

NEWS

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If your region is not listed here,
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Shore2Shore riders took part in the
Canada Day parade in Chatham, Ontario.



ANITA BRINKMAN

A Small Group with a Powerful Message

A small group of Christian Reformed people with a powerful message traveled around southern Ontario and across Michigan this summer to raise awareness of the effects of pornography on lives and communities and to encourage discussion about it.

The Shore2Shore with a Roar motorcycle tour took riders 2,369 kilometers (1,480 miles), with stops at 14 churches in two weeks, to break the silence about this issue. Brought together by a common desire to bring healing through discussion, bikers came from as far as Prince Edward Island to join the tour.

The core group of seven riders was joined by “day-trippers” riding along for part of the tour in support of the effort. Originally envisioned as a longer tour with a larger group, the ride was shortened when initial response was less than organizers had hoped. “We’re seeing it as more of a pilot or seed project [this year],” said Janette VanderZaag.

Riders shared personal stories of the damage that pornography can bring to marriages and families, discussed the ease with which pornography can be found—even stumbled upon—and urged people to deal with the problem through accountability, computer filters, and knowledge. At each stop, the group gave away copies of *Just One Click: Christians, Porn, and the Lure of Cybersex* (Faith Alive), and a “Shhhh . . .” brochure from the Safe Church Ministry of the CRC.

At one rally, Pastor Chad Vandervalk of Charlottetown (Prince Edward Island) CRC told people, “Don’t give up what you want most for what you want now.”

One rider, Janny, said she was drawn to the tour “first of all [for] bike riding.” She grew more serious as she continued, “Second, my marriage was broken because of this. And third, a lady in my church—her husband has been [using] porn.”

Jake Snieder, who attended the presentation at Grace CRC in Chatham, Ontario, said, “As a man and as a youth pastor, [I realized] this is something we do need to talk about more openly—to take away the power of shame that porn has on people’s lives, just by talking about it. . . . This is a real issue that affects real lives.”

—Anita Brinkman

CRCs Affected by Rock Valley Flooding

Storms and flooding in June affected various Christian Reformed churches and communities along the Rock and Sioux Rivers in northwest Iowa. Heavy rain over several days washed out roadways and caused flooding across a large area.

Matthew Haan is pastor at First CRC in Rock Valley. He said at least 20 families from First were displaced from their homes and at least 20 more had water in their basement. The local Christian school and First Church itself only had "minor backup basement water," Haan said. "We praise God that it was not any worse."

At Calvin CRC, secretary Becky Kooima said one member had to gut the basement and the main floor of his home, as he had water on both floors. The parsonage "was under water and the basement was filled to the top," she added.

Calvin CRC became a meeting place for those who were displaced as well as those who were working during the flood. It was, said Kooima, "a place people could pick up cleaning supplies, rubber gloves, and bottled water, use the restroom, get water for cleanup, and even enjoy air-conditioning and treats brought in by church members."



BRENT KOOPS

An aerial view of the flooding in Rock Valley.

Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, put out the call for alumni and community members to join a clean-up crew. More than 100 volunteers turned out on June 26 to help.

World Renew's Disaster Response Service sent regional

managers to provide early response coordination with local officials and volunteer organizations and determine the need for further work.

—Kyle Hoogendoorn

Study Trip Takes Pastors to Middle East

Pastors from about 17 Christian Reformed congregations in British Columbia were recently absent from their pulpits. Instead they were making bricks out of mud and straw like the ancient Israelites in Egypt, climbing the Mount of Olives in the footsteps of Jesus, and floating on the salty waters of the Dead Sea.

The pastors and many of their spouses spent two weeks on a biblical study trip of Egypt, Israel, and Jordan. The trip was paid for by the DeVries Family Foundation because of the family's desire to bless the pastoral leadership of Christian Reformed churches in the region.

The main purpose of the trip was to equip pastors for ministry in their local churches by learning to read the Bible in its geographical and cultural context and to help forge closer



KEVIN VAN DER LEEK

Pastors' tour group visits the Egyptian pyramids.

relationships among pastors in the province.

That investment appears to be paying off already.

"Theology really is connected to geography," said Wilma van der Leek, a commissioned pastor and facilitator with BC Leadership Development Network. "Walking through the desert landscape of the Middle East, I understood right to my bones

why images of shade and water come up so often in the prayers of Israel."

Participants were asked to prepare for the trip both physically and spiritually; churches were asked to support the trip by providing paid study leave for their pastors. The trip was led by George DeJong of Under the Fig Tree. The group posted a daily travel blog on his website.

"The fellowship with fellow believers was amazing . . . and led to a broad and thorough appreciation of fellow pastors and spouses," said Joel Ringma, pastor of Terrace Christian Reformed Church.

The inclusion of spouses in the invitation was appreciated by Candy Vander Woud, whose husband, Sid, is pastor at Hope Community CRC in Surrey. "It was wonderful to be able to accompany my husband and experience together the land of the Bible," she explained. "Often pastoral spouses take a background role and yet are called upon to be in a leadership role. This experience . . . was an invaluable gift to us as a leadership couple and for our church that we deeply appreciate!"

—Tracey Yan

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Peter Chung Ping Tong

1932 – 2014

Peter Tong's ministry was conducted with vigor, determination, compassion, vision, and understanding. A speaker of four Chinese dialects in addition to Indonesian, he died of a heart attack in Fontana, Calif., at age 81.

Born Tong Chung Ping in Xiamen, China, Tong attended Sunday school with friends and became a believer.

In 1957 he attended Reformed Bible Institute (now Kuyper College) in Grand Rapids, Mich. He subsequently studied at Calvin College and Seminary, graduating in 1964. The California Graduate School of Theology granted him a Ph.D. degree in 1991.

While at Hyde Park CRC in Chicago, Ill., Tong did Chinese language radio and gospel literature translation. He was a church planter in Taiwan and served as president of China Reformed Theological Seminary in Taipei. He retired in 1998.

Tong published 18 books in Chinese that continue to be of help to Chinese pastors and local Christians.

He is survived by his wife, Freda, four children and their spouses, and six grandsons.

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 and on The Banner's website.

Racing Back to the Future

Young adults from several Alberta Christian Reformed churches held an "amazing race" in which they competed to reach places that reflected Reformation history.

The 25 participants from Edmonton, Edson, Lacombe, and Neerlandia, aged 18 to 30, were attending the fifth annual Classis Alberta North Young Adults (CANYA) Retreat held in Canmore.

