-effective production of food.

I write to offer a caution to the author’s endorsement of GMO foods. A synoptic history of the approval of GMOs is available online at “Seeds of Deception” from the Institute for Responsible Technology.

If we are to eat healthfully we must know how crops and livestock are grown, and we must be confident that land and facilities are uncompromised.

—*Garth Cubitt
New Lowell, Ontario*

Hell or High Water?

I am not happy with the editorial “Cast Your Bread upon the Waters” (January 2013). The editor says “Immanuel will walk with us come hell or high water.” These words were not necessary in a Christian magazine. Couldn’t he have said “Immanuel will walk with us no matter what happens”? Doesn’t anyone read these things before they go to print?

—*Wilma Dodde
Howard City, Mich.*

World Renew

We have no problem with deleting the word “Reformed” from CRWRC, but to take out “Christian” is going a step too far. Is it politically incorrect to use the word “Christian” because we might hurt the feelings of other religions?

The name World Renew is as secular as the Red Cross. Sad!

—*Peter and Jennie Vermeulen
Bowmanville, Ontario*

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Something Old, Something New in Structure Task Force Report

The Task Force for Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC) has released its report to Synod 2013 (the annual leadership meeting of the Christian Reformed Church). Along with some new ideas, the report offers much that has been seen before.

What's new this time around is the emphasis on faith formation, building on the six years' worth of work of the denomination's Faith Formation Committee.

Also new is the imagery guiding this latest round of structure talks. Called "Five Streams," each stream denotes one of five ministry priorities the task force is asking synod to endorse:

- Faith Formation
- Servant Leadership
- Global Missions
- Loving Mercy; Doing Justice
- Gospel Proclamation and Worship

This imagery is borrowed from the Evangelical Covenant Church's "Five Smooth Stones" and includes a mechanism called a "collaboration table" intended "to connect departments, agencies, and institutions to advance the cohesive development of each of the five ministry priorities."

The report dedicated significant space to revisiting the issue of binationality—being one church in two nations. That discussion is timely given that the director of Canadian ministries resigned last summer and the role of that office is currently under review.

The task force called for "heightened awareness and intentionality to engage with our respective contexts and foster gracious space for differentiated approaches."

The task force pointed to a number of ongoing structural challenges that have been previously addressed but that will need fresh answers:

- A denominational structure that is made up of a loose amalgam of agencies and institutions created over the last 150 years to meet a variety of needs but lacks appropriate integration.
- The continued need to support local churches, becoming their "partner of choice" for missions and resources.
- Finding a workable way to cluster together a number of specialized ministries.

The task force also echoed previous calls for more communication and collaboration—especially among staff—in the wake of resignations of the denomination's two top executives in 2011 and reports of low staff morale.

Finally, the task force is asking synod to authorize the Board of Trustees to approve senior leadership job descriptions that the task force will create in consultation with a new executive director who will be appointed by this year's synod. Nominees for such positions will be presented to Synod 2014.

Synod 2013 will meet in Grand Rapids, Mich., June 7-14. The *Agenda for Synod*, which contains this report, is available at crcna.org. Printed copies are also sent to each congregation.

—Gayla R. Postma

Ontario Man Named Top College Volleyball Coach in Canada

The Canadian Collegiate Athletics Association recently named Wayne Harris Coach of the Year, placing him as the top men's volleyball coach in Canadian college sports.

Harris coaches men's volleyball at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario.

The award marks the finish to an outstanding career. Harris plans to step down as head coach at the end of this year. Over the past 30 years, he has been one of the most successful coaches in Redeemer's history. His teams have earned three provincial medals in five seasons.

MORE ONLINE

—Monica deRegt

Redeemer's Wayne Harris is Coach of the Year.



Helping Hands for Haiti

For a group of women in Iowa, prayers for Haiti are accompanied by the works of their hands. That's why they spend time sewing and making school uniforms, nametags, dresses, and quilts.

Their work is part of Mission Haiti, an organization that runs an orphanage in Haiti and supports a school for younger children.

Alma Kooistra, a member of Rock Valley's Trinity Christian Reformed Church, went on one of the Mission Haiti trips. "Each of us was allowed to check a 50-pound bag for our flight, and each of us gave that space for items for the mission," she said. Those items included clothes,



A young Haitian holds a soccer ball with Bible verses written in the Creole language.

shoes, and story Bibles written in the Creole language.

When it was time to leave, participants were eager to go back to Haiti. Kelci Kooima, 14, said, "I would definitely go back . . . even though we try to help

the people and be a blessing to them, they actually bless us too in return." [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Kyle Hoogendoorn

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Martin Toonstra

1932 – 2012

Rev. Martin Toonstra, 80, was a godly, humble, sensitive, soft-spoken, and wise pastor who touched the lives of many. He had a heart for missions and reached out to people of diverse cultures.

After serving in the U.S. military during the Korean War, Toonstra was ordained into ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in 1961.

He served congregations in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, retiring in 1998.

Toonstra will be remembered for his humble, dedicated service to the Lord. Both in preaching and teaching it was evident that he was a student of the Word. His compassion for the sick and suffering made him a wonderful counselor. He played football with neighborhood kids on Saturday afternoons. He also loved music.

His ministerial colleagues remember him as the regional pastor who had a sympathetic understanding for their problems.

Toonstra is survived by his wife, Joyce, four children and their spouses, 14 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

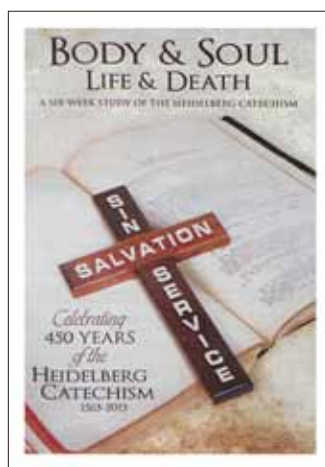
Further information on recently deceased ministers is available each year in the front pages of the *Christian Reformed Church's annual Yearbook*.

Iowa Churches Celebrate 450th Anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism

"What is your only comfort in life and death?"

The first question of the Heidelberg Catechism holds special meaning for three Orange City Christian Reformed churches that commemorated and celebrated the 450th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism.

"What a celebration such as this says is that we are connected historically to the past. That past has helped shape us and given us some identity," said Mark Vande Zande, pastor of First CRC. "It unites us together in the present as a denomination where there are many different styles of worship and many different things that could divide us. And it also



encourages us to stay together as the future unfolds."

First CRC, Calvary CRC, Living Water CRC, and Immanuel CRC all participated in a six-week series

focusing on the Heidelberg Catechism.

Vande Zande believes the Heidelberg Catechism should continue to hold a significant role in the Christian community today. "In a world where there is so much uncertainty and chaos, the Heidelberg Catechism, which summarizes Scripture, gives us some guidance, help, and strength in a personal way as we go through those uncertainties and that chaos," he said. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Kyle Hoogendoorn

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. John B. Hulst
1929 – 2013

Rev. John B. Hulst, 83, the second president of Dordt College, was a visionary for the kingdom. Tactful but firm, modest but energetic, he died from a sudden onset of metastatic brain cancer.

Hulst served Christian Reformed congregations in Iowa and Michigan before devoting the rest of his career to Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. There he served as professor of theology, campus pastor, dean of students, and, from 1982 to 1996, as president.

Hulst was a gifted speaker, preacher, and writer. He embodied many wonderful gifts: integrity, scholarship, vitality, prudence, engaging winsomeness, and a deep love for kingdom and church.

He was a cofounder of what is now called the Center for Public Justice based in Washington, D.C. Other organizations that profited from his leadership include the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, the Reformed Ecumenical Council, and the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education.

But Hulst will be remembered most for his Christ-like demeanor and as an encourager of the people around him.

He is survived by his wife, Louise, three children and their spouses, and seven grandchildren.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

Christian School Support Program Under Tax Scrutiny

The Canada Revenue Agency, enforcer of Canada's Income Tax Act, has challenged the charitable status of CEAF, a school support program used by many Christian Schools in Ontario.

CEAF (Christian Economic Assistance Foundation) voluntarily suspended the program after receiving a CRA notice indicating concerns with the structure of the program.

Most Christian schools in Ontario charge a single fee per family. To satisfy tax regulations, Christian schools each year determine the per-pupil cost of the

“secular” education they provide, which CRA regards as ineligible for charitable receipts. The remaining school fees—considered to pay the costs of “religious” education—are eligible for a charitable donation receipt.

Under CEAF, families donate that charitable amount to the foundation. The foundation then redistributes the money to participating schools based on annual grant applications. School treasurers use that money to defray the “secular” education cost of the school, allowing them to designate a larger percentage of tuition

fees paid by parents as a charitable donation.

According to Jules DeJager, executive director of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, 43 of its 69 member schools participate in CEAF.

A story recently published on the front page of the *National Post* asserted that the Canada Revenue Agency recently informed CEAF donors that “it is the CRA’s opinion that the intention of the School Support Program is merely a tax scheme to artificially maximize charitable donation receipts received by parents for private school tuition fees by improperly characterizing tuition payments by parents as grants.”

Asked to comment on the issue, CEAF chairman Adrian Guldmond issued the following statement: “The CEAF Board regrets the misleading headline in the *Post*. The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has audited the program three times in the past two decades and found no compliance issues. The CEAF Board did receive a letter in January of 2013 indicating that there are compliance issues now . . . as the result of an audit in 2012.

“The CEAF Board has suspended the program pending discussions with CRA auditors. The public controversy which led to the *Post* article was caused by the issuance of 1,000 questionnaires to donors of the 2009 tax year from a CRA regional office. The board is confident that the matters of disagreement can be resolved in the near future.”

[MORE ONLINE](#)

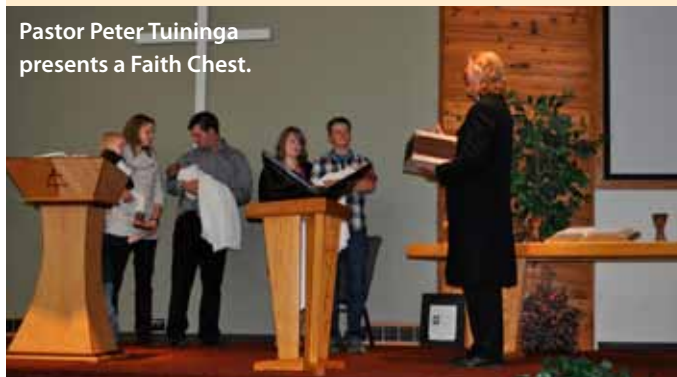
—Ron Rupke

Faith Chests Nurture Faith Formation at Home

Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church in Leduc, Alberta, has found a tangible way of helping families mark their children’s faith walk at home.

The church presents every baptized infant with a Faith Chest to use as a repository for articles significant to the child’s walk with Christ throughout his or her life. Families can fill the Faith Chest with photos, symbols, books, and other reminders of the milestones and events in the child’s faith journey. “We saw the importance of treasuring faith memories as the child grew, giving parents an opportunity to explain why certain things were in their Faith Chest,” explained pastor Peter Tuininga.

In the nearly two years since the program started, 26 Faith Chests have been presented at Ebenezer. [MORE ONLINE](#) —Janet A. Greidanus



Pastor Peter Tuininga presents a Faith Chest.

Disability Awareness Crosses Language Lines

For the first time, Korean and Anglo congregations came together for a Disability Concerns conference that involved Christian Reformed congregations as well as churches from the Reformed Church in America (RCA).

At Anaheim (Calif.) Christian Reformed Church, keynote speaker Jeff McNair challenged the audience to see this not as an event but as a beginning.

Steve Nyhuis, regional disability advocate for Classis Greater Los Angeles (a regional group of churches), said the conference presented “a clear message that engaging people with disabilities in church life knows no denominational (or language) barriers.”

Taking down barriers was an important part of the conference. Terry DeYoung, coordinator of Disability Concerns in the RCA, said, “It’s heartening to observe people with and without disabilities naturally negotiate acts of service, hospitality,



Translation devices helped remove barriers of communication at this inclusive event.

and generosity toward one another in ways that are personal and helpful without drawing attention or making a scene.”

Attendees were challenged to think about the day-to-day obstacles faced by people with disabilities and then “to imagine that when they come into the church community they find just the opposite: love, warmth, value, opportunities to serve, and belonging,” said Mark Stephenson, director of Disability Concerns for the CRC.

Anaheim CRC’s Friendship class of adults with cognitive disabilities led the opening worship with their praise team, and there was simultaneous translation for Korean attendees, according to Jonathan Kim, regional disability advocate for Classis Pacific Hanmi.

“I sense that many churches are hungering for practical assistance and resources so they can welcome and include people with disabilities more effectively,” said DeYoung. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Heidi Wicker

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Riemer Praamsma

1939 – 2013

Rev. Riemer Praamsma, 73, a life-long student of the Word, was wonderfully outgoing, humbly thankful to his Sender, and always good-humored. He died as a result of an accident.

Praamsma served Christian Reformed congregations in Ontario and Michigan.

The pastoral office was for him a gift of God’s grace that never ceased to fill him with wonder. He was very much a people person, a listener, an encourager. He was drawn to those on the fringes of life; the down-and-out always found a welcome in the Praamsma parsonage.

He loved to discuss the art of preaching with friends and colleagues. The legacy of his faith was a blessing to his wife and children. He was a fine runner, and a favorite hobby was playing chess.

Following their retirement, the Praamsmas served as interim pastor in several churches.

Praamsma is survived by his wife, Joyce, three children and their spouses, and 13 grandchildren. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

Florida Is More Than Vacation for Retired Pastor



Rev. Gerald Van Oyen (center, with clerical collar) poses with a ship’s crew and fellow volunteers.

On a typical winter’s day, Rev. Gerald Van Oyen might share a Bible with a Chinese sea captain or join in a Skype conversation between a Russian seafarer and his wife.

Van Oyen, a retired Christian Reformed pastor, has spent the past eight years volunteering as a chaplain at port ministries in

Florida, most recently near Tampa.

Often, members of a ship’s crew must stay on board because they don’t have visas. So Van Oyen, 80, seeks permission to board the ship to lead a worship service and distribute Bibles. He follows up personal conversations with a Bible study that he sends by email.