"Instead of random countries or places being selected as locations of the challenges," explained Ron deVries, Classis Alberta North's youth ministry consultant, "groups were taken to places that reflected part of Reformation history. One example was when groups were directed to a mass of water representing the ocean separating Europe and America."

The young adults biked around the lake, weighed down with



Teams of young adults compete in puzzle-making at Classis Alberta North Young Adults Retreat in Canmore, Alberta.

knapsacks filled with rocks to suggest the weight of the journey. Once there, said deVries, "the challenge was to build communities using Popsicle sticks and glue. It was interesting to witness that the majority of groups established churches first, not houses. We were inspired by this."

Throughout the weekend, participants made connections to the Heidelberg Catechism, Reformation history, and the present church story through puzzles, stories, challenges, and Scripture. Rick VanManen, a CRC campus chaplain at the University of Alberta, offered three worship and teaching sessions based on Q&A 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Participants reflected on the anxieties they experience and where and how they might recognize God's providence in their lives.

Brad VanderWey, 27, was on the planning committee as well as a retreat participant. "I think it is important for young adults to hang out in a Christian environment with their peers to have fellowship and worship with each other," he said. "It is nice to be a part of a group like CANYA and know that when you bring up the topic of religion, you don't feel like you need to be defensive or worry about offending someone."

—*Janet Greidanus*

NOTEWORTHY

Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., reached its goal of raising \$25 million in debt relief three years faster than its 2017 target.

The King's University in Edmonton, Alberta, received the provincial government's permission to drop the word "college" from its formal name.

Maple Avenue Ministries in Holland, Mich.; **First Christian Reformed Church of Detroit** (Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.); and **Third CRC** in Zeeland, Mich., all celebrated their 100th anniversaries.

The girls' soccer team of **Calvin Christian High School** in Grandville, Mich., won the state's Division IV title.

The girls' soccer team of **Unity Christian High** in Hudsonville, Mich., won the state's Division III title.

Tom VanWingerden has been appointed executive director of Friendship Ministries.

Immanuel Christian School in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, hosted Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, during a recent visit in Canada.

Please visit our website at thebanner.org for all these stories.



(L-r) Students Abby McGeoghegan, Grace Lee, Hannah Mowat, and Leila Mann show Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, the hair fascinators they made.

—*Banner correspondents*

Hope Centre Ministries Rolls Out the Red Carpet

Most people who walk the red carpet are famous Hollywood celebrities. But in April, the red carpet of inclusion was rolled out for all people—including people with disabilities. The event, called “IN 2014,” was organized by Hope Centre Ministries. Hope Centre, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, is supported by the Christian Reformed Church. It provides spiritual support for people living with disabilities.

Approximately 600 people, including men and women with disabilities, caregivers, and pastors representing 14 denominations, attended. The event included workshops, a concert, Sunday worship, and a movie with a red-carpet premiere.

Shellie Power, director of spiritual care for Hope Centre Ministries, said, “We categorize people. We are all in our different groups. This was a day to lay that all down and focus on God’s inclusion. What a beautiful picture!”

People with disabilities participated in the event as seminar presenters, participants on panel discussion boards, food service workers, and background support providers.

This is the second year Hope Centre Ministries has hosted an “IN” weekend. It was supported by Disability Concerns, a CRC ministry that helps churches nurture the spiritual lives of people who have disabilities.



Shellie Power (right) and Kayla Kiers on the red carpet.

ANTHONY MARK PHOTOGRAPHY

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Allen Hoogewind

1942 – 2014

Allen Jay Hoogewind, age 71, pastor, chaplain, compassionate counselor, and gifted teacher, died on May 7 in a traffic accident.

Hoogewind attended Calvin College and Seminary. He later completed an M.A. at Western Michigan University with a certificate in alcohol and drug abuse ministry.

Hoogewind served three Christian Reformed congregations in Michigan. He also spent several years as a chaplain, serving both people with alcohol and drug addictions and people with disabilities.

Following his retirement in 2007, Hoogewind built his counseling practice. He and a colleague were in Nashville, Tenn., for a work-related conference when he was hit by a car.

Hoogewind was an empathetic caregiver, an encourager, and a welcoming person. A thoughtful extrovert, people felt drawn to him. He was also a man of broad interests. All manner of Christian expressions in society had his attention, understanding, and support.

He knew his way around in the complex world of drug addiction, and people with addictions found in him new hope.

Hoogewind is survived by his wife, Coral, three children and their spouses, and seven grandchildren.

—Louis M. Tamminga

[MORE ONLINE](#)

California Church Does Missions Close to Home

Many people go on mission trips far away to serve those in need. Meanwhile, members of Good News Chapel Christian Reformed Church in Walnut, Calif., have been helping the children of their own neighborhood.

For the past four years, a group of about 10 women and men from the church have been meeting monthly with groups of preteen and teenage girls in foster care to show them the love of Jesus. The girls live at Maryvale, a child wel-

fare facility run by the Roman Catholic Church.

“What I love about being involved in Maryvale is that we are able to obey the teachings of Jesus right here in our backyard,” said Angie Oh, one of the ministry organizers. “There are so many children here in the U.S. who need to know the love of their heavenly Father. These girls have so much hope, joy, and love, and it’s an honor to be a part of their lives.”

The program offered by the church includes a wide variety of activities, including craft projects, games, and sports.

“My time there has given me a deeper understanding into the riches of God’s love for us as his adopted children,” said volunteer John Pyun. “It has been an amazing experience to be able to share his love with those at Maryvale.”

—Tracey Yan

[Maryvale volunteers from Good News Chapel CRC.](#)



NEWS

New City Kids Celebrates 20 Years of Transforming Lives

For 20 years, New City Kids, a Christian Reformed ministry in Jersey City, N.J., has transformed the lives of at-risk children through its after-school center and its focus on the fine arts. Recently some graduates of the program held a reunion.

"New City Kids was like my second home!" Tonia Young explained. Young, a recent graduate of Howard University, has been a part of New City Kids since graduating from eighth grade. She attended a job fair, hoping to get a summer job at New City Kids, and ended up working there throughout high school. "I was an art teacher, creative writing teacher, dance teacher, tutor, assistant team leader, and a team leader," she said.

Young was a part of the Teen Life Internship program in which teens work eight to 12 hours during the week. They also learn how to prepare for college and receive one-on-one coaching.



Young was also involved in New City Kids X-Change ministry, which allows teens to express their trials, fears, and suffering through poetry, drama, and music in "exchange" for a message on God's love. As part of the X-Change Crew, Young explained that she "helped participants deal with their issues and created a safe place for them to exchange their burdens for the love of God."