“Ninety-seven percent of the [seafarers] we talk to are glad to talk to us,” said Van Oyen. “At the end of their visit, they almost always write us a note, saying, ‘Man, we’ve never been treated so well.’” [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Roxanne Van Farowe

NEWS

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Jacob Boonstra

1927 – 2013

Rev. Jacob (Jake) P. Boonstra, 86, a U.S. Navy veteran and a compassionate, well-read pastor, passed away on February 27 after a stroke.

He served Christian Reformed congregations in Michigan, Illinois, and Colorado.

Boonstra's ministry followed the pattern set by CRC pastors for generations: he preached twice each week, taught catechism classes, led Bible study groups, conducted funerals, and faithfully visited members in the congregations he served.

Among his colleagues he was known and appreciated for his helpfulness and friendship. He was delegated to the CRC's annual synod several times.

Boonstra loved people. He recognized their gifts and services and had a way of making them feel valued. He was also a wonderful family man who enjoyed many camping trips with his family.

Boonstra was predeceased in 2009 by Angelina, his first wife, with whom he shared 60 years of marriage.

He is survived by his second wife, Virginia Visser. He is also survived by five children and their spouses, 13 grandchildren, and 19 great-grandchildren.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

Highlights from 2013 Winter Classis Meetings

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

Several people were **welcomed into ministry** in the Christian Reformed Church, including seminary graduates

Sarah Albers, Andrew Aukema, Michael Boerkoel, Benjamin Browneye, Bryan Dick, Jeff Kroondyk, Kurt Monroe, George Lubbers, and David Ten Clay.

Transferred to the CRC from other denominations were Jong Bam (Tiger) Oh and Jim Halstead.

Wayne DeYoung, Joy Engelman, Todd Grotenhuis, Ladan Jennings, David Nederhood, Frank Guter, and Dae Won Shin were **released from their congregations**.

Bobbyjon Bauman, John Gerits, Seong Soo (Bob) Kim, and

Trent Walker were **released from CRC ministry**.

River Walk CRC, Battle Creek, Mich., and First CRC, Highland, Ind., will both form **union churches** with congregations from the Reformed Church in America.

The Way (Lockport, Ill.), Dunwoody Christian Fellowship (Atlanta, Ga.), Pine Grove Community CRC (Pinellas Park, Fla.), The Well (Bothell, Wash.), Wallingford Neighborhood Church (Seattle, Wash.), and Square Inch Church (Lacey, Wash.) were **closed**.

Wisconsin Church Runs Motel Ministry

For the congregation of Covenant Christian Reformed Church in Appleton, Wisc., a local motel has become the heart of ministry.

When pastor Mark Pluimer and council leaders of the church challenged the congregation to envision new ways of doing local ministry, the invitation was met with a passionate plea from members Mike and Cheryl Watson. They have served the poverty-stricken community at Northern Inn for the past 13-plus years. "We thought it'd be wonderful to have church interactions out there and for people to catch the vision that this is where Christ would be and would stay."

What began as a once-a-month outdoor food gathering eventually prompted the congregation to develop the Northern Inn Ministry, providing funding for the permanent renting and renovation of Room 16 as a home base for ministry, including weekly meals, Bible studies, support programs, and recently a memorial service for one of the deceased motel residents.

Recently, the ministry helped a mother and her five children move out of a tiny room at the motel into more stable transitional housing.

Real-life stories of both beauty and sorrow continue to flow from the ministry. It always comes down to the intervention of Christ—"That's the only thing that will change us," said Cheryl. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Jessica Oosterhouse



Northern Inn, Room 16, is home base for ministry in Appleton, Wisc.

All the Canadian classes held conversations on the future of **CRC ministry in Canada.**

SYNOD 2013

Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan requested that Synod 2013 adopt all recommendations in the **Diakonia Remixed** report. Classis Alberta North sent a communication endorsing the report. Classis Hudson requested that Synod 2013 not adopt several of the suggested Church Order changes and retain the language of the current Form for Ordination.

Classis Zeeland requested that Synod 2013 not adopt recommendations of the **Diversity in Leadership Planning Group II**, including hiring a person to implement the diversity recommendations.

Classis British Columbia Northwest and Classis Grand Rapids East requested **changes to the Minister's Pension Plan.**

Classis Grand Rapids North and Classis Kalamazoo requested Synod 2013 authorize the creation of a **new classis for churches that exclude women from serving as officebearers.** (See p. 16.)

Classis Pacific Northwest requested pastoral advice from Synod 2013 on the issue of **gay marriage.** Classis Zeeland would like a study committee to expand on the **1973 report on homosexuality.**

All materials regarding Synod 2013 are available in the *Agenda for Synod 2013*, posted online at crcna.org and sent in print to every church. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Gayla R. Postma



Rev. Stephen Kendall of the PCC and Rev. William Koopmans of the CRC holding specially designed coffee mugs portraying each other's denominational logo.

Classis Niagara Meets with Local Presbytery

The first-ever joint meeting between a Christian Reformed classis (regional group of churches) and a Presbyterian Church in Canada presbytery was held in February in Welland, Ontario.

The event celebrated the Affirmation of Relationship between the two denominations that was adopted in 2009 by the PCC General Assembly and in 2010 by the Synod of the CRC.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Monica deRegt

Washington Youth Group Cares for Chinese Exchange Student

For many Chinese high school exchange students, learning English is a challenge. Lee Sue Deng, a 10th grade student who attends youth group at First Christian Reformed Church in Lynden, Wash., faced a different obstacle.

Only a few weeks after arriving in the United States to attend Lynden Christian High School, she was diagnosed with stage 4A Hodgkin's lymphoma.

A doctor at Seattle Children's Hospital obtained an emergency visa allowing Huang Qyn, Lee Sue's mother, to fly in from China.

Youth group members sold prayer bracelets to encourage others to remember Lee Sue and financially support her medical treatments. Youth pastor Dan Houston also took a group of students to Seattle during the Chinese New Year in February to visit Lee Sue.

"I believe the church is like a tribe and takes care of the ones that God has brought to us, just like we would any of our family," said Houston. "When a situation like this presents itself, it puts everything in perspective." [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Amy Toornstra



DAN HOUSTON

Lee Sue lost most of her hair as a result of chemotherapy. The First CRC of Lynden youth group brought wigs on a visit so Lee Sue would not be the only one wearing one.

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. John Medendorp

1926 – 2013

Rev. John Calvin Medendorp, 86, one of four generations of John Medendorps in Christian Reformed ministry, was a gifted preacher, teacher, counselor, and pastor. He passed away on February 23 from complications of pneumonia.

Medendorp served Christian Reformed congregations in Iowa and Michigan. He retired in 1991 but remained active in ministry in Michigan and Florida.

Medendorp was well-known and well-loved. He was deeply committed to the Reformed faith and loved the Christian Reformed denomination. Though sermon preparation and pastoral calling were his priority, he found time to read, study, and keep up with current events. He was a frequent delegate to synod and served the boards of both Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary as a member and as president.

Medendorp was deeply devoted to his family. He was preceded in death by his wife, Christine, in 2009, and by two daughters.

Medendorp is survived by two children and their spouses, nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Sung Soo Kim
1964 – 2013

Rev. Sung Kim, 49, a radical follower of Jesus Christ's gospel, passed away from a sudden heart attack following a struggle with colorectal cancer in Korea.

Kim joined the Christian Reformed Church in 2006 and served Smyrna CRC in Los Angeles, Calif. He had recently returned to Seoul, South Korea, to start a new Smyrna Church.

Prior to entering gospel ministry, he worked as a singer and received an award in the College of Music festival. He also served as secretary to Korea's president.

Kim will be remembered for his Christ-like manner and life. He loved music and the gospel; he was often called a singer/pastor.

Kim is survived by his wife, Sherry.

—Jonathan Kim

Synod 2013 Asked to Consider an Affinity Classis

Two classes (regional groups of churches) in West Michigan have asked Synod 2013 to allow the formation of a new classis for congregations that exclude women from holding ordained office. Synod is the annual leadership meeting of the Christian Reformed Church.

In recent meetings, both Classes Kalamazoo and Grand Rapid North adopted overtures (requests) for the new classis. Classis Zeeland declined to support a similar overture from one of its churches. Classis Minnkota sent a communication to synod supporting the idea.

"Please understand that these churches, in keeping with their biblical convictions, do not wish to continuously protest or cause discomfort for those who believe differently than they do on these matters," reads one of the overtures.

Synod 2007 opened all the offices to women, and most of the 47 regional classes also allow women to be delegated at their assemblies.

Some churches, such as Second CRC in Kalamazoo, Mich., chose to abstain from attending classis meetings, believing that attending under protest would soon become a mere formality.

Indeed, the Christian Reformed church in Medicine Hat, Alberta, requested at the most recent meeting of Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan that the following statement be read and recorded in the minutes: "The council of Medicine Hat protests the seating of women elders and ministers at classis as we believe it is in violation to the Word of God." After some discussion, the classis decided that in future the statement would no longer be read to the delegates but that the congregation could continue to have it recorded in the classis minutes.

Since 2007, as many as 11 churches in Michigan have discussed starting a new classis.

In 2010, Second CRC, along with Trinity CRC in Sparta, Mich., sought instead to join Classis Minnkota despite the geographical separation between Michigan and Minnesota. That classis is on record

as excluding women as delegates to classis. However, Synod 2010 denied the request for the transfer, noting that classes are meant to be "neighboring churches" and suggested instead that the churches find a classis nearer by. However, the churches have not been able to find a nearby classis to call home.

Thus the request for creation of a new classis. "After much prayer and collective wisdom from church leaders . . . we believe that God is leading to a better option of starting a new classis in Michigan," the overture reads. "This classis will be for churches who have deep convictions about the Bible's qualifications for leadership in the home and in the church, and who wish to keep devoted male and female members, families, and churches from leaving the CRC."

Synod 2013 will meet in Grand Rapids, Mich., June 7-14. The *Agenda for Synod*, which contains these overtures, is available at crcna.org. Printed copies are also sent to each congregation. —Gayla R. Postma

Alberta Youth Conference Explores What It Means to Be Reformed

"How do we help students understand what it is to be Reformed in this world, and what does it look like?"

That question guided the organizers of a February youth conference in Edmonton, Alberta, for 140 high school students, some of whom traveled hundreds of kilometers to attend.

The Inspire Conference was billed as "a new retreat experience for high school students looking to go deeper into who they are and what they believe."

Organizers also wanted the weekend to focus on service and discipleship, providing students opportunities to be of service in



Youth from around Alberta gather for the Inspire Conference.

the community, to reflect the hands and feet of Christ through their words and actions.

"The conference was amazing. . . . It was inspiring to see how small acts of kindness brought smiles to peoples' faces," said 17-year-old Emanuelle Dubbel-

dam, a member of Edmonton's Bethel CRC. "As an added bonus, we met other youth from around the province, which is not something we get to do very often."

—Janet A. Greidanus

FAQs

Faith Formation

Q Our congregation has many young families, and we baptize one or two newborns a month. This is a huge blessing, but I've noticed that some members find all the baptisms irritating. Any ideas?

A It's easy for a baptism to become a family event with spectators like a hockey game: family members are the players on the ice and the church members are the fans in the stands. Some denominations treat infant baptisms like weddings: an event for family and friends that occurs outside of Sunday worship.

But in the Reformed tradition we consider baptism a congregational event, and it's helpful to cultivate practices that highlight this more clearly. Recently a couple in our church asked if they could each give a testimony in response to the questions parents are asked in baptism. Reading a letter to his infant son, the father promised, "We will listen for God's voice together. We will learn together, pray together, make mistakes together. And your mother and I will be here for you every step of the way." The mother, who had herself been baptized in our congregation as an infant, read a letter to all of us. She thanked us for fulfilling the congregational vow we had made with her baptism, and concluded, "Thank you for being our family, for loving us, and for raising our son up in your prayers even before he was born."

Irritating? Absolutely not. Deeply affirming, celebrative, and formative for the entire body—this is congregational worship at its best.

—Syd Hielema is a professor of religion and theology at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, and a member of the CRC's Synodical Faith Formation Study Committee.

What better way to honor the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism!

Outreach

Q Our church says it wants to shine the light of the gospel in our neighborhood. Yet we never seem to venture out into it. Instead we sit around in committees debating whether the Belhar Confession is Reformed enough or whether the vacation Bible school curriculum is too evangelical, or asking if the pastor quoted the catechism enough in his sermon. I understand caring about theological concerns, but what about actually doing something?

A Theological concerns certainly have their place. After all, they help us frame what we should be doing and why. So we definitely should not leave those concerns behind. However, you're right to question the balance of energy spent on debating orthodoxy at the expense of actually bearing witness to what one believes!

A friend noted anecdotally that there seems to be a divide between sound theology and being relevant to the world. Her experience is that a church that pays little attention to maintaining strict orthodoxy does much in the way of city involvement and bringing shalom to brokenness, while some of the churches that spend more time maintaining their theological borders seem to ignore the real concerns around them.

It doesn't have to be either/or. The important thing is seeking honestly to be disciples of Jesus. Try this: pass your personal and church activities through a lens asking, "Is this what Jesus would have us spending time on?" I find clarity for my own life and ministry when I allow this filter to shed light on what I'm doing. I trust it may do the same for you.

—Bryan Berghoef is a church planter starting a new faith community in Washington, D.C., and is the author of *Pub Theology: Beer, Conversation, and God*.

Justice

Q What comes first: security or justice?

A We live in a culture of fear. That leads to an obsession with security of all kinds—physical, economic, and social. Fear starts with a real problem, but it easily can take over and be manipulated by fearmongers who benefit from a fearful society. Too much fear harms people, erodes community, and wastes money on more weaponry that does not bring peace.

Fear is a reflex emotion. Justice and compassion require more thought. While fear alerts us to danger, our response needs to be guided by justice and compassion. That's what the Bible says. And it holds out a promise for our culture of fear: do justice and things will go well in the land.