Gregg Nelson, who has been involved with New City Kids since he was 2, was also part of the

Linda Rubingh (back row center) and the Teen Support Group at a New City Kids reunion.

X-Change Crew. "We planned, did skits, and prepared a message at the end of the night," Nelson explained. "The purpose was to show teenagers a different route."

Nelson, a recent graduate of Montclair State University, was both a participant in New City Kids and an employee. When he participated in the after-school program, he said, kids did their

homework but also learned to play an instrument. "The city's all about the arts," Nelson said. "New City Kids incorporates music because it's a skill kids want to learn. Performing in front of your peers shows kids they have self-worth and gives them tools to do something besides the norm."

Nelson said he had family issues growing up, and New City Kids was there to support him through his childhood and adolescent years. They also helped him get into college and find a job.

Young agrees that the program supported her spiritually, emotionally, and also financially. "I was able to gain a sense of self, develop an authentic relationship with God, and strengthen my academic skills as well as gain the courage to share my God-given talents."

When Linda Rubingh and her husband, Trevor, started New City Kids 20 years ago, "there was no money, no people, no building—just the call," Linda said. The work was not easy. "Pain and suffering are everywhere, but it's concentrated in high-need areas of the city. Breaking into a hurting community felt like having to break down a brick wall with our bare hands."

Despite the resistance and frustration, the Rubinghs believed God was calling and strove to serve the children of Jersey City. "Learning how to bring the fullness of this reality to the foot of the cross each day, and then allowing God to re-proclaim the power of the resurrection in our hearts, was a humbling yet essential thing we had to learn."

—Callie Feyen

Faith, Farms, and Fathers

What do you get when you put together John Calvin and John Deere? A "Drive Your Tractor to Church" Sunday service, of course. East Saugatuck Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich., held this special event as a way to celebrate Father's Day.

"It was a fun time," said member Wayne Becksvoort, who drove his 1941 Farmall on the leisurely four-mile, 26-minute ride to church.

The first-time event was a nod to the agricultural roots of the community, said Wayne Bakker, worship and media director at East Saugatuck. With over 25 tractors driven by members and visitors alike, "it was a good turnout," he said.

Head pastor Gary Luurtsema delivered a sermon entitled "How Christians Are Like Tractors" based on 1 Corinthians 3:7.

After the service, everyone enjoyed a cookout and admired all the tractors, from the smaller antiques to the enormous green machines that lined the back of the parking lot.



Hank and Marcia Belder pose with their 1954 Super MTA Farmall.

—Susan Vanden Berg



Ayden James is baptized at Alger Community CRC while his mom, grandmother, and great-grandmother make profession of faith.

Four Generations Join Washington Church

Four people joined Alger Community Christian Reformed Church in Bellingham, Wash., through baptism and public profession of faith on a Sunday morning in May. But it was not just any four people—it was four generations of the same family.

Carolyn Bradshaw (great-grandmother), Cheryl Janzen (grandmother), Amanda James (mother), and her 4-year-old son, Ayden, all found a church home at Alger Community CRC.

Carolyn, Cheryl, and Amanda all relocated to the Alger area in 2011 and settled less than a mile from the church. They attended immediately and became involved in various ways, including the music ministry. “We love the church and its people. We wanted to be a part of it, so we became members,” said Carolyn.

All four family members have felt hospitality and care from their new church family. “We love the warmth of the church, the way the congregation has embraced us, and the message the pastor brings every Sunday,” said Amanda.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Amy Toornstra

Helping Kids Be Kids

With a reported 2.5 million individuals caught in human trafficking, childhoods are ripped away every day. That is why 18 students from Hamilton (Ontario) District Christian High are striving to raise \$15,000 by the time they graduate in 2015. So far they have raised almost \$9,000 to “Let Kids Be Kids.”

The funds will be matched 3:1 by the Canadian government to assist with World Renew’s efforts in Nigeria and Senegal to support communities through education, employment initiatives, and village savings and loans.

“Let Kids Be Kids” was formed a year ago after several students heard World Renew’s presentation on human trafficking at the All Ontario Youth Convention.

They were challenged by a teacher to write an end-of-year research paper that would lead to a service project. Student Braden VanDyk of Burlington Christian Reformed Church came up with the idea of a campaign to help the children they had just heard about. After completing the research paper, students wanted to propel this idea forward.

What started as a great way to work together as a group of friends became so much more. “We saw God opening more doors and opportunities,” said student Victoria teBrake of Faith CRC in Burlington. For student Erin Kurvits, first-hand experience during a mission trip to Uganda this past March and meeting children who need this help motivates her to reach the goal.

“We commend this group for their creativity and compassion,” said Ida Kaastra Mutoigo, director of World Renew Canada. “The key to preventing human trafficking is to increase people’s ability to improve their financial situation. This is an exciting example of how God can be at work to address social injustice.”

For VanDyk, it is important to advocate on behalf of these children: “We’ve grown up with toys, food, clothes, a home, and no worries of being forced into labor,” explained VanDyk. “Every kid deserves to have a childhood.”

—Krista Dam-VandeKuyt

(L-r): Students Victoria teBrake, Braden VanDyk, and Erin Kurvits have organized several fund-raisers such as bake sales, car washes, and a spaghetti dinner.



IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Gerald Van Oyen

1932 – 2014

Gerald Van Oyen, 81, winsome in all his ways, a faithful witness of his Savior, and musically and mechanically gifted, passed away on May 10 while bird watching in Ohio from an apparent heart attack.

Van Oyen attended Calvin College and Seminary, graduating in 1957.

Van Oyen served Christian Reformed congregations in Minnesota, Iowa, and Michigan, and was a missionary in Mexico. His retirement years in Florida included a multitude of services for church and Kingdom.

Van Oyen conducted his ministry with purpose, resolution, passion, and self-deprecation. Once, when he crossed the border into Mexico with a load of Bibles, border officials had him jailed for seven days. He witnessed to the guards, one of whom accepted Christ.

There were few musical instruments he could not play. He was a fine singer, an accomplished bird photographer, and a splendid wood carver. He loved riding motorcycles.

Van Oyen is survived by his wife, Ellen, four children and their spouses, and 17 grandchildren.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

NEWS

CHURCH WORLDWIDE

Rick Warren to Pastors: “There is no testimony without a test”



Sharing how he has coped after his son’s suicide last year, megachurch pastor Rick Warren urged Southern Baptist pastors in June to let their times of suffering be acts of ministry.