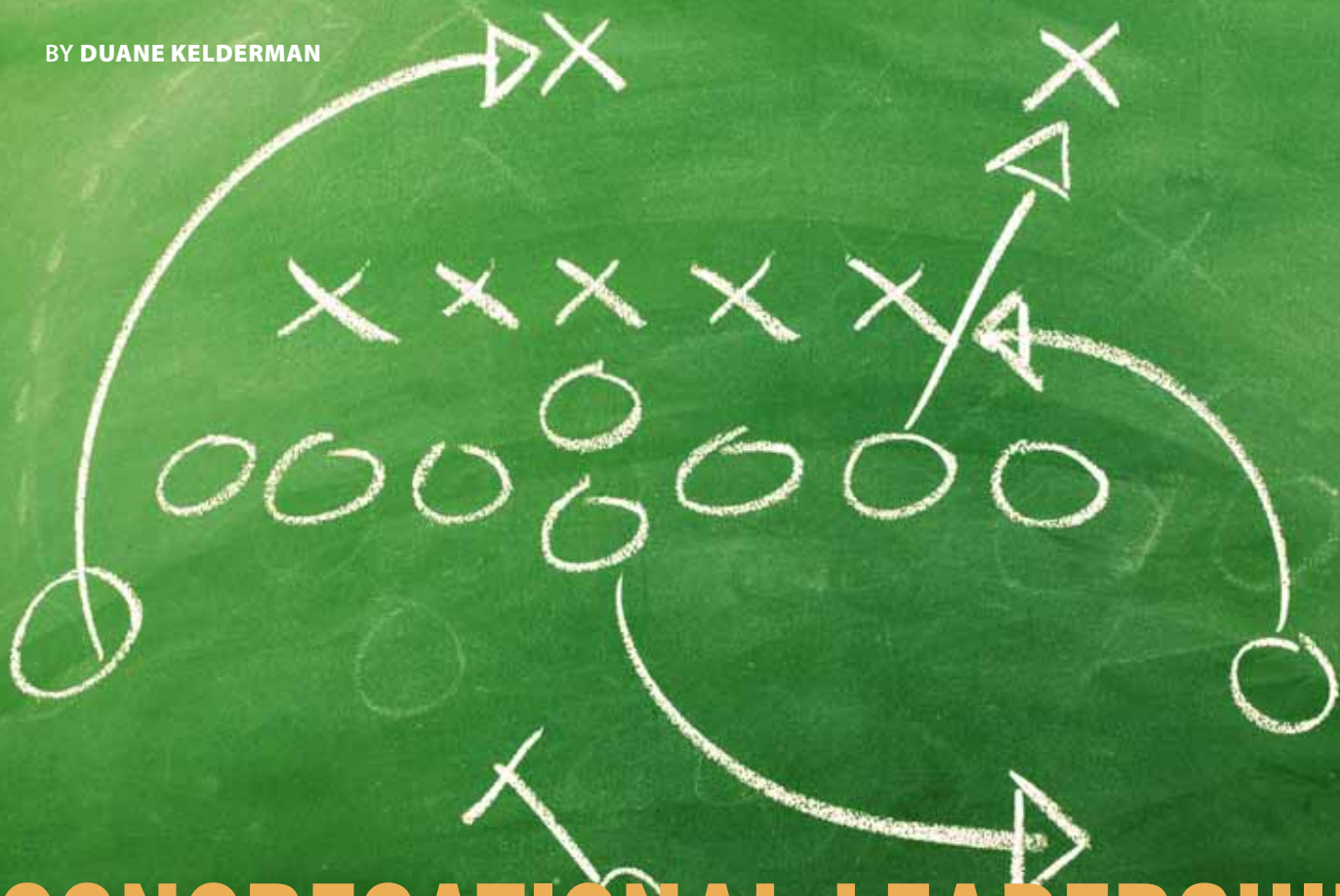
One good gift churches can give to current debates about guns and the war on terrorism is to depose the culture of fear and reframe public discussion to focus on justice and care for others. What better way to honor the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism! It says our security is in Christ, not in weapons or bank accounts. Christ knew fear, but he spoke and acted in love.

A first step reasserts core principles, starting with respect for the dignity and worth of every person as created and loved by God. Then we can't demonize others. Second is cultivating the ability to see the world through the eyes of others. That opens the door to solutions other than revenge and violence.

If we keep fear in its place as a warning, but act on justice and compassion, greater security will be the result. The Bible tells me so.

—Kathy Vandergrift teaches public ethics to university students and advocates for the rights of children. ■

BY DUANE KELDERMAN



CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP: WHOSE JOB IS IT?

WHOSE JOB IT IS to give congregational leadership? That's a question many pastors and congregations are struggling with these days. The struggles vary depending upon the congregation and pastor, but in many cases, each thinks that the other is ultimately responsible for congregational leadership. Congregations expect their pastor to take the lead, and pastors expect the congregation to do so.

In situations like this, pastors usually argue that the council or elders must take responsibility for the congregation's vision and direction. For many pastors, it's a matter of theological conviction about the nature of pastoral ministry and Reformed polity. Pastors, they say, must perform pastoral functions—preach God's Word, shepherd God's people, conduct weddings and funerals, evangelize, teach, and model Christian living. They firmly believe that setting the congregation's vision and implementing congregational goals that come out of that vision are the responsibility of the council, elders, or other designated leaders—not the pastor.

Congregations, on the other hand, are crying out for help. They know they need a deeply shared congregational vision and direction, and they want more help from the pastor than they're getting. Many are in a period of malaise—they're losing members and finding themselves avoiding the difficult conversations around sensitive issues that are necessary to move forward.

Reciprocal Leadership

At one level, this dilemma is not as difficult as it may seem. If we were to rephrase the question as "Who will help our congregation be what God calls it to be?" (a fairly simple and biblical way to define leadership) most pastors and congregations would agree that both have crucial roles. Pastors hope that everything they do helps their congregation to be what God calls it to be. And congregations understand that they can't shove off on the pastor the responsibility for the church being the church. It's really not that complicated. In the congregational context, both the pastor and the congregation share responsibility for helping the church to be what God calls it to be. Together they should be able to say, "This is *our* project."

WHEN IT COMES TO LEADERSHIP STYLE AND GIFTS, PASTORS ARE WIRED DIFFERENTLY.

The New Testament and Reformed church polity are pretty clear about the mutual, reciprocal nature of ministry and leadership. The New Testament image of the church as a body with many parts (1 Corinthians 12) and the teaching that God has given gifts to all the members so that the body of Christ may be built up (see especially Ephesians 4) argue strongly for a “both/and” answer to the question of who leads. Christ is the head of the body—not the pastor and not the congregation. All members of the body are organically united with Christ and have responsibility to serve, lead, and follow Christ.

In this reciprocal understanding of leadership, pastors, council, and elders all have particular and strategic leadership roles to play in helping a congregation to be everything God intends it to be. The Christian Reformed Church Order fleshes out some of those roles. When understood not simply as a book of rules, but as a book of wisdom, the Church Order actually offers a pretty brilliant blueprint for reciprocal leadership.

Unfortunately, both pastors and congregations can agree on all of this and still hold firm in their opinion that the other is not doing the job. Here are some suggestions for each.

A Word to Pastors

Three things can help pastors as they try to figure out their leadership responsibility in a congregation.

First, get rid of the distinction between “congregational leadership” and “pastoral functions.” The fact is that pastors lead their congregations in everything they do. Leadership is not some optional organizational function tacked onto the pastor’s otherwise spiritual job. If congregational leadership means helping the church be the church, then every minute of the pastor’s work is congregational leadership. In his book *360-Degree Leadership: Preaching to Transform Congregations*, Michael Quicke argues eloquently that preaching is where the pastor most centrally exercises leadership responsibility. In the same way, pastors give critical congregational leadership in their worship leadership, pastoral care, discipling, and evangelizing.

Second, don’t confuse being a leader with being an organization builder. Don Cousins argues that every pastor is a leader, but not every pastor is an organization builder. In his book *Experiencing LeaderShift: Letting Go of Leadership Heresies*, Cousins writes that only 8 percent of pastors have the spiritual gift of leadership referred to in Romans 12:8. Cousins calls people with this gift “organization builders” and defines the gift as “the divine enablement to cast vision, motivate, and direct people to harmoniously accomplish the purposes of God.” Organization builders have the special abilities to present a big picture that has organizational traction, motivate others, and align an organization’s vision, values, and ministries.

It’s possible to quibble over Cousins’ percentages and even over his exegesis of Romans 12:8, but his overall point seems fairly obvious: when it comes to leadership style and gifts, pastors are wired differently and are not helped by trying to be something they are not. If every pastor tries to be an organization builder, Cousins maintains, the vast majority will be frustrated because that’s not who they are. Their congregations will also be frustrated because the pastor isn’t effective, and the people within those congregations who actually do have the spiritual gift of leadership will be displaced or under-utilized. Most pastors who resist the idea of being a leader are really resisting the expectation that they be an organization builder. So pastors need to discern their own spiritual gifts and lead from those gifts.

Third, accept the fact that you are a leader. To put it another way, you have responsibility for helping the congregation you serve to find its way. You may not be an organization builder, but your calling as pastor still entails helping the congregation you serve to be the church God calls it to be. The New Testament doesn’t separate pastoral functions from the tasks of leading and equipping the body of Christ. Indeed, everything pastors (and all the members) do is “so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:12-13).

This is difficult because pastors are trained mostly to perform particular pastoral functions. They’re trained to think about what they do in terms of the sermons they write, the people they visit, the neighbors they reach out to, and the meetings they run. Even the form for ordination used in the Christian Reformed Church is task-oriented. As a result, many pastors are uncertain about what congregational leadership from the pastor actually entails.

Add to that uncertainty the fact that many congregations are highly resistant even to effective leadership, and it’s understandable that pastors want to stay out of the crossfire and just fulfill certain clearly defined pastoral functions. But leadership simply is not optional for pastors. In reality, central to the pastor’s calling is helping a particular congregation to flourish.

A Word to Congregations

Three things can help congregations as they try to work creatively with their pastor in being the church:

First, don’t expect the pastor to be an organization builder if she is not one. A leader? Yes. But not every pastor has the more specialized gift of building organizations. If the congregation tries to make the pastor into a Bill Hybels, everyone loses.

Instead, believe that within the congregation as a whole are the gifts needed to be a healthy body. How often have congregations over-relied on pastors only to be frustrated by their pastor’s »

poor performance—a pastor, by the way, who was probably trying to serve outside of his or her area of giftedness—and in the process underused the gifts of others in the congregation?

The greatest shift in the North American church over the last 50 years has been moving from what Jackson Carroll has called a *clerical* orientation to an *ecclesial* orientation. A congregation used to describe its ministry primarily in terms of what the pastor did. Today, the focus is not on clerical functions—worship, sacraments, weddings, funerals, catechesis—but on the gifts and ministries of the body as a whole. Flourishing congregations are embracing this shift. Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12 require it. Your pastor needs to be a leader for this shift to take place, but you can't assume that your pastor is an organization builder.

Second, realize the important role of the congregation in healthy leadership. Sometimes pastors are not resisting their leadership responsibility but are simply holding a congregation accountable for *its* leadership responsibility and for addressing the dysfunctions that may exist in the congregation. Dysfunctional congregational culture is extremely difficult to change. Congregations have a way of refusing to confront dysfunctional behaviors in powerful members or deal with long-standing personnel problems or make crucial decisions. Congregations often blame the pastor for not giving strong-enough leadership when the issue isn't primarily pastoral leadership at all. The congregation simply refuses to take responsibility for its own life and to make some hard decisions. Staying in old dysfunctional ruts is easier.

Third, don't quickly link your congregation's health or lack of health to your pastor. Blessed is the congregation that can talk a long time about its strengths and weaknesses without referring to its pastor. Mature congregations realize that, of course, their pastor has strengths and weaknesses, but those are distinct from the strengths and weaknesses of the congregation. Mature congregations focus more on things the congregation must work on than on things the pastor has to work on.

We're in This Together

This article addresses one particular leadership challenge—the challenge of pastors and congregations who think that the other has ultimate leadership responsibility for the congregation. The opposite challenge is pastors and congregations who think they themselves—not the other—have ultimate leadership responsibility. But the answer to both of these situations is the same: We're in this together!

Congregations and other organizations that are effective and healthy have usually succeeded, to some degree, in helping people discover and work from their areas of strength and giftedness—and that applies to church members, leaders, and pastors. It's hard to capture this truth more eloquently than Paul does in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. The good news is that this is exactly what God wants for churches and pastors, so efforts in this direction are likely to succeed as the Holy Spirit leads the church. ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE

Digging Deeper

Don Cousins, *Experiencing LeaderShift: Letting Go of Leadership Heresies*, David C. Cook, 2008.

This book exposes the "heresy" that all pastors are equally gifted in leadership; it proposes biblical approaches to spiritual gifts and shared congregational leadership that guide and encourage pastors and congregations.

Bill Hybels, *Axiom: Powerful Leadership Proverbs*, Zondervan, 2008.

Hybels distills into 67 axioms the wisdom he has gained through 30 years of leadership at Willow Creek Church. Each axiom is both practical and deep. Hybels is honest and vulnerable in sharing his own leadership failures. Together the axioms communicate a biblical understanding of the essential nature of the church and of shared leadership.

Tod E. Bolsinger, *It Takes a Church to Raise a Christian: How the Community of God Transforms Lives*, Brazos Press, 2004.

Questions about leadership always engage Christians in the deeper question "What is the church?" Bolsinger offers a deep but accessible vision of the church, an ecclesiology rooted in the triune God that is biblical, beautiful, and compelling as Christians seek to embody the life of the triune God in their local church.

Effective Leadership in the Church, Sustaining Pastoral Excellence in the Christian Reformed Church of North America, 2005.

This booklet, created by collaboration among CRC leaders nearly 10 years ago, addresses the difficult questions of who leads the church and articulates a reciprocal, adaptive understanding of leadership and change. This booklet is an excellent resource and study guide for congregational leaders seeking to learn together about their roles.

Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *Leadership from Inside Out: Spirituality and Organizational Change*, Crossroad, 2004.

This former leader of the Reformed Church of America offers a vision of leadership interwoven with Christian spirituality and argues that significant leadership reflection invariably drives us to deep questions about God, personal identity, values, and the larger purposes our leadership serves.

Leadership Journal: Real Ministry in a Complex World, christianitytoday.com/le

This online journal produced by *Christianity Today* offers a mix of practical and theological articles on leadership. Divided into three major categories—Soul, Skills, and Culture—the journal includes resources for pastors and laypersons who seek to build biblically grounded and healthy congregations.



Duane Kelderman is one of the interim ministers of preaching at LaGrave Avenue CRC and an adjunct faculty member at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Night Shift

I DON'T LIVE A NORMAL LIFE.