“Behind every publicly successful ministry, there is private pain,” Warren said at the Southern Baptist Convention’s Pastors’ Conference. “Pain is God’s megaphone. There is no testimony without a test. There is no message without a mess. There is no impact without criticism.”

Warren’s son, Matthew, 27, who suffered from mental illness, killed himself five days after Easter in 2013.

Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Southern

California, urged his fellow Southern Baptist pastors to draw close to others when they are suffering. He said a small group of men were on the scene within half an hour to comfort him when Matthew died. They were the same people he had met with in their times of crises.

“Your greatest ministry will come out of your deepest hurt,” he said. “We mistakenly think that the world is impressed by how we handle prosperity, but the fact is, the world is impressed by how we handle adversity.”

—Religion News Service

U.S. Presbyterians Vote to Allow Same-Sex Marriage



The Presbyterian Church (USA) voted June 19 to allow gay and lesbian weddings within the church, making it among the largest U.S. Christian denominations to take an embracing step toward same-sex marriage.

The General Assembly of the 1.8 million-member PCUSA voted to allow pastors to perform gay marriages in American states where they are legal. Delegates also approved new language about marriage in the church’s Book of Order, or

constitution, altering references to “a man and woman” to “two persons.”

This change will not become church law until a majority of the 172 regional presbyteries vote to ratify the new language. But given the lopsided 3-1 ratio of the vote, approval is expected.

The Presbyterian Lay Committee, which opposes same-sex marriage, urged congregations to launch a financial boycott out of protest.

The U.S.’s largest churches—Roman Catholic, Southern Baptist, United Methodist, and most evangelical churches—recognize marriage only as between a man and a woman, though many Methodists are pushing for a change. The Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the United Church of Christ all allow same-sex marriage.

—Religion News Service

For more on these stories, please visit thebanner.org.



“Jesus Is Love” in Spanish is written on the parachutes.

Minnesota Church Spreads the Gospel with Parachutes

What starts as a simple white bedsheet from a thrift store in Minnesota is transformed by volunteers into a parachute carrying the gospel message to unreached people groups in the jungles of Colombia.

Marianne Koning, a member of Willmar (Minn.) Christian Reformed Church, leads a group of senior citizens who meet bimonthly to make the parachutes for Voice of the Martyrs.

Solar radios pre-tuned to a Christian station with a missionary sharing the gospel are attached to the parachutes, to be dropped by pilots into Colombia. “Most of these [parachutes] are flown over jungles that are not accessible by trails,” explained Koning.

Last year the group sent 175 parachutes to Voice of the Martyrs.

—Amy Toornstra



The Schuurman, Vandenberg, and Koops families arrive at New Life CRC on Bike to Church Sunday.

Bike to Church Day for Ontario Congregation

From around the corner and around the city they came. New Life Christian Reformed Church in Guelph, Ontario, recently hosted a “Bike to Church Sunday,” encouraging members to cycle to the service instead of driving.

About 50 people accepted the challenge, arriving on 25-speeds, 3-speeds, and tricycles, from down the block and the other side of the city.

The event coincided with the beginning of Ontario’s Bike to Work Week. “But that was totally by accident,” admitted organizer Jake DeBruyn.

“Biking to church,” said elder Tom Bruulsema, “puts us in touch with the fabric of our community—the people, the places, the natural environment. It’s a great way to prepare our heart, soul, and mind for church.”

—Anita Brinkman

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. James Lont
1932 – 2014

James Lont, 84, whose strength lay in the development of youth and education ministries and Reformed ecumenicity, passed away on May 14 following a stroke.

Lont attended Calvin College and Seminary, graduating in 1955.

Lont served Christian Reformed congregations in Minnesota, Michigan, and Illinois. He also worked for Young Calvinist Federation (now Youth Unlimited) and Worldwide Christian Schools, retiring in 1996.

The causes of Christian education and Reformed ecumenicity found in Lont a visionary champion.

He was deeply interested in the well-being of the people around him, always ready to help them—but he also had high expectations of them.

Lont’s superbly crafted sermons demanded utmost attention. He loved the Word, owned the Reformed vision, and was loyal to the CRC. He cherished nature and liked to travel.

Lont was preceded in death by his wife, Carol, in 2013. He is survived by sons Stephen and Timothy, Timothy’s wife, Joyce, and five grandchildren.

—Louis M. Tamminga

Wisconsin Church Digs Deep for Water in Africa

Members of Brookfield (Wisc.) Christian Reformed Church dug deeper to find water for a small community near Nampula, Mozambique. Deeper into their wallets, that is. The church raised nearly \$100,000 for a well-drilling rig for the community where some of the church members had been working for several years.

Approximately eight church members, working through Partners Worldwide, helped the community start a small chicken processing plant that has since expanded to two egg farms and a technical college.

However, according to Brandon Haan, associate pastor of Brookfield CRC, “One of the biggest roadblocks has to do with water. . . . Most people have to walk a kilometer or more in order to get water, and it’s not necessarily safe to drink.”

So for three months this spring, members embarked on a giving project named “Dig Deep.” They raised \$98,604 for a well-drilling rig for the community, surpassing their goal of \$75,000.

Church members organized rummage sales, sold lemonade, and put up signs in their front yards advertising the campaign.

On Sunday, May 4, they circled the church neighborhood on a “water walk.” Members placed water bottles on doorsteps with attached labels advertising the project. Church members established a presence in the neighborhood, and some residents responded with donations.

The church hopes to continue similar giving projects—both local and global. “Really, we want as many people as possible to participate in, experience, and benefit from God’s generosity. He’s