I work as a paramedic on weekend nights and see a part of society that few know of except for the horror stories they hear. Lights and sirens are my anthem as I'm rushing to the person who dialed 911: the rich executive with abdominal pain; the alcoholic drinking mouthwash; the victims of car accidents, stabbings, overdoses, and heart attacks.

For many years I lived this life as a struggling member of secular society, trying to be part of the "in" crowd. Having grown up in the Roman Catholic Church, I'd had many lessons about Christ through my schooling but didn't take them to heart. I left the church because I didn't agree with the dogma.

Then my daughter was born, and that's when I heard God's voice again. I was picking up on whispers before then, when she would kick in my wife's womb, but it wasn't until I actually saw her that God's voice was audible. At first I didn't listen. But while voting in the 2008 election at Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, the voting place for my district, I found God. I'd been there a few times before, but that day the place seemed different—perhaps because my daughter was crawling on the floor, pulling books off a shelf. I began inquiring and quickly realized that God had been calling me to this church.

The hardest part of my life is wanting to be more involved in the church, but always finding conflicts: Bible study is on Wednesday nights, and I'm at work. The fellowship time after church is right when our daughter is ready for her nap—and a nap for me wouldn't hurt either. I want to stop being on the bench as a "fan" of Christ and start being a "follower." It just seems as if my life isn't playing along.

But sometimes I get these moments at work when no one is calling and I can

I want to stop being on the bench as a "fan" of Christ and start being a "follower."



sit back and try to sift my way through the Bible. Then I find out my own brokenness and unworthiness before God; sometimes I cry at how shallow and undeserving I am of God's love.

The night shift is rough. Sundays are the hardest, when I try to reset to the day schedule. Often I just want to call in sick and try to get more than three or four hours of sleep instead of going to church. But every week I find the strength to get up and hear God's Word. And every week I feel my relationship with God growing.

Family and friends, coworkers and strangers ridiculed me for becoming a Christian again. They didn't understand why I had gone back to church and mocked me for believing in God.

Then my pastor preached on Luke 12:51-53. Jesus said he was here not to bring peace, but division. He told us how we as Christians are set apart from society by our belief in Christ, and how we need to be prepared for ridicule and being

shunned. To know that I will never again set foot in the society to which I tried for so long to belong was both comforting and scary.

This is what I learned: that our home in Christ is a haven, one that few understand but all seek. I now know that I will be apart from society. And I'm happy with that, for Christ has already shown me his love and his power to provide. I thank God daily for bringing me back to him and pray that I continue to try to follow his commands. I thank God for forgiving me when I fail him. Mostly I thank God for loving us so much that he saved us through Christ, our Lord and Savior. ■



Dennis Royman is a paramedic with Sandoval Regional Medical Center and a member of Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, Albuquerque, N.M.

Nigeria: A New Era in Missions

by Sarah Lin



Pilot Ray Browneye helped transport critically ill patients to CRWM's hospitals.

Garba Umar, 49, had planned to be a lawyer.

But shortly after finishing his legal training, he realized that the nudging on his heart to become a pastor was growing. So in 1997, at the urging of then-Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) missionaries Bob and Ineke Lodewyk, Umar became a church planter in Nigeria.

Today Umar is an evangelist with the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria

(CRCN). He is also the coordinator of the CRCN's evangelism program in Abuja, Nigeria. For 15 years, he and his wife, Helen, have shared the gospel with people in the Abuja suburb of Kabusa.

As the Kabusa church expanded, the Umars began building up local believers for evangelism and discipleship. In the spring of 2012, the Umars moved to Kuje, another suburb of Abuja, to begin building a church all over again.

Abuja and its suburbs are home to more than 3 million people. As Abuja

grows, so does the CRCN's vision for reaching people with the gospel.

In the fall, Umar led a three-day evangelism training event in Kabusa for about 70 people. He offered strategies, tips, and tools for effectively reaching out to people and then sent the participants out to apply what they had learned.

They fanned out through five neighboring villages, starting conversations with people on the streets and making records for follow-up with the people they met.

You add.
God multiplies.

“God had worked through their witness that day to bring 45 people to himself.”

Some, including Umar, went to a village known for its drugs, alcohol, and wild parties. They held an outdoor service in the middle of the village’s open-air bars, telling people how Jesus had brought them hope and forgiveness. Nine villagers committed their lives to Christ.

Later the participants gathered to share their experiences. God had worked through their witness that day to bring 45 people to himself.

“People realized [that God used] ‘ordinary’ members for extraordinary work,” said Umar. “People understood evangelism is a way of life.” The events of the day led seven people to commit themselves fully to being evangelists.

The CRCN’s ministry through Umar and other evangelists marks a new era for Christian Reformed World Missions’ work in Nigeria.

When CRWM adopted Nigeria as a mission field over 70 years ago, the missionaries largely focused on sharing the gospel.

Many people in central Nigeria in the 1940s were following Islam or African traditional religions. Missionaries settled

in Jos, Mkar, Takum, and other villages and began building relationships in the communities. They opened schools and medical clinics, taught in Bible colleges and seminaries, planted churches, and joined Nigerian evangelists in telling people about Jesus.

Thousands of Nigerians put their trust in Jesus. By the 1970s, three Nigerian Reformed denominations, including the CRCN, had formed as a result of the work of CRWM and its partners.

Today, CRWM missionaries work in partnership with these denominations. Missionaries are still involved in ministry to Muslims, teaching, and other evangelistic roles, but the focus has shifted to strengthening the Nigerian church for ministry in Nigeria and beyond.

“Increasingly CRWM works as a partner in ministries that are owned, governed, and sustained by Nigerian counterparts,” said CRWM missionary Albert Strydhorst. CRWM missionaries mentor and train Nigerian leaders, support outreach efforts, and encourage Nigerian churches and believers to apply their faith to every societal sphere.



Evangelist Garba Umar with his wife, Helen, and their children, Miracle and Victor.

Since 2010, CRWM and the CRCN have also worked together to do ministry in Sierra Leone.

The years when Nigeria was simply a missionary-receiving nation have passed. Now, Nigerian Christians are sharing the gospel they once received with those who have yet to hear it. ■



Sarah Lin is a staff writer with Christian Reformed World Missions.



CRWM alumnus Dave Dykgraaf explains a point to Bible school students.

CRWM at 125

Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) is celebrating 125 years of helping Christian Reformed churches to fulfill the Great Commission.

What began as a mission to share the gospel with Native Americans has expanded to ministry in more than 50 countries. During these years, many people and churches have faithfully partnered with CRWM to extend Jesus’ message of hope worldwide.

Please join us as we celebrate God’s work through our partnership together. Visit crrwm.org/125 to learn about anniversary events being held near you.

Nicaragua: The Church Transformed

In the 1970s, political instability forced Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) to stop planting churches in Nicaragua.

When CRWM returned in 1996, it realized that Nicaragua's Protestant evangelical churches had the real potential to transform the nation. One thing, however, was holding them back.

"Their impact on society and culture was limited by a dualistic worldview," said CRWM missionary Joel Huyser.

Evangelical Christians separated their faith from the rest of their life. Churches shared the gospel but did little else in



Nicaraguan Christians pray together.

their communities. What happened in church largely stayed in church.

So CRWM and local and international organizations began challenging Nicaraguan Christians to embrace a more fully biblical worldview. They formed the Nehemiah Center and began training people to integrate faith into life.

One of the center's offerings is the Healthy Church Initiative, which trains church leaders in healthy relationships, word-and-deed outreach, accountability, God-centered worship, gifts-based ministry, expository preaching, servant leadership, and strategic planning.

Denis Cienfuegos, a pastor in Leon, Nicaragua, is part of the Healthy Church Initiative. He's been involved in several Nehemiah Center training events over the years. Each one gives him more tools for helping his church worship and follow God. Since participating in the Healthy Church Initiative, he's made some significant changes.

Cienfuegos now writes Scripture-based sermons and trains others to do the same.

He also has helped his church form gifts-based teams for worship and administration. People no longer are doing something simply because it's their turn, but because they're skilled in it. The church's music ministry has improved, and administrative tasks are completed accurately and on time.

The church also has started reaching out to the community. Some members offer counseling services to church and community members. Others minister to inmates, showing them Jesus'

love through their care. Youth have started inviting non-Christian friends to study the Bible with them.

The church's outreach has drawn many newcomers. Around 20 people have either returned to church, committed themselves to Christ, or are close to putting their trust in Jesus.

Cienfuegos has shared the training with other churches in his denomination too. While some people are unhappy with the changes, most are eager to see how God might work through them.

"In the past [churches] maybe knew of a need or problem, in or out of the church, but they didn't know how to respond," said Henry Cruz Sandoval, facilitator of the Healthy Church Initiative. "Now they have the tools to respond."

With thankfulness to God for his work, CRWM missionaries continue encouraging believers to live out their faith, dreaming of how God may use the believers to expand his kingdom in Nicaragua. ■

—Sarah Lin

Church @ Prayer

- Pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide CRWM about when, where, and how to engage in ministry.
- Pray for missionaries to encourage and walk alongside their ministry partners wisely and humbly.
- Pray that God will work through local evangelists to bring people to himself.
- Pray for the gospel to make inroads in Japan.
- Thank God for the hundreds of former and current CRWM missionaries and volunteers.
- Thank God for Christian Reformed churches, donors, and prayer warriors who have been partners in missions with CRWM.

Sign up for CRWM's ePray at cwm.org/membership to receive a weekly email of prayer requests.

Misato RCJ church in the early years.



Japan: Small Church, Big Vision

Twenty-five years ago, Misato Reformed Church in Japan was a small church plant in the middle of rice fields outside of Tokyo. Today it is a light for Christ in an ever-growing city.

Rev. Hiortsugu Mochida, a pastor with the Reformed Church in Japan (RCJ), started Misato RCJ with two Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) missionary couples, Mike and Trudy DeBerdt and Richard and Sandy Sytsma.

Initially the church had nine people, five of whom were children. Missionaries preached, taught, and did some evangelism. Mochida led the church's evangelism activities and handled culturally sensitive tasks. Over time, Misato became an organized church of over 40 people.

Sharing the gospel in Japan has never been easy. Even after hundreds of years of missions, fewer than 1 percent of Japan's people believe in Christ. Yet Japanese Christians and missionaries refuse to be discouraged. Instead they continually search for new outreach opportunities.

CRWM missionary Ken Lee has been working with Misato RCJ for three years. Along with mentoring young adults, he offers the church ideas and encouragement on reaching out. His work reflects CRWM's shift from planting churches in Japan to strengthening existing churches for outreach.

"Many missionaries planted and watered Misato RCJ diligently," said Lee. "Now I see the fruits of their labor. Misato RCJ wants to reach out, even if it means going out of its way to do it."

Misato RCJ draws people in by offering concerts, cooking classes, Korean lessons, social events, and other activities. It has also offered Bible studies and courses like Alpha. While none of their recent visitors has embraced the gospel yet, the church is becoming known as a welcoming place.

Church members are also trying to start more intentional conversations. About a year ago, many of them participated in a CRWM-led "Friendship Evangelism" workshop. People shared questions, fears, and uncertainties about reaching out. Then they did some role-playing to practice moving conversations beyond surface dialogue. The experience gave people new courage for sharing the gospel.

"Manpower is a big hindrance to evangelism in Japan," noted Lee. "Japanese churches are small, and many of their members are elderly." Despite these challenges, the people of Misato RCJ are committed to telling others about Jesus.

Some of the church's young adults are helping to lead the way. A young married couple moved farther into Tokyo to have a shorter work commute. Since then they have been inviting young adults in the

area to monthly gatherings and Bible studies. They hope the gatherings will encourage believers and attract others to the gospel message.

"Rev. Mochida and his congregation are on fire, evangelizing to their neighbors and beyond," said Lee. "My wife, Jeannie, and I came to Japan to expand God's kingdom. Misato Church's enthusiasm



Ken and Jeannie Lee help Misato RCJ reach out to its community with food.

for his kingdom expansion encourages and motivates us to take part in it more diligently."

The rice fields around Misato RCJ have been replaced by tall buildings. But the church's passion for reaching the community has not disappeared—it's only grown stronger. ■

—Sarah Lin

He Is Counting on Us

first read this story long ago. It was first told still longer ago. It is fiction, and yet it is true:

When Jesus ascended into heaven, one of the angels said to him, “You must have suffered terribly down there.”

“I did,” Jesus replied.

“Do they all know what you did for them?” the angel asked.

“No,” Jesus answered. “Not yet. Only a few know so far.”

“Then what have you done so that all can know?” asked the angel.

“I asked Peter and James and John and a few others to make it their business to tell others, and the others still others, until all the world should know,” Jesus responded.

“Yes,” said the angel dubiously, “but what if Peter and James and John and the others forget or fail? What if they tire of telling? What if, way ahead in the 21st century, people fail to tell the story of your love?”

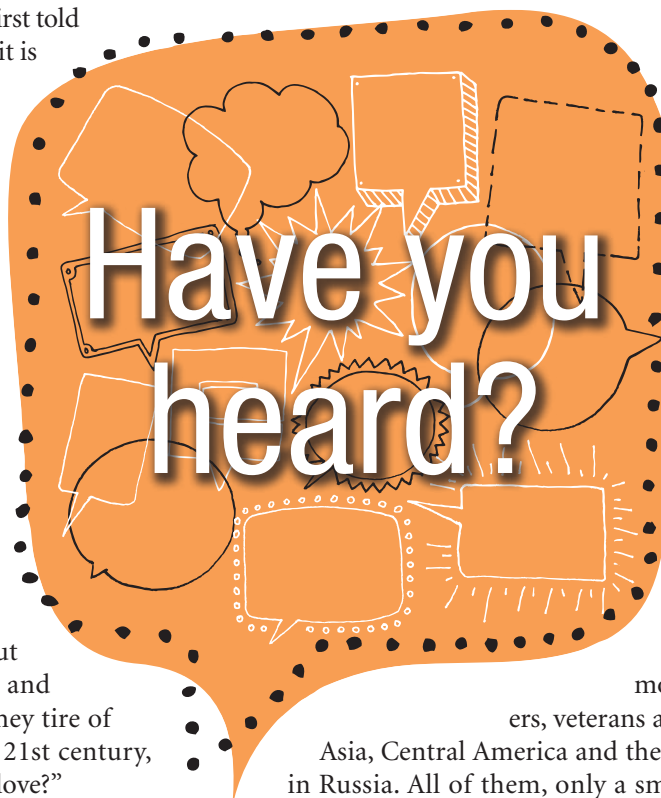
Back came Jesus’ answer: “*I’m counting on them.*”

Jesus is not dependent on us, but he is counting on us. Us! Think of it. Jesus is counting on us to get the Word out.