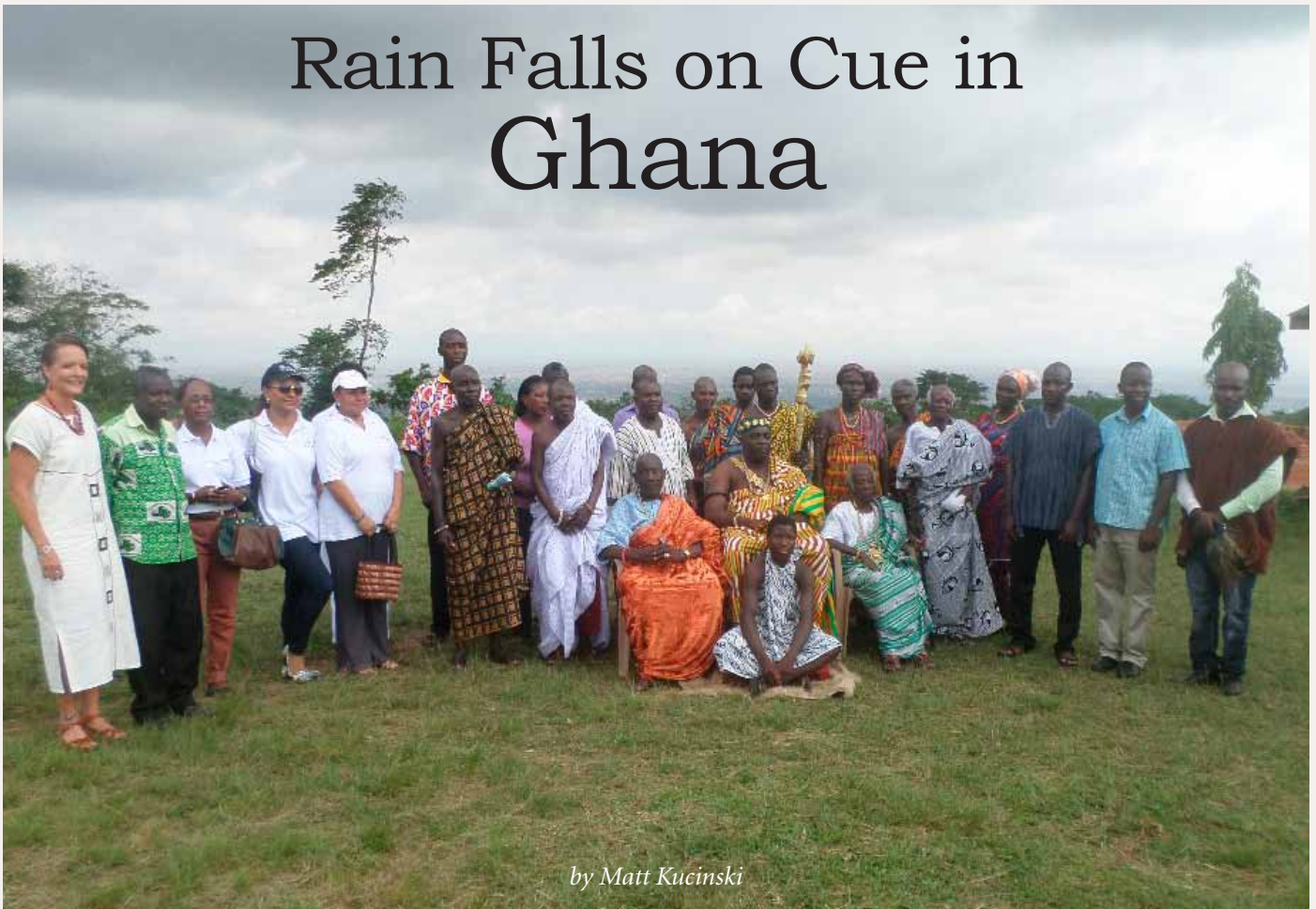


Church members raised \$98,604 for a well-drilling rig in Mozambique, surpassing their goal of \$75,000.

been so generous to us. Now we want to spread that generosity around in word and deed,” said Haan.

—Amy Toornstra

Rain Falls on Cue in Ghana



by Matt Kucinski

“It’s just a miracle. But it all happened. And that community will remember this forever.”

The miracle that Calvin College communication arts and sciences professor Stephanie Sandberg was referring to involved two students who were 5,700 miles from campus on a semester abroad in Ghana.

Maggie Ferntheil, a theater major, and BeAnka Mushenkye, an interdisciplinary major, said they used theater as a unique way to ask people to donate funds to build a health clinic in the small village of Adenkrebi.

Working with middle school students, they put on a performance of short, real-life plays on Friday, November 22, 2013. And that is when the miracle, which included a downpour, happened.

Outside of the theater production, Ferntheil and Mushenkye’s experience was quite similar to the other 15 students on their semester abroad.

The two spent the majority of their time in Ghana learning about the history and culture of the country and taking classes at the University of Ghana. Like the other students, Ferntheil and Mushenkye spent the final three weeks in Ghana participating in a period of intense service learning.

“We set up these situations for students where they could go in for an extended period of time and work with a community group or an NGO or a service organization or a clinic,” said Sandberg.

“Wherever they had vocational gifts, we tried to match them or find them a place where they could work.”

Some of the audience, including the local chief.

Students worked in various villages surrounding Ga East, which is a sister city to Grand Rapids, Mich. A few students worked on documentary films, a few more helped with publicity efforts for special projects, and another student worked in a speech pathology clinic, which in Ghana, Sandberg said, is “a rare opportunity.”

Ferntheil and Mushenkye were assigned a project up in the hills in Adenkrebi, which is situated on a ridge overlooking the sprawling metropolis of Accra.

The students’ project came out of a previous visit to Ghana, where Sandberg and Roland Hoksbergen, Calvin’s director of international development studies, had

“If whoever is performing, writing, directing, or producing is passionate about their work, it can bring change.”

joined with representatives from MAP International—a global Christian health organization—to meet with the chief and others in the village of Adenkrebí to ask them, “What are your biggest needs?”

The theme that emerged from those conversations was knowledge about and access to better healthcare.

The people in the village determined that building a health clinic and living facilities for the workers would most effectively address these issues. The price tag would be about \$50,000.

With this in mind, Sandberg asked her students to work with the people of Adenkrebí to make the case to donors for this need. And she asked them to do it through theater.

“Anyone can go up to a podium and speak about how we should raise money to help out this charity or this village,” said Ferntheil.

“But in theater, you are shown what the story is and why it would be great to help out.”

So Ferntheil and Mushenkýe set out to tell the stories of the villagers in a handful of five- to seven-minute plays.

The two started the project by listening to the stories of people in the village, hearing about the health issues that had affected their loved ones. While malaria, broken bones, tropical diseases, and a host of other issues were brought up, it was access to healthcare that seemed to be the biggest problem.

“They were having people seriously injured. They were having people die unnecessarily. There was a high infant mortality rate; it was problematic across the board,” said Sandberg.

“The people were registered with the national health insurance in Ghana, but they had no access to that healthcare.”

A major factor playing into that access was the dangerous path to the nearest clinic.

“The roads are atrocious; people die on those roads because of how dangerous they are,” said Sandberg.



A traditional dance during the performance.

The two-mile dirt road is ungraded, full of potholes, and hasn't been repaired for years. There's a steep, dangerous hill to get up to the village, and many cars have toppled backwards down the hill.