Take a look at Romans 16 sometime soon. The first 16 verses refer to more than two dozen saints in Rome who were involved in getting the Word out, people on whom Jesus was counting—men and women serving as teachers and hosts, messengers and mentors, ministers and martyrs, servants and dignitaries, witnesses and workers.

Because of folks like these, the Christian church, begun just a few decades earlier with a few dozen people, grew to tens of thousands and spread from a locked room in Jerusalem to much of the known world.

We do not know their stories. We can guess at some, but most remain a mystery. What is evident is that God used them and the likes of Peter, James, and John—flaws, failures, and all—to communicate the Word throughout the world.



Very near the end of this amazing letter to Rome, Paul expresses the purpose of God’s mission to the world and to the frail, often less-than-dependable likes of us: “so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith” (v. 26).

On pages 710-715 in the 2012 *CRC Yearbook* are recorded even more names than the ones Paul knew—hundreds of names of men and women who serve as missionaries and mobilizers, staff and teach-

ers, veterans and novices in Africa and

Asia, Central America and the Caribbean, Europe, and in Russia. All of them, only a small portion of the army currently covering the globe, are living and working and testifying and teaching “so that all nations might believe and obey him.”

You and I are part of that group, supporting and praying for their work because Jesus is also counting on us. This is a mission that will never end as long as there is time. This is a cause that can never be oversubscribed as long as people are willing to be sent. This is a prayer that will never be finished until the Amen returns to take us home.

William Tyndale concludes his prologue to the Epistle to the Romans with these words: “Now go to, reader, according to the order of Paul’s writing, even so do thou.”

Now go to, reader. Jesus is counting on the likes of us. He always has, always will. And by his grace and with his blessing, the nations will believe and obey him.

Now “to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen” (Rom. 16:27). ■

Jesus is counting on the likes of us. He always has, always will.



Rev. Joel Boot is executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

You add.
God multiplies.

OUT AND ABOUT

CTS Students Take Time for Retreat

In February first-year students at Calvin Theological Seminary headed to Camp Geneva on the icy shores of Lake Michigan to spend 24 hours in retreat discerning their calls to ministry.

They spent time in small group conversations about personal stories of calls, gifts for ministry, and deeper motivations for ministry practice.

Students said that the small group conversations were rich and engaging as they wondered about how God might use them in ministry.

Sometimes at these retreats students do in fact discern that they are not called to pastoral ministry, and in that learning they are blessed as well.

Students also worshiped as a community among the sand dunes of Lake Michigan.

Rev. Ron Nydam, professor of pastoral care, facilitated the 2013 Pastoral Identity



Calvin Theological Seminary students and facilitators at the 2013 Pastoral Identity Retreat.

Retreat as part of the core curriculum of the course “Foundations for Pastoral Care.”

“Each year I look forward to our retreat because, as we gather in community off-campus and engage each other

in a more relaxed setting, I always sense the movement of God’s spirit in the lives of our students,” said Nydam. “I love it.”

—Calvin Theological Seminary

Tribal Languages Reach More People with the Gospel

Supri was excited to hear Back to God Ministries International’s (BTGMI) radio programs *Rencana Ogung* (Majestic Plan) and *Kutak Andau* (Today’s Word) in his tribal language.

Like many people in Indonesia, he is much more comfortable using his tribal dialect—in this case, Dayaknese—instead of the national language.

“I’ve never before heard Christian teachings in Dayaknese,” said Supri, who lives in Central Borneo. “When I hear these programs, I feel that the Christian faith is close to me, not just a strange Western religion.”



A family in the Dyak village.

Rev. Untung Ongkowidjaya, ministry leader for BTGMI’s outreach in Indonesia, said that the ministry has expanded its broadcasts to include 10 programs in seven tribal languages in addition to six programs in the national language.

Part of the challenge of sharing the gospel in Indonesia is the number of tribal languages spoken across its 6,000 inhabited islands.

Also, nearly 90 percent of the population is Muslim, and many also practice tribal ancestral religions.

Although the BTGMI Indonesian ministry team focuses on the major tribal languages, Rev. Untung says they “have a dream to produce tribal radio programs in the common languages that are used by Muslim people.”

Since beginning a partnership in 2011 with Words of Hope, the media ministry associated with the Reformed Church in America, BTGMI’s Indonesian ministry has expanded its programming to more efficiently reach its audience. ■

—Brian Clark, *Back to God Ministries International*

TOGETHER DOING MORE

Hedge Fund Manager Turns from the Money

“Justin,” a hedge fund manager weary of the financial treadmill, is about to jump into the unknown and into God’s hands.

He is part of City Grace Church in New York City. “Our mission is sharing the ‘life’ that is truly life,” says Pastor Ben Spalink. “New Yorkers find their sense of value in making lots of money.”

Begun five years ago to reach the East Village’s educated professionals, City Grace, a Home Missions-supported partner, has 90 congregants who meet in a movie theater on Sunday mornings.

“There were lots of churches around here, but not gospel-believing ones,” says Spalink.

Six small community groups span at least three boroughs during the week. City Grace is young—the median age is



Ben and Christy Spalink are building City Life church in New York City.

25—and its population ranges from students to upwardly mobile lawyers and white-collar professionals in the financial world such as Justin.

“We have recent converts, those who became Christians through campus ministries, and those who grew up nominal or unchurched,” Spalink says.

Several people have come to saving faith in Jesus Christ through City Grace; Justin is one of them.

After coming to church for a while, he realized that money was an empty god to follow.

“He realized he was being led to take a big risk, to quit his job, and to see what God has in store,” says Spalink. “The gospel gave him the courage to walk away.” ■

—Lorilee Craker,
Christian Reformed Home Missions

Pair of Student Athletes Share Rare Honor

Calvin College seniors Carissa Verkaik and Lizzie Kamp have taken the school’s athletic program to new heights during the 2012-2013 academic year.



Lizzie Kamp

The College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) named Verkaik and Kamp the Capital One Academic All-American of the Year in their respective sports.

“This is a phenomenal occurrence,” said Nancy Meyer, director of women’s athletics. “It’s a huge honor for us to have two student athletes of that caliber competing for Calvin for four years.”

Both have won other honors as well.

An accounting major with a 3.69 GPA, Kamp followed in her older sister Rebecca’s footsteps, being named the 2012 Division III National Player of the Year by the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA).

During her senior season, Kamp led Calvin’s volleyball team to a 33-3 record and a runner-up finish in the NCAA Division III tournament. She was a part of Calvin’s national championship team in 2010.

An elementary education major with a 3.76 GPA, Verkaik was named the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Association’s (MIAA) MVP in basketball for four straight years.

She completed her career as Calvin’s all-time leader in points, rebounds, and blocked



Carissa Verkaik has won top awards for her basketball skills at Calvin College.

shots, and she ranks third all-time in Division III for blocked shots. She helped Calvin reach the NCAA III Tournament for four straight years. ■

—Matt Kucinski,
Calvin College

You add.

Land Rights Improve Lives in Tanzania

In the District of Sengerema on the southwest coast of Lake Victoria, farmers can't use their land as collateral or benefit from the work they do to improve it.

As in many other districts in Tanzania, the land is owned by the government, and the local farmers lack titles to it.

They are also at risk of being evicted from the land without compensation if the government, an agribusiness, or other farmers wish to use the land.

In 2010, World Renew began to work with its local Christian partner, the Sengerema Informal Sector Association (SISA), to address this issue.

While Tanzanian citizens have been allowed to apply for land rights since 1999, an estimated 98 percent of farmers in Sengerema continue to lack legal title to their land, primarily because they don't understand the process.

SISA worked with the local government to educate farmers about land rights and the application process.

Women do most of the agricultural work in the country, but men control land ownership.

With this in mind, World Renew and SISA paid special attention to widows, families headed by women, those caring for AIDS orphans, and families caring for people who live with HIV.

"God has called us to speak out on behalf of the poor and pursue justice. This program has enabled us to do just that," said Chris Enns, World Renew Tanzania staff member.

As farmers in surrounding communities became aware of the project, the demand increased, expanding to 10 new communities.

In September 2012, the Prime Minister of Tanzania visited Sengerema and praised the project.

Joseph Shigulu, the program coordinator, says he has been getting email from



all over the world about the land rights program and the improved agriculture practices being taught.

To assist these external organizations and spread the word to all communities in the area, SISA has begun working with its partners to create two manuals.

The greatest impact, however, is felt by the farmers and landowners themselves.

Through the project, Angelina Hobbas has gone from being a peasant farmer who could not afford to eat three meals a day to owning a five-acre farm and

A farmer in Sengerema, Tanzania, demonstrates the difference that applying homemade bio-fertilizer made to his maize.

becoming a prominent food producer and processor in the district.

"With World Renew and SISA," she said, "you will never be disappointed." ■

—Kristen deRoo Vanderberg,
World Renew

Birds of a Feather

Birds are everywhere in the Bible! According to Genesis 1, God created birds even before other animals and people. Later, Noah sent out a raven and a dove to see if the floodwaters were going down. After the Israelites left Egypt, God sent them quail in the desert to keep them from starving. When the prophet Elijah was

scared and hungry, God told some ravens to bring him food. And the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove. Don't you wonder why God chose a dove and not another animal or bird?

Birds live in every country on earth—even in Antarctica. Read on to find out more about our fine feathered friends!



Eat Like a Bird?

When people say “You eat like a bird,” they usually mean that you don’t eat much. But if you *really* ate like a bird, you’d have to eat hundreds and hundreds of times a day. The amount of food some birds eat in a day is equal to their own weight!

Weigh yourself and imagine eating that much food every single day. You’d have to spend almost all your time eating, as birds do.

Just like you, birds have their favorite foods. Yellow warblers like caterpillars. American goldfinches love thistle seed. And if you’ve ever watched robins after a rain, you know they go nuts for worms.

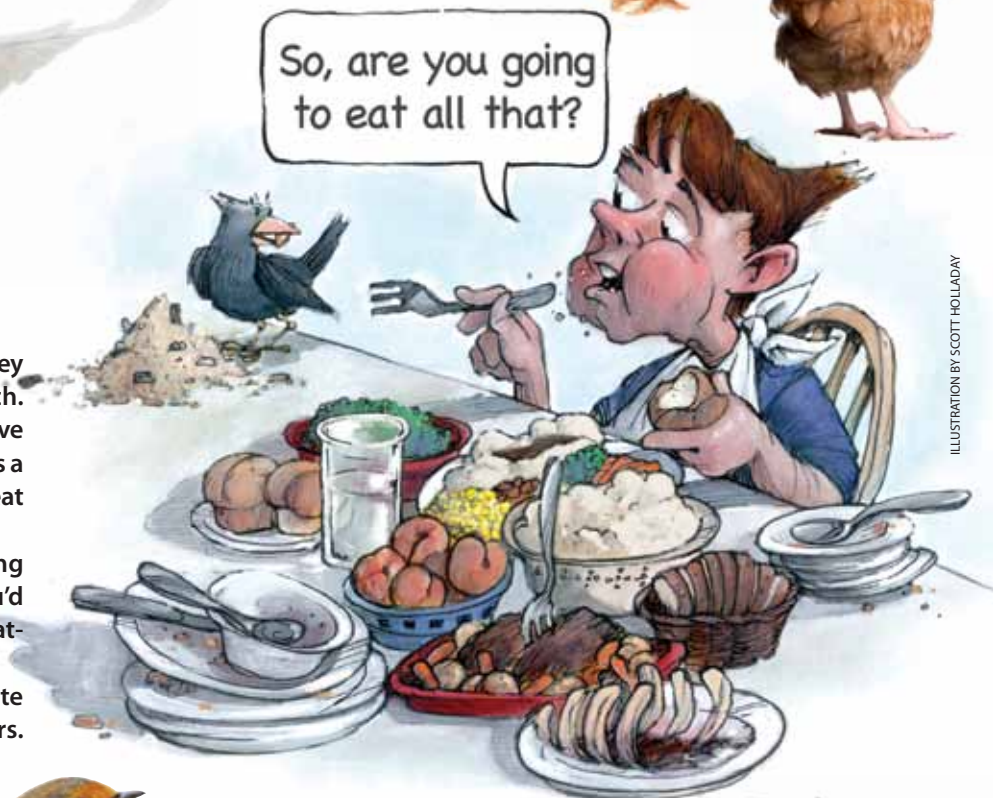


ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY

Watch a Chick Hatch

At the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago you can watch chicks breaking out of their shells at the Baby Chick Hatchery. Or you can watch a video from the museum at tinyurl.com/museumchicks. Chicks start to hatch about three weeks after the hen lays the egg. It can take hours—sometimes even a whole day—for a chick to peck its way out of the shell. It’s hard work!



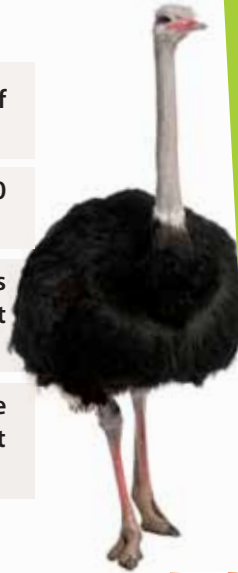
FuN Facts

There are about **10,000** different species of birds in the world.

Most **songbirds** have between 1,500 and 3,000 feathers.

Male ostriches can weigh up to 287 pounds (130 kilograms). One ostrich egg weighs about as much as two dozen chicken eggs!

According to **Guinness World Records**, the world's oldest known chicken lived to be 16. Most chickens live only between five and 10 years.



Eggpops

Try this fun and easy egg recipe.

First, have an adult show you how to hard-boil some eggs. Let them cool completely and then peel them. Next use a sharp knife to cut a small "X" in the bottom of each peeled egg. Carefully push a pretzel rod through the "X" about half-way up into the egg.

Dip each egg into ranch dressing and then dip it into your favorite toppings like bacon bits or finely chopped carrots, celery, or tomato. Enjoy!

—Original recipe from incredibleegg.org



Why You Can't Fly

People have always wanted to soar through the air like birds. The great Leonardo da Vinci even tried to make mechanical wings for people to wear. But people just aren't designed to fly. Here are some reasons why.

1. Birds have feathers to catch the air and push it down when they flap their wings. Humans just have a little bit of hair on their arms.
2. Birds have small, light bodies. Gravity doesn't pull them down as much as it does humans.
3. Birds have hollow bones. Human bones are much heavier.
4. Birds have special air sacs in their bodies that put more oxygen into the bird's body. That allows birds to fly without getting as tired as humans would.

To see a short but amazing slow-motion video of birds taking off and landing, visit tinyurl.com/Bannerbirds.



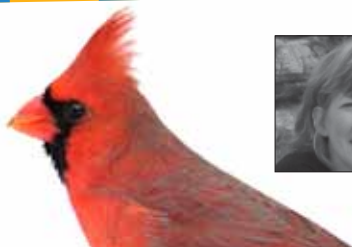
Scrambled Birds

Unscramble these bird names. If you're stuck, check the answer key at the bottom of the page.



- WOL
- WRROAPS
- RBONI
- EBUL YJA
- OTSIRHC
- HRDIBUMMGNI
- ROWC
- LEAGE
- ALDINARC
- DEEHICACK

Answers to "Scrambled Birds": eagle, cardinal, chickadee, ostrich, hummingbird, crow, owl, sparrow, robin, blue jay.



Sandy Swartzentruber is a freelance writer and editor. She attends Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich. Her favorite bird is the chickadee.



BY JULIUS MEDENBLIK



The **Power** of Pentecost

A **SMALL BAND** of believers huddles in an upper room. They're waiting. Their numbers are small but the challenge they face is great. They are to be Jesus' witnesses—not just in Jerusalem but in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

But how could they be witnesses in this world without Jesus? Jesus has been taken up into heaven, leaving the disciples a puzzling message: they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them. What's that supposed to mean?

What's more, these disciples can still hear the echoes of Jesus praying not for

their escape from the world but for their protection in it (John 17:15). Concluding his prayer, Jesus prayed not only for this band of believers but for us—"those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you" (John 17:20-21).

2013 is a time of turmoil. Issues like same-sex marriage, abortion, capital punishment, gun control, and government health care show the fracture lines of division in our society.

Likewise, there's division within families and within the church. Worship styles sometimes divide generations. And I once officiated at a funeral during which one side of the family changed the locks

on the family home while they were all at the service.

Disunity rather than unity marks our lives and mars our witness in the world. If we can't get along with each other, why would the world want to hear the gospel?

To understand the task of unity, we need to understand the gift that Jesus promises to send—the gift of the Holy Spirit. "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7). Do we really believe the promise of how the Holy Spirit will shape our lives and our churches to make us one?

Jesus identifies the exchange that will follow—his leaving and the Holy Spirit

coming—as a source of comfort. We live in a world of grief. This week, I predict that each and every one of us will experience some level of loss, sorrow, and brokenness. In that moment, where do we turn? To whom do we turn?

As a pastor, I have seen Satan use grief and sorrow to isolate believers from the community of faith and even from God. I have seen parents drift apart from each other after the death of their child. I have seen men and women who lost their jobs in the “Great Recession” drift away from church because the offering time is a painful reminder of their empty wallets. I have seen those who struggle with addiction drift away from the body of Christ, believing that no one understands them. In their isolation there is loneliness, not “oneness.”

During our times of sorrow, we need to be reminded—another work of the Holy Spirit—that we are not alone. The Holy Spirit testifies that God is still Immanuel—God with us and for us.

The Holy Spirit Convicts Our Heart of Sin

Jesus testifies that he is the way and the truth and the life (John 14:6). One of the key barriers to unity is that we hold onto our own perspective as the whole truth or the truth for all persons. Sinners who acknowledge the deceptiveness of their heart are sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit. They are less judgmental, more humble. When the Spirit is at work, people have tears in their eyes and listening ears. If we are going to see barriers be overcome and love increase, we need to be willing to understand the gift that comes when the Spirit convicts us of sin or prompts our own guilty conscience.

The Holy Spirit Points Us to True Righteousness

In John 16:8, Jesus speaks of the Counselor convicting the world of guilt in regard to sin *and righteousness*. There is a righteousness that comes from God and there is also a righteousness that we like to generate.

“Self-righteousness” is our preferred antidote to our sense of our own brokenness. We compare ourselves to others and

secretly comfort ourselves by saying, “At least we are not like them”—in that moment dividing the world between “us” and “them.” The Christian story is centered on the righteousness that comes not from ourselves but from the pierced hands of Jesus Christ.

Righteousness is opening ourselves up to the gift of grace—not climbing a ladder of good works or “success” to get closer to God. Grace is seeing that God came closer to be “one” with us as prompted by his love, not our efforts.

The Holy Spirit Guides Us in Truth

The heart transformation that takes place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is constant. We will have good days; we will have bad days. But every day can be one where we submit ourselves to the triune God. Our submission and our obedience weave together to give us assurance of

When the Spirit is at work, people have tears in their eyes and listening ears.

our salvation but also frame our continued sanctification as individuals within a community of faith.

I saw this process unfold, when, for example, a new believer told me that she’d never realized the coarseness of the language she’d used or the television she’d watched until now. That’s because the Holy Spirit had been changing her day by day, sensitizing her to it.

The Holy Spirit Builds the Body of Christ

We should never forget that the Holy Spirit came upon a band of believers—not random individuals—at Pentecost. The apostle Paul reminds us that the gifts of the Spirit are best dedicated to being part of a body—the body of Christ.

Our unity as believers is easily bruised. That bruising can come in a whisper of

gossip. It can come in a fight over the color of carpet in a church remodeling project. It can come in a congregational meeting where people argue about freezing the pastor’s salary as a response to tight economic times.

Being the body of Christ does not just happen. It takes work, and we must exercise constant vigilance. At the same time, the coming of the Holy Spirit reminds us that the foundation of the church is the ongoing work of our triune God. When we are emptied of pride, self-righteousness, and envy, we may be filled by the Spirit.

David Kinnaman’s book *You Lost Me: Why Christians Are Leaving the Church . . . and Rethinking Faith* identifies various reasons for disillusionment. As we listen to these voices, we should know that divisions and arguments between Christians are key factors of this decline in involvement in the church. The witness

of Christians to the next generation, both inside and outside the church, is muted by disunity.

Are we bruised? Yes. And yet we are still the body of Christ. Jesus did not pray in vain. In the words of the contemporary testimony *Our World Belongs to God*, “Jesus stays with us in the Spirit, who renews our hearts, moves us to faith, leads us in the truth, stands by us in our need, and makes our obedience fresh and vibrant” (st. 31).

May we live in that hope together! ■



Julius Medenblik is president of Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich., and professor of church planting and leadership.

Worship Planning 2.0



ONLINE WORSHIP PLANNING resources are a technological gift for worship planners, preachers, and musicians alike. Some sites allow access by subscription only, but many others are available for free. Here are just three online resources I find invaluable for planning worship.

Textweek.com is “a virtual study desk for students, teachers, and preachers.” I add “and for bulletin editors, artists, creators of children’s bulletins, and deliverers of children’s messages.” Organized by Bible text, the site provides links for preachers (journal articles, scholarly research, and even a movie concordance!) and musicians (hymn and anthem suggestions) as well as those planning bulletins (public domain images), children’s messages, and children’s bulletins. Most of these inspirational suggestions come from the Catholic and Lutheran traditions.

For Reformed resources, surf the website of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (*worship.calvin.edu*). The site offers helpful worship planning resources, including model liturgies used by the

Institute. A valuable partner to this site is Calvin Theological Seminary’s Center for Excellence in Preaching (*cep.calvin-seminary.edu*), offering resources for preachers from the Bible or our confessions.

While these websites frame the larger theme and components of worship, for specific song choices go to *hymnary.org*. This database catalogs thousands of songs searchable by title, composer, theme, meter, keyword, or Bible text. Once a song is selected, the site displays musical arrangements for piano, instruments, handbells, organ, or choir. With some songs it is even possible to modulate the music and print it in a new key. This is extremely helpful, for example, if a B-flat clarinet would like to play with the opening hymn.

Of course this list of worship and music planning websites is not exhaustive. As you become aware of the talents and preferences of your particular worshipping community, you’ll discover other sites that are more useful to you. That’s the work of the Spirit: taking all things—our planning, our thoughts, and our resources—and pointing them to Christ. ■

Online worship-planning resources are a technological gift.



Randall Engle is the pastor of North Hills Christian Reformed Church in Troy, Mich.



Come and See

by **Dean R. Heetderks**
reviewed by **Kristy Quist**

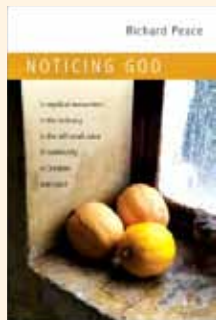
Is your church blessed with artistic people? Most churches are! Yet sometimes congregations have a difficult time knowing how to incorporate the creative impulses of their members. *Come and See* offers 24 beautiful and practical ideas for forming visuals for worship, including projects with fabric, paper, painting, drawing, and projection. These projects could serve as inspiration for worship committees, youth group leaders, Sunday school teachers, and many others. The text offers sage advice for those planning visuals; the accompanying CD includes patterns, symbols, and other resources. (Faith Alive)



Noticing God

by Richard Peace

reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

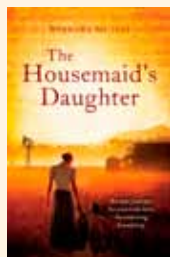


Christians know that God's presence permeates the world, yet so often we are unaware of him because of our spiritual blindness. Richard Peace urges readers to actively pursue the "spiritual discipline of noticing God." He spells out ways in which that happens—in mystical encounters, in ordinary events, in community, in creation, in culture, and in the church. The final chapter deals with discernment: "How do we know it is God?" The book concludes with a guide for personal reflection and group discussion. (InterVarsity Press)

The Housemaid's Daughter

by Barbara Mutch

reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema



In 1930, Ada is born to the housemaid of South African Cathleen Harrington. When Cathleen, a capable pianist, realizes Ada's musical abilities, she tutors her, opening up worlds of music as well as future avenues for employment and recognition. This epic novel, with subtle commentary about the Dutch Reformed Church's support of apartheid, spans Ada's lifetime, exploring the spiritual struggles and victories of a skilled black pianist as well as the pains of a nation laboring toward a hopeful future. (Headline Review Books)

Hands Around the Library: Protecting Egypt's Treasured Books

by Susan L. Roth and Karen Leggett Abouraya

reviewed by Jenny deGroot



Hands Around the Library tells the story of how Egypt's political unrest and violent protests in January 2011 placed the present-day Bibliotheca Alexandrina in danger of being damaged and possibly destroyed. Through collage illustrations, this book shows and tells how children, young people, and adults circled the library and lined the streets as a physical symbol of their desire to protect the library. It's a great way to introduce children to the history of one of the oldest libraries in the world: the great Library of Alexandria. Ages 3 and up. (Dial)

Need You Now

by Plumb

reviewed by Paul Delger



Tiffany Arbuckle Lee, better known as the artist Plumb, does not promote "pie-in-the-sky Christianity." Her sixth studio album, *Need You Now*, is another bold, honest work. The music features the singer's distinctive voice with an edgy pop rock sound and lyrics that cry out to God in desperation and hope. Based on Lee's high school struggles with anxiety, the title cut "Need You Now (How Many Times)" is a repeated plea for God's intervention. (Curb Records)

Hellbound?

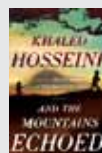
reviewed by Jenny deGroot

Is hell a metaphor or an actual place? Canadian director and filmmaker Kevin Miller boldly takes on the views of Christians in regard to hell. Miller carries us from footage and interviews with placard-carrying, hell-promising Christians taken at the 9/11 memorial to the more generous theologies that open the door for second chances and all-embracing salvation. Wherever you might find yourself theologically on this subject, this film encourages thoughtful reading of Scripture, consideration of how we land on our interpretations, and engagement of the generosity of God's grace and salvation. On DVD at the end of the month. (Kevin Miller XI Productions)

THE LOWDOWN



She's Back. Amy Grant returns with a new studio album after more than 10 years. *How Mercy Looks from Here* releases this month. (Sparrow)



And So Is He. Khaled Hosseini, author of *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, introduces his latest title, *And the Mountains Echoed*. (Riverhead)



Odd Couple? Steve Martin (yes, that one) and Edie Brickell (the former

New Bohemian) have combined their talents for an album called *Love Has Come for You*; other performers include siblings Sean and Sara Watkins, formerly of Nickel Creek. (Rounder)

High Hopes.

Some big movies are coming out this month. Can they live up

New Releases

to the hype? *The Great Gatsby* (Warner Bros.), *Star Trek Into Darkness* (Paramount), and *Iron Man 3* (Disney) will appear at a theater near you.

MORE REVIEWS ONLINE

A Confession to Celebrate

EXACTLY 450 YEARS AGO, IN 1563, the Heidelberg Catechism was first published in a small section of the Holy Roman Empire as a way of instructing ordinary Christians in the basic truths of Scripture. Today we join millions of Reformed Christians around the world in celebrating this anniversary of a much-loved confession.

There's no question that the catechism has been a gracious gift of God to the church. No other confession spells out foundational biblical teachings—what we need to know about our guilt, God's grace, and our gratitude—with such clarity, order, and warmth as the Heidelberg. It has provided solid instruction in the Reformed faith for generations, guiding young and old through the Apostles' Creed, the sacraments, the commandments, and the Lord's Prayer in 129 carefully crafted questions and answers. The Heidelberg is arguably still the best teacher of what it means to be a Reformed Christian in today's world.

The catechism that began so humbly now binds together some 20 million Reformed and Presbyterian Christians around the world in close to 40 different language groups. It unites contemporary believers to all those, present and past, who have confessed that we are not our own, but belong to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. "We recite the creeds and confessions as a way of proclaiming that we are part of a great faith that has formed our lives," says Craig Barnes in his new book *Body and Soul: Reclaiming the Heidelberg Catechism*.

What distinguishes the Heidelberg from most of the other catechisms born of the Reformation is that it so compellingly touches our hearts as well as engages our minds. It is a warm, living, personal confession of faith that provides a practical guide to day-to-day Christian living. "Much of the catechism seems to have been written from bended knees," wrote Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. Perhaps we don't often think of the catechism as devotional, but it is exactly that.