The students realized that a story about the road and its impact on healthcare was necessary. So they included a story about a woman in the village who got sick and needed urgent care.

In the story, another person in the village bypasses the road and carries the woman down the other side of the mountain. But before they reach the clinic, the woman dies.

The other plays told stories of people's experiences with a broken leg, a pregnancy, and a tropical disease. Ferntheil and Mushenkýe wrote and produced the stories and worked with middle school students in the village who acted the stories out on stage.

“I saw the joy in the children's faces when we were telling them about our project,” said Ferntheil. “I think if whoever is performing, writing, directing, or producing is passionate about their work, it can bring social change.”

The two Calvin students' connection to their subject matter became very real during the project when BeAnka Mushenkýe lost her appetite and spiked a high fever. She was taken to the clinic and diagnosed with malaria, eventually ending up in the hospital for a day.

“If I had not gotten access to a clinic in a certain amount of time and [received] decent healthcare, my results could »



Maggie Ferntheil with students.

Supporting Calvin College in Prayer

- Pray for wisdom for the leadership of Calvin College as the college continues to look ahead at some of the opportunities and challenges facing higher education.
- Pray that each of the nearly 900 students in the most recent graduating class will find meaningful work and serve God as agents of renewal wherever they are.
- Pray for the incoming class of students who will be joining us later this month to arrive safely, and that they will grow closer to God during their journey at Calvin.
- Pray for Calvin College's mission to remain clear, compelling, and relevant to the next generation of students.
- Pray that all faculty and staff will remain committed to integrating faith into every learning opportunity.

have turned out differently,” said Mushenkye.

“It made everything that was distant, the stories we heard and collected during our production, real. I was in it. I went through it. And it created in me even greater humility, remorse, and desire to work hard on this project.”

“It was ironic because here we were dealing with healthcare issues, and in a lot of ways BeAnka's situation, getting her up and down that mountain, for example, gave us a true empathy for what the people were going through,” said Sandberg.

“So I believe that even the illness, the suffering BeAnka was going through, played into the success of the project. That's just the way God works—all of these things converging at the same moment. And then, of course, the performance itself. . . .”

On Friday, November 22, the project Ferntheil and Mushenkye had been work-

ing on for the past three weeks had reached its pinnacle. The actors were ready. The stage was set.

But the audience would determine the success of the project. Would they come? Would they be moved to help out? The two had invited the entire village, including the chief and the municipal authorities, and they also invited those who had showed interest in donating to the project.

“We needed a way to convince the donors that the community was invested in this, that these are real stories about needs in healthcare,” said Sandberg. “We needed them to come to say, ‘Yes, we are going to give you money.’”

After waiting and waiting, Sandberg said the donors arrived in a big van. “It took them forever to get up that hill,” she said.

That van full of people was just the start.

“The entire village came,” said Sandberg. “The chief rarely goes to things like this. He came. He was there in his full regalia.” His entourage accompanied him.

The middle school students performed their hearts out, acting out stories of people in their village.

Even a short downpour couldn't stop them from performing. In fact, rain was included in the script.

“During a part of the play, it says it starts to rain—and it started to rain,” said Sandberg. “The students stayed out there and kept performing while it was getting worse and worse.”

“Then, as a sign from heaven, as that part of the play ended, when it ceased raining in the play, it ceased raining in Adenkrebi!”

“I was pretty speechless after the whole thing happened,” said Ferntheil.

The donors agreed to fund the clinic that day. And the chief agreed to give eight acres of land to the project. The clinic will serve more than 5,000 people, includ-

You add.
God multiplies.



The dangerous road.

ing the communities surrounding Adenkrebi.

Sandberg said most people would probably consider different approaches when seeking to raise \$50,000 for a health clinic. But those who took part in the project said the plays, arising from the life of the village itself, had the greatest impact.

“You know, theater is a great catalyst for human action. A performance can bring people together in a way that other types of events can’t,” said Sandberg.

“Yeah, you can have a dinner or a party, but a performance that people have invested their time and their energy into really works as a catalyst for action, and it also helps us on this journey that we are all on together,” she added. ■



Matt Kucinski is the senior editor of News and Stories at Calvin College.

A Passion for Telling People’s Stories

Calvin College communication arts and sciences professor Stephanie Sandberg has a passion for using ethnography—a research method that explores cultural phenomena through the point of view of the subject of the study—within the context of theater.

“It raises the human problem to a level where you can listen to it, ask questions about it, and then find a solution to the problem,” said Sandberg.

Sandberg’s interest in ethnographic theater was piqued in graduate school in a verbatim theater course. “I realized that it was rooted in anthropology, so I just took a bunch more classes in it,” said Sandberg.

Ethnography is the branch of anthropology that deals with the scientific description of individual cultures, while anthropology is the science that studies the origins, physical and cultural development, biological characteristics, and social customs and beliefs of people.

Sandberg didn’t use her knowledge of ethnography for a while, she said, until projects involving this field of study started falling into her lap.

Now ethnography is Sandberg’s primary area of research, and she presents regularly on the subject at conferences.

“It is happening around the world, so people are using it,” said Sandberg. “I have invested in having students know what it is, how it works, and how they can create projects that will address the human needs they encounter.”

Sandberg has produced and directed ethnographic plays many times before, but what happened in Adenkrebi broke new ground.

“I had done a lot of projects in the United States like this, but I had never done one in Africa. I grew up in West Africa, in Liberia, so I felt like this was the first time I was bringing together my upbringing and my knowledge of Africa with my vocation,” said Sandberg. “It was really exciting, and it gave me lots of ideas for further work.”

Sandberg said that seeing the success of this project helped her work up the courage to apply for a Fulbright Scholarship to go back to Ghana to work on a piece on human trafficking.

If she’s awarded the Fulbright, she hopes to work with the University of Ghana and some NGOs that are doing anti-trafficking work, one of those NGOs being Challenging Heights, which is connected to the International Justice Mission.

“They’re working on human trafficking in Ghana really seriously. I would go live with those kids who have been rescued from slavery and talk to them about their experiences. And then we’d create a performance piece around their experiences that we would eventually play at the National Theatre of Ghana and at the university and places like that. And we would share it with the world too.” ■

—by Matt Kucinski, Calvin College



Stephanie Sandberg

Family Portraits

One of the books that sits on a shelf at home is James Schaap's *CRC Family Portrait: Sketches of Ordinary Christians in a 125-Year-Old Church*.

Recently I reread these stories and was struck by the breadth of our shared stories, already more than 30 years ago. Yet as officers of Synod 2014 looked out over the delegates, I'm sure they saw an even more vibrant mosaic of the CRC. The number of delegates reflecting ethnically diverse backgrounds was the greatest ever.

Our CRC family portrait continues to change, and I'm grateful to be included in my new role as executive director. I decided to use this opportunity to introduce myself and my family—ordinary Christians in a now 157-year-old church.

If my portrait were a montage of still shots, I could include a picture with my parents and sister of my baptism at South Grandville CRC and then, over time, a series of pictures of me in Sunday school, catechism, youth group, and finally in front of the church for profession of faith.

The next series might include snapshots from my college days—serving Calvin College's KIDS program, counseling at Camp Roger, student teaching at Pine Rest, and going on a first date with my wife after our fall Campus Choir concert.

At this point, selecting the pictures becomes overwhelming. Some of the pictures could be drawn from my career journey: starting as teaching principal at Christian Learning Center in Grand Rapids, Mich.; attending the University of Michigan for graduate studies; serving children and families as a psychologist in a rehabilitation setting; and then moving into Christian higher education in a variety of roles, concluding with serving as president at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Ill.

Another set of pictures could show where we've lived: Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor, Mich.; Rehoboth, New Mexico; metropolitan Chicago, and the Christian Reformed churches we attended in each place. Each of these pictures would show a growing family filling a pew: Katie, Paul, Becca, and Jessica, and then, via adoption, Getenet and Fekadu, and finally Yaineabeba.

Schaap's writing reminds me that telling one's story is helped by focusing on one or two significant events. For my wife, Barb,

and me, our family portrait becomes a testimony particularly because of our son Paul and our adoption story.

Paul is 28 years old. One look at him signals Down syndrome. Like all new parents of special needs children, our initial reaction was shock and uncertainty. Yet after 28 years of being Paul's parents, we've learned that he often understands things more clearly than we do—and he always leads us in showing how to be accepting of others. We see his growth into young adulthood as testimony of God's faithfulness. Those whom the world

might consider as least can be great in God's kingdom.

Four years ago, we adopted Ethiopian brothers Fekadu and Getenet, now 15 and 19, and later welcomed their older sister Yaineabeba into our family in a more informal sense. Even though their lives were thrown into disruption and

uncertainty when their parents died, God's promises endured. And while adoption didn't result in anyone's name being changed, our initial uncertainty and lack of confidence has been transformed, through God's grace, into gratitude and thanksgiving for a family rich in love, despite our differing backgrounds, abilities, and ethnic identities.

I'm grateful that our family portrait belongs in the CRC story, as does yours. In some respects, our family—with Barb and me and seven kids between 15 and 29, as well as those being added by marriage—is a microcosm of the CRC. It's a portrait that keeps needing to be updated since the group keeps growing in number, in diversity, in its impact, and, most of all, in faith.

Perhaps you remember the "Psalty" children's video series of two decades ago. From this series comes our son Paul's favorite song—a song aimed at children, but helpful for us all:

"Welcome to the family. We're glad that you have come to share your life with us as we grow in love. And may we always be to you what God would have us be: A family always there to be strong and to lean on. May we learn to love each other more with each new day. May words of love be on our lips in everything we say. May the Spirit melt our hearts and teach us how to pray that we might be a true family." ■



The Timmermans family



Steven Timmermans was appointed by Synod 2014 as executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Our CRC family portrait continues to change.

You add.
God multiplies.



A Christian Reformed World Missions leadership cohort meets in Costa Rica.

Banded Together in Missions

Young adults in Costa Rica sit in a circle and discuss their recent adventures. Jim DeBorst, a Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) missionary, shares insights gained from years of working in Central America. The Cohort of Missioners is underway.

As the name “cohort” suggests, young adults known as “missioners,” who take part in CRWM’s newest program, are banded together with others who are considering careers in missions. Together, these missioners from both North America and Central America learn effective ways to serve people in a new context.

“There are many young adults with a passion for missions,” said Joel Huyser, CRWM’s director for transformational networks. “Our hope is that missioners have a lifelong vocation for serving.”

Joel believes that bringing together both North and Central Americans to learn more about missions allows young people to discern their next step—whether at home or abroad.

“We have begun to see ourselves as global Christians,” said Rachel Beveridge, a missioner from California.

Missioners receive theological training and assist in community development events, but they stress that their biggest takeaways come from observing the work of others.

“This experience is about being humble enough to say that there’s something to learn from another context,” Rachel said. ■

—by Brian Clark,
Christian Reformed World Missions

Combating Human Trafficking

When a stranger arrived in the village of Pho in Laos and promised young people jobs on a sugarcane plantation in Thailand, the offer seemed too good to pass up.

Lured by the stranger’s promise, 27 people left in December 2012 for Thailand.

Pho is one of 29 rural communities in Laos that World Renew has been working with to build up local leadership and improve agricultural production, health, literacy rates, and family incomes.

Despite these interventions, young people remain vulnerable to human traffickers who promise big money and jobs outside their poor communities.

After leaving, says Sang (not his real name), “A man took us on a bumpy, eight-hour trip by truck to Sop Lao, where we spent the night.”

They drove the next day to a village on the Mekong River. After staying the night, a boat took them across the river. Another truck then drove them several hours to the plantation, where they worked long days clearing land and planting and harvesting sugarcane.

Although they were promised \$10 to \$15 per day, they also had to repay for food, lodging, and supplies.

“After three months, I had earned over twenty thousand baht (\$600 USD), but the people over us took some of the money for our transport, housing, and their ‘finder’s fee,” said Sang.

By that time, several people wanted to return home. Their employers agreed but charged an additional fee for transportation costs. By the time he arrived in Pho, Sang only had \$35 left.

After learning what had happened, World Renew held an anti-trafficking event where Sang shared his experience and encouraged others to not make the same mistake.

“Having Sang and those who were trafficked share their stories



Telling the story of going to Thailand.

was an excellent way to raise awareness about the risks,” said Mike Fennema, World Renew’s country consultant in Laos. ■

—by Kristen deRoo Vanderberg,
World Renew



Giving Back by Washing Windows

Emmanuel Bileya, a pastor in the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria, came to Calvin Theological Seminary to learn about worship practices and resources, especially the lectionary of weekly Scripture readings for sermons and the seasons of the church year.

Such practices have faded from use in Nigerian churches in recent years.

Equipped with a master of theology in worship, Bileya will return and help train worship leaders for the churches of the CRC's sister denomination.