Whether the catechism is an old friend, a nodding acquaintance, or a total stranger, consider honoring its 450th birthday with a thoughtful and prayerful *devotional* reading. Take it slow and read a Lord's Day at a time, or get the big picture in a single reading. If you want to go deeper, Andrew Kuyvenhoven's *Comfort and Joy: A Study of the Heidelberg Catechism* is a classic question-by-question guide. For a fresh look at the catechism

This comfort . . . is a golden thread woven through the catechism from beginning to end.

for our changing world, try Barnes's *Body and Soul*, a six-chapter overview of the catechism in its latest ecumenical format.

A Devotional Reading

The authors of the catechism let you know immediately that it's addressed to *you*, personally and pastorally: "What is your only comfort in life and in death? That I am not my own but belong . . . to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ," Q&A 1 famously says. Zacharias Ursinus, one of the authors of the catechism, once said that "he would not take a thousand worlds for the blessed assurance of being owned by Jesus Christ."

This comfort, this strength, this security in belonging to Christ, is a golden thread woven through the catechism from beginning to end. Again and again the catechism assures us that we are in good hands, that God is actually interested in comforting us (Q&As 1, 2, 52, 57, 58), and that every action of our loving Father is for our benefit (Q&As 36, 45, 49, 51). "If this comfort," says Andrew Kuyvenhoven in *Comfort and Joy*, "this knowledge of belonging to Christ, has fully entered our consciousness, we can endure all pain, fight every battle, and be confident of the outcome."

Who's Asking?

We probably don't think much about who is asking the 129 questions of the catechism. But suppose, as Craig Barnes suggests in *Body and Soul*, that none other than God is asking us these questions: "What if the only one who can provide

true comfort has just grabbed you by the shoulders and asked, ‘How are you?’ No one can offer a glib ‘Fine’ and keep moving. Suddenly all of our hustling about to make life right is stopped dead in its tracks. We’re forced to tell God the truth. *This is the real function of . . . catechisms. . . . They begin an intimate, holy dialogue between us and our Comforter, between us and our God.*”

As you read through the catechism, begin that holy conversation with God. Picture God, if you will, asking you what your faith means to you (Q&A 21). Or imagine God, perhaps at a moment of crisis in your life, asking you how much you trust him and what he is both able and willing to do for you (Q&A 26). Or see yourself talking with Jesus about why you call him your Lord (Q&A 34) or why you claim the name “Christian” (Q&A 32). When you’ve stumbled into a familiar sin and suffer the pain of guilt, listen to God asking you to recall what you believe about the forgiveness of sins, and be reminded that none of your sins, because of Christ’s atonement, will ever be held against you (Q&A 56).

Living Our Gratitude

Good devotional literature not only instructs and inspires, it also affects how we live from day to day. Having shown us the way out of our misery through the saving work of Jesus Christ, the catechism offers us two ways to show our gratitude: through observing God’s law as expressed in the Ten Commandments and through prayer.

God’s law, as explained by the catechism, isn’t just a legalistic series of “Don’t do this!” and “By all means, don’t do that!” Instead, the catechism presents the law as a spiritual guide to joyful Christian living, giving the commandments broad and positive applications. So, for example, the sixth commandment not only warns us against murder and the roots of murder but also commands us to “protect [our neighbors] from harm as much as we can.” The eighth commandment not only prohibits theft of all kinds but also urges us to “do whatever [we] can for our neighbor’s good.” Moreover, we do these things not because we *have* to but because we “delight to do every kind of good as God wants us to do” (Q&A 90).

The catechism ends with a moving devotional treatment of the Lord’s Prayer. Rather than merely explaining each petition, the authors of the catechism stunningly turn their explanations into powerful prayers that beg to be said on bended knee: “*Hallowed be your name* means, Help us to really know you, to bless, worship, and praise you for all your works and for all that shines forth from them” (Q&A 122). Savor these prayerful answers, pray them aloud, and find new meaning and depth in the prayer you’ve said since you were a child.

By God’s grace, the Heidelberg Catechism has survived for 450 years. Put it on your reading list and let this comforting confession of the church speak to your heart and mind—and your everyday life. ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE

All-Church Celebration

Join with your congregation in celebrating the 450th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism. All the resources needed for an all-church six-week event are available from Faith Alive (faithaliveresources.org). They include outlines of worship services, the book and DVD *Body and Soul* by Craig Barnes, and small group discussion materials.



Bob Rozema, a retired Faith Alive editor, is a member of Ferrysburg (Mich.) Community Church, a Christian Reformed congregation.

The Millennial Challenge

In your 20s or 30s? We want to hear what's on your mind as it relates to living out your faith in today's world. Please send manuscripts (600 words) to editorial@thebanner.org. (And, no, you don't have to be ordained!)

MILLENNIALS. Everyone's talking about them. Churches want to reach them; marketers want to understand them; Facebook wants to subsume their existence. They're leaving church and not coming back. They're leaving college with massive debt, unable to find jobs. They want the church to be known more for what it's for instead of what it's against.

The problem is, understanding who "they" are is a lot harder than one might think.

Some of us are married; others are single. Some of us have kids; others want never to have children. Some of us went to grad school as the next logical step in a career path; others took a year off. Despite what some may think, Millennials don't think as one monolithic bloc.

Recently I have noticed two distinct streams of thought regarding Millennials.

First there's the "delayed adulthood" idea. A post on the denominational Young Adult Leadership Taskforce Facebook page linked to an article in *USA Today* about the lengths to which some parents go in order to help their college grad children get jobs. It quoted one sentence from the article: "Our children CAN find jobs, they just don't LIKE them," and then noted "Millennials and that pesky call of adulthood." Underlying this statement is the idea that adulthood is defined by such things as getting a job, marrying, and buying a house.

On the other side is emerging sociological research arguing that people's 20s and maybe even their 30s are a new developmental category often referred to as "emerging adulthood." Such research suggests that frequent job changes and delayed marriage are defining characteristics of these young adults. The task after college graduation is not to *become* an adult by getting a job, it is to *be* an emerging adult. Millennials today, says Todd Cioffi, professor of congregational

studies at Calvin College, are doing exactly what they have been taught to do.

So what does the church do with this dichotomy?

First, we need to examine our own expectations about adulthood. When you look at college students, single graduates, or DINKs (double income, no kids), what assumptions do you bring? Do you try to set up the single accountant with that nice boy who lives across the street? Do you ask the young couple when they plan to have kids? Do you encourage students who continue their studies after college even if it means a couple more years without a job? The most well-meaning comments can be incredibly hurtful if they imply that this person is not really an adult.

This extends to church programming as well. Is there a distinction between "adult small groups" and "singles group"? Are Wednesday evening activities oriented to nuclear families or to the church family? Far too many churches attempt to stem the mass exodus of young adults with programming aimed toward them, not realizing that this has a tendency to exacerbate the problem. What if adults of all stages (as well as teens and children) were fully participating members of your congregation's life?

Second, we need to give voice to the concerns of Millennials. Do 20-somethings have the sense that they are part of the life of your congregation? Are they serving in meaningful positions? Is anyone under the age of 30 on your church council or on the search committee for the next pastor? Are small groups led by single and married people? These things signal how important emerging adults are to the life of a congregation in a much more profound manner than starting a new round of programming for college grads.

Many of today's young adults have a strong desire to understand and to learn more in respectful, healthy dialogue. When we welcome emerging adults into meaningful roles in our churches, we have the tremendous opportunity to be blessed by their rich diversity. ■

Kory Plockmeyer is the pastor of Campus Edge Fellowship at Michigan State University.

NEXT



Do you try to set up the single accountant with that nice boy who lives across the street?

ADS

Deadlines: June issue is 5/6/13; July issue is 6/3/13. Details online.

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

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

Denominational and Classical

Calls Accepted

FAITH COMMUNITY CRC (Wyckoff, NJ) rejoices in the acceptance of their call to Rev. KC Vande Streek of Jenison, MI to serve as their next pastor.

Available for Call

THE COUNCIL OF ALL NATIONS CRC of Halifax, NS, declares Rev. Brad Close available for call to the churches.

Meetings of Classis

CALL TO SYNOD 2013 The council of Roosevelt Park CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan, calls all delegates to Synod 2013, elected by their respective classes, to meet in the Covenant Fine Arts Center auditorium of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Friday, June 7, at 8:30 a.m. All area CRC members are invited to join the delegates in worship at the synodical Service of Prayer and Praise on Sunday morning, June 9, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. at Roosevelt Park CRC, 811 Chicago Drive SW, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Rev. Reginald Smith will deliver the message. All CRC churches across the continent are requested to remember the deliberations of synod in their intercessory prayers on Sunday, June 2, and on Sunday, June 9.

Council of Roosevelt Park CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Retirement

PASTOR GERALD ERFMEYER of Orland Park CRC will be retiring this summer. To celebrate his 47 years in ministry, everyone is invited to a celebration at Di Nolfo's Banquets in Mokena on Thursday evening, June 27. (Tickets will be available for \$15.00.) Everyone is welcome Sunday, June 30, between the services at 9:30 a.m., for a coffee and cake celebration. Contact Orland Park CRC for more details.

Congregational

Church's 100th Anniversary

OCHEYEDAN, IA CRC invites all former pastors, members and friends to join us as we celebrate 100 years of God's blessings on June 23, 2013. Details can be found on our website www.ochedanccrc.org

Church's 75th Anniversary

RAYMOND CRC in Raymond, MN will celebrate 75 years on June 22 and 23. We invite all previous pastors, members and friends to join us for a Saturday evening program and worship service and pot luck dinner on Sunday. For details contact the church at 320-967-4721 or rcrc@frontiernet.net or the web site at www.raymondccrc.org

DORR CRC in Dorr, MI is celebrating their 75th Anniversary on May 3. A dinner will be held at Camp Beechpoint in Allegan, MI. Special music will include the Post family and Steve Jansen. All former members, pastors and friends are invited. Please RSVP by April 25 by contacting the church office (616-681-2104 or dorrcrc@sbcglobal.net).

Church's 50th Anniversary

ZION CRC in Oshawa, Ontario will celebrate its 50th Anniversary on June 22 and 23, 2013. We invite all friends and former members to celebrate and worship with us. Thanks be to God. Info. at 905-436-3255 or www.zionccrc.ca.

Birthdays

100th Birthday

INEZ POSTMA of Lakewood, OH, celebrated her 100th birthday on March 27, 2013. We thank God for the love and the help she has given to so many generations of children, the members of her West Park CRC, her family, and the Lakewood community.

95th Birthday

MARGUERITE (DEHAAN) MULDER 2121 Raybrook St. SE #340, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 will be celebrating her 95th birthday on June 8. Children: Jim (Ruth) Mulder, Ray (Linda) Mulder, Don Mulder and Bob (Sheryl) Mulder, 9 grand-children and 10 great-grand children. We thank God for her love, faith and encouragement.

90th Birthday



ANN (GORTSEMA) BOS of Grangeville, Idaho will celebrate her 90th birthday on May 14. Her family honors her for her life of continued service to God and others.

REV. WILLIS DE BOER 2111 Raybrook St. #3000 Grand Rapids, MI 49546 will celebrate his 90th birthday on April 18. His wife, Gertrude, 5 children and spouses, 5 grand children and spouses and 6 great grandchildren thank him for his love and care for us all these years. Thanks be to God for our many blessings.

NELLY DYKHOUSE P. O. Box 347, 4416 St. Clair Parkway, Port Lambton, On., N0P 2B0 will celebrate her 90th birthday on May 6, 2013. Her children Mike (and Carol), Gerrit (and Cori), Henk (and Pam), Clarence (and Tina), Willemiena (and Courtney), 15 grand children, and 13 great grand children praise God for her full and loving life and the blessing she is to them. An Open House will be held in Nelly's honor

Write for *The Banner*!

The Banner is seeking news writers for the Rocky Mountain/Yellowstone region, California, and lower Michigan. If you like to write and have a passion for telling stories of how God is at work in the Christian Reformed churches in your area, we'd like to hear from you. We'd especially welcome writers from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Email expressions of interest to news editor Gayla Postma at gpostma@crcna.org. Please include resume or letter outlining your newswriting experience and some recent samples of your work.

May 4, 2013 at the Baldoon Golf and Country Club, 7018 Dufferin Ave., Wallaceburg, On. from 2 - 4 p.m.



JOHN TERMAAT 18012 Kansas Court, Orland Park, Ill. 60467 will celebrate his 90th Birthday on July 4th. Our family gives thanks to Dad for his faith, devotion and love that he continues to share with us and all who know him. Please join us and celebrate God's faithfulness in his life!

85th Birthday

AL VANDER LUGT (Mr. Van) of 3045 Maple Villa Dr SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508, will celebrate his 85th birthday on May 26. His wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren thank God for his life of faithfulness, service, and love. Happy birthday! We love you.

Anniversaries

70th Anniversary

DISSSELKOEN Si & Margaret of Zeeland, MI. celebrated 70 years of marriage in April. Their 7 children, grandchildren and great grandchildren thank God for their love and faithfulness throughout their lives.



is seeking applications for the following positions:

- Senior Development Officer
- Director of Information Technology
- Computer Support Technician

For job details, please visit www.redeemer.ca

Applicants are requested to email their application to HR@redeemer.ca and include a statement that articulates their faith perspective and its relation to the mission of Redeemer University College.

Only applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

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65th Anniversary

TIMMER Harold and Rosemary (Buenting) on April 3. We thank God for initiating, nurturing and providing a loving relationship for 65 years. 4 children; Judith Bellot (Jim), David (Mary Beth), Sandra Smith and Susan Cooper; 11 grandchildren; 13+ great-grandchildren. Retired in Bradenton, Florida.

60th Anniversary

DEKKENGA Louie and Freda (Bosma) celebrated their 60th anniversary on April 30, 2013. Their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren wish them God's blessings and congratulations! PO Box 97 Ocheyedand, IA 51354

DE WIT Floyd & Bea (Bosch) 1804 W. San Angelo St. Gilbert, AZ 85233 will celebrate 60 yrs of marriage on May 13, 2013. Their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are thankful for their love and God's faithfulness for all these years

Obituaries

BOER LaVerne (Hollis) age 74, of Temecula, CA, went to her eternal home on March 7, 2013. She will be lovingly remembered by her husband, John of 51 years, children: Janet (Daniel) Johnson, Greg (Pat) Boer, Tracy (Paul) De Witt, Karen (Rick) Vogt, Michael (Jennifer) Boer, Dennis Preston and 12 grandchildren.

BREEMS Lorraine 83, January 31, 2013, preceded to glory by devoted husband Gordon. Cherishing memories of a humble, loving woman are children Brad, Helen, Marlin, Kerry, Lyle, and Sally Breems; grandchildren Christina, Kirk, Nick, Jenni, Kara, Tony, Daniel, Heather, Matthew, Melissa, Joel, Joanna, Luke, Adrian and Graeme; 12 great-grandchildren; brother Vernol (Bonnie) Wieberdink, sisters Beverly (Mel) Ryks and Sandra (Lowell) Slagter; sisters-in-law Dorothy Breems & Helena Swierenga; brothers-in-law Henry (Donna) and Martin Breems; beloved nieces and nephews.

DE JONGE William (Bill) 89, of 834 OakCrest LN. Jenison Mich., Survived by his beloved wife, Betty(Kingma) children: Kathy (Duaine)VanDer-

Bill, Joan (Paul) Galinski, Susan (Mike) Flikkema, Jayne (Jim) Quist; 10 grandchildren, 6 great grandchildren

JEZEQUEL Phyllis (Meines), age 79; died on Feb. 8, 2013. Survived by her husband, Joseph; children - Doreen (Tim) Rinker, George (Jo) Broekema; 7 grandchildren, 7 great grandbabies. She was preceded in death by her beloved son, Gary Broekema.

KLEIN Cornelius (Neil), 86, of Palm Beach Gardens, FL died peacefully on Feb 16, 2013. He will be dearly missed by his loving wife of 63 years, Nell and children: Russ and Carol Baker, Dr. Tom Klein, Marty and Karen Klein, and Ron and Linda Klein; grandchildren: Meredith and Dan Best, Lindsey and Brian Maher, Allison and Walker Winchester; great grandchildren: Collin and Julia Best; sisters: Alice and Rev. Ken Slager, Grace Slager, brother-in-law: Dan Bratt. We thank God for your Christian life dad.

KONING Margaret, aged 89; March 19, 2013; She was preceded in death by her husband Stanley, son Dirk and daughter Joy. Surviving are her sister, Jane Thomassen; sons Gene (Marla), Lee (Bonnie), and Karl (Sue) Koning, and daughter Ann Koning; ten grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

MELLEMA Rena was received into the arms of the Lord, her Shepherd on Mar. 2, 2013 at the age of 97, and has thus also joined her beloved Bert. She lived at Inland Home in Ontario, Ca. She will be remembered with love and appreciation by her children: Wilbur Mellema of Pismo Beach, Ca., Jack & Betty Mellema of Lynden, Wa., Dirk Mellema of Walnut Creek, Ca., and Ruth & Ron Bode of Redding, Ca. She also leaves 10 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren, and 3 great, great grandchildren.

PETERSEN Rev. John A., 93, went to be with his Lord on January 29, 2013, joining his wife Suzanne who passed away Oct.16, 2006. Survived by his 3 children: Karl (Lisa), Phil (Eileen), Margaret (Ted), 6 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild. Pastor John faithfully served 7 churches during his ministry.

Church Position Announcements

PASTOR Willoughby CRC is searching to grow into its calling of greater service to our community of Langley, British Columbia. We are seeking a fulltime pastor with strengths in preaching, leadership and relational gifts to help us in that service. The pastor would work in a team staffing model. For more information contact search@willoughbychurch.com.

LEAD PASTOR Members of Ridgewood CRC in Jenison, MI are seeking a full-time ordained lead pastor who is enthusiastic, has a deep knowledge of the Bible, a passion for preaching God's Word and teaching messages with life applications. We desire a pastor who possesses spiritual discernment for directing and challenging members to cultivate a close relationship with God. This position requires an individual with solid administrative and communication skills yet open to change. If you seek to lead others to be disciples of Jesus Christ, desire to promote bible learning for all ages, and to be an encourager of missions and local outreach, please email Pastor. Search@Ridgewoodcrc.com for additional information about this ministry opportunity.

FULL TIME PASTOR Grace Fellowship CRC of Pella, IA, a non-liturgical congregation with a casual, contemporary style of worship is seeking a highly relational pastor to lead us. Send profiles to pastorsearch@gracepella.org. For more info contact interim Pastor Scherer at 641-628-1885 or pastor@gracepella.org.

PASTOR Saugatuck CRC is committed to "Growing, Caring, and Sharing". We are seeking a pastor with the passion and skills to lead a small congregation as we live out our calling to: Grow in our knowledge of God and in our response of love and service; Care for each other and our neighbors; and effectively Share the Good News to impact our diverse community. Please send inquiries, resume/ministry profile to JoAnn at jtdejonge@gmail.com.

SENIOR PASTOR The congregation of River Park Church (CRC), located in Calgary, Alberta, is seeking to fill the position of Senior Pastor to lead a staff ministry. All candidates should direct any inquires and resumes to Tony Bouma, Calling Committee Chair at 403-281-7292 or atbouma@shaw.ca.

PASTOR: Talbot Street CRC is an energetic, multi-generational congregation located downtown in the heart of London, ON, Canada. As a congregation, we seek to discover Christ and grow in Him through solid Biblical teaching, strong leadership and visioning from our Pastor. We are a diverse faithful congregation with passion for worship, service projects and actively living for Christ. With God leading us forward, we seek a Pastor who is able to challenge us. Those interested with a priority of preaching and teaching, and excelling at leading a multi-staff ministry as well as ministering to our downtown community, should send their inquiry to Harry De Jonge at harryde@

sympatico.ca. For more information on our church and a church profile, please check us out at www.talbotstreetchurch.com. Job description posted on website under About Us - Job Opportunities.

PASTOR Bethel CRC in Listowel, ON is seeking a second full time pastor to serve a vibrant, all-ages congregation of approx. 350 members. For a job description, please email John Greydanus jhgreydaus@gmail.ca

MINISTRY COORD. & YOUTH LEADER Palm Lane CRC Scottsdale AZ is searching for a p/t Ministry Coordinator for our ministry activities and a p/t Youth Leader to disciple our Jr. & Sr. High group. One person for both positions, or two separate people possible. For more info and job descriptions go to www.palmlanecrc.org, or email:oasis@palmlanecrc.org.

PASTOR Peoria CRC near Pella, Iowa, is seeking a full-time pastor to shepherd our congregation as we worship, learn, and serve God together. If you have a strong gift for preaching and can relate to persons of all ages in both an established church setting and in the local community, we would like to hear from you. Contact Ken Fynaardt at kenf@iowatelecom.net.

POSITION OPENING West Leonard CRC seeks Worship Director; 8-10 hrs per week for blended worship services Contact: wleonard-crc@gmail.com or 616-456-1994.

YOUTH PASTOR Crosspoint Community Church in Anchorage, AK, is seeking a full time children and youth pastor. Visit crosspointcommunity.com for job description, or phone (907) 868-5147.

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY An imperfect Christian Reformed Church in Exeter, Ontario, Canada is looking for a director of youth ministries to complement our imperfections. The role of this individual will be coordinating the various youth programs and supporting our volunteers. If you think you may be a perfect fit for this position please contact Gerald Kodde for a complete job description @gs.kodde@quadro.net.

NEERLANDIA CRC is a large, rural congregation located in Northern Alberta. We are a well-established, active church enjoying a blended style of worship. Our Search Committee is looking for a full-time pastor willing to assist us in becoming the church God expects us to be. Interested applicants may contact Erna at famvn@hotmail.com for more detailed information.

PLYMOUTH HEIGHTS CRC in Grand Rapids, MI is looking to fill the following part time positions: Youth Pastor: A 25 hour a week position focused on Middle School and High School students. Children's Pastor: A 15 hour a week position focused on children from Nursery through 5th grade. All interested individuals should request a job description from the church office at office@phcrrc.org



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Get all the 50th details at www.tdchristian.ca



POST Dick, of Lombard, went to be with his LORD, March 3rd, 2013, 15424 Chase Ave, Lombard, IL, 60148. Beloved husband of Jenny Post, nee Leystra; loving father of Teresa (Michael) Hughes, Gert (Allen) Heerema, and Gerald (Regina) Post; devoted grandfather of Traci (Justin) Hoogendoorn, Eric (Kristen) Heerema, Kelly (Matt) Day, Jamie (Mark) Wolgemuth, and Maria (Mark Lecocq) Post; great-grandfather of Taylor, Alexis, Trevor and Austin Hoogendoorn, Jackson, Carter, Kamryn, and Ledger Day, Cole and Miles Heerema, Tucker Wolgemuth, and Rosanna Lecocq; preceded by 3 brothers; uncle of many nieces and nephews. Proud sergeant in the Royal Dutch Army. Memorials to Timothy Christian Schools, 188 W. Butterfield Rd, Elmhurst, IL 60126 or All God's Children, PO Box 5909, Villa Park, IL 60181.

UITVLUGT Nella Marie (Hoogland) Executive Director of Friendship Ministries; March 21, 2013; 1149 Cadillac Dr. S. E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506; She was preceded in death by their infant son Nathan, parents Jacob and Dorothea Hoogland, brother Marvin Hoogland, sister-in-law Alma Hoogland, brother-in-law John Meulink and mother-in-law Donna Uitvlugt. She is survived by her husband Eric Uitvlugt; three children Andrea (Uitvlugt) Lautenbach and husband Michael, Kevin Uitvlugt, and Trevor Uitvlugt and fiancé Abigail Grimm; nine siblings Helen Meulink, Ann Hoogland, John Hoogland, Bernard (Helen) Hoogland, Ruth (Bernard) DeHoog, Esther (James) Rehmus, William (Grace) Hoogland, Dorothy Verkerk, Mary (Edward) DeGroot, sister-in-law Thelma Hoogland and brother-in-law Joost Verkerk.

VISSER Simon, age 95, of Orland Park, IL; 5/12/1917-3/11/2013. Survived by his wife of almost 72 yrs Jennie(DeJong) and children: Charlotte Smits, Mervin, Arlene Evenhouse, Janis Iwema, 21 grandchildren (1 deceased), 33 great grandchildren. Preceded in death by his children: Simon, Alan, Carol Rozema.

WEIDENAAR Grace E, (Van Dyke) 76, Byron Center, Mich, Went to be with her Lord on Jan 31, 2013. She graduated Chicago Christian High School, Class of 54, Surviving are Calvin, her husband of 54 years, two daughters, Valerie Taylor and Vicki (Mark) DeVries, 6 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. Please visit www.stegengafuneralchapel.com

Employment

CAREGIVERS NEEDED Are you interested in working for the best living assistance services company in West Michigan? Visiting Angels is looking for people who can be excellent, not average; make a connection with our clients; be perfectly dependable; practice compassion

and work with integrity. Contact Heather at 616-243-7080 or heather@vangels.com. www.vangels.com

TZ COUNTRY DIRECTOR STEM, a Christian, non-profit organization based in Iowa is looking for a Country Director to oversee its operations in Tanzania. This includes an orphanage, farming, education and service trips. If you feel God leading you in this direction you can find more information at www.stemm.org.

Real Estate: Sales and Rentals

WANT TO RENT: Furnished house or apt in Long Beach CA area for 5 months—Nov 2013-Mar 2014. Contact cwassenaar@aol.com 515-554-2876

RENTAL Recent Hope College graduate needs rental near Tampa/St. Petersburg for 2-years beginning in June. (616) 399-7907, or (616) 550-3791.

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Pastor Lin (fourth from right) stands with members of One Hope Community Church on a vacant lot they reclaimed with five raised flower beds. Families from the church worked on the lot each week during their family activity nights.

Christian Reformed Home Missions is training, equipping, and providing start-up grants to over 100 ministries like One Hope across Canada and the United States. Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support.



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Punch Lines

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

Surgeons who are invited to dinner parties often are asked to carve the meat—or, worse yet, to watch the host carve.

At one party, a surgeon was watching the carving while his host, Harry, kept up a running commentary: "How am I doing, doc? How do you like that technique? I'd make a pretty good surgeon, don't you think?"

When the slices of meat lay neatly on the serving platter, the surgeon spoke up.

"Anyone can take them apart, Harry. Now let's see you put them back together again."

—John Veltkamp

Where did Sir Lancelot and his friends study?

At knight school.

—Tom Posthumus

Running in last place, Joe was being harassed by the person running second to last. "How does it feel to be running in last place?" he yelled at Joe.

"Do you really want to know?" Joe replied.

Then he dropped out of the race.

—Dick Bylsma

One day our son Jacob, 7, came home from school and excitedly told us that he had

dissected worms in class. When I told him that in high school he would get to dissect frogs and pigs, he replied, "I thought I was going to a Christian high school!"

—Mike Branderhorst

While vacationing in Florida, my mother and I were waiting for my father at the ATM. As we waited, my mother explained to me my father's banking strategy: "I'm sure he's taking out the maximum withdrawal today because it costs \$3 per transgression."

—Kim Ellens

My mom loves to talk about her faith. That's fine, but she talks to *everybody*. On a plane trip we took together, I encouraged her not to talk to everyone about it.

"But why?" she said. "I'm proud of my faith." Then she thought for a moment and said, "OK, I won't start a conversation about it, but if someone else brings it up, then I'll put in my two cents' worth."

"Fine," I replied.

The first person to speak to her on the plane inquired about the seat next to her. "Excuse me, ma'am, but is this seat saved?"

"Well," she said, "I don't know about the seat, but let me tell you about me!"

—Kevin and Jacquie Bolen

When our daughters were young, they enjoyed going to the local museum, which had an Egyptian mummy on display. On one occasion, our older daughter asked whether the mummy was a man or a woman. At this the younger daughter

piped up, "Of course it's a lady—if it was a man it would be a 'duddy.'"

—Ernie Voss

When Bill came home from church, his wife asked, "How was church?"

"Good."

"Did the minister have a good sermon?"

"Yes."

"What did he preach on?"

"Sin."

"Well, what did he have to say about it?"

"He was against it."

—Jacob Rook

Do you know how we can tell that Santa Claus is a man and not a woman? Because he wears the same suit as he did the previous year.

—Greta Oord



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