Pastor Emmanuel would not have been able to earn his degree without scholarship funds provided for him and other international students, he wrote to President Jul Medenblik.

"I am very thankful to the school for providing me with financial aid that took care of all my fees and living expenses. If the school had not done so I would not have been able to study at Calvin Seminary."

He went on to describe how he decided to show his gratitude by cleaning windows at the seminary for free. He never kept track of his hours—he just kept cleaning until the job was done.

Through his relationships with his seminary professors and experiences in his local church, Woodlawn CRC, he said he was inspired by finding in North America Christians "who serve God from their hearts." ■

—by Jinny De Jong, Calvin Seminary

Emmanuel Bileya

Equipping Leaders in New Mexico

Run by local pastors and teachers, the Red Mesa Leadership Development Network has been seeking to discover potential leaders, develop ministry skills and Bible knowledge, and deploy leaders into ministry roles since 2008.

Rob Byker, pastor of Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church in Rehoboth, N.M., and an instructor of Old and New Testament for the network, said the program fills a need.

"Our churches are getting older. If we don't purposefully try to work on leadership development, then the bright witness of some precious churches might go dim," he said.

Beginning in 2008 with a class of 10, the Red Mesa Leadership Development Network

has seen dozens of graduates, with 24 enrolled last year.

In the past, when CRC congregations experienced vacancies in pastoral roles, churches called on other denominations' leaders. Now leadership development networks in Red Mesa and elsewhere are providing leaders.

In addition, the leaders of this network are working to develop an accredited program for graduates wishing to become commissioned pastors.

Caleb Dickson was a member of the first class to graduate from the Red Mesa Leadership Development Network and is serving as temporary pastor at Naschitti CRC.

"Receiving a license to exhort was definitely a milestone in my life. The opportunities and blessings of



Meeting of Red Mesa Leadership Development Network.

preaching were the direct result of this program," said Dickson. ■

—by Rachel Gabrielse, Christian Reformed Home Missions

You can find longer versions of these stories, as well as additional stories, online at thebanner.org/together.

You add.
God multiplies.



Aida credits prayer with saving her marriage.

Aida's Testimony

As a young woman in Guatemala, Aida was living with a husband who spent what little income they had on alcohol.

Although she was raised Christian, she had too many questions to call herself a believer. Discouraged, Aida turned to Christian radio, hoping to find answers.

Aida discovered *La Hora de la Reforma* (The Hour of Reformation), produced by Back to God Ministries' Spanish outreach team.

Encouraged by the messages, she kept listening and visited a church mentioned on the radio. That was more than 20 years ago.

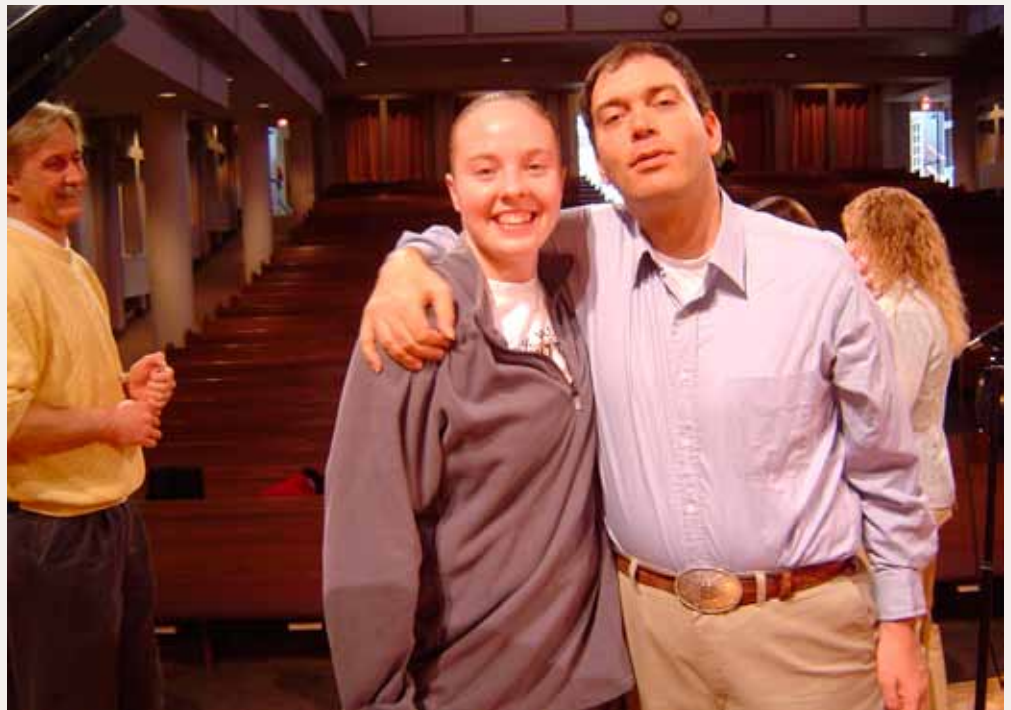
She ended up committing her life to God and volunteering at her church and the radio station.

Her life at home was not easy, but she prayed faithfully for her husband.

Several months ago, he joined her in listening to Christian radio. Then he agreed to attend church and gave his life to the Lord.

The couple recommitted their lives to each other and were married in the church. ■

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



Brett found faith through a church and disabilities concerns ministry.

Reformed Collaborative at Work

Dan De Vries grew up in the Reformed Church in America and served as a missionary with the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines.

He now works for Hope Haven, an organization founded and supported by members of both denominations who are working together in a range of efforts called the Reformed Collaborative.

Given his background, De Vries said, it makes sense for him to serve as a regional disabilities concerns advocate in Rock Valley, Iowa. Dis-

abilities concerns is one area in which the denominations are collaborating.

Working in one CRC classis and two RCA classes, said De Vries, he seeks to include individuals with disabilities in belonging to and serving in their church.

He has a similar goal at Hope Haven ministries, where he works to help people such as Brett grow in faith.

"When I was younger, I had heard of Jesus Christ from radio and TV, but there was no Christianity in my home growing up," Brett said.

One week after graduating from high school, Brett made profession of faith at Faith Reformed Church in Rock Valley, Iowa.

"The pastor clearly communicated that following Jesus was a choice," Brett said. "I decided to put my past behind me and follow Jesus." ■

—by Brian Clark

Graphic Church History: An Interview with Gene Luen Yang



IN RECENT YEARS, the humble comic book has transformed into the “graphic novel,” presenting in book-length format topics usually reserved for literary writing. While Gene Luen Yang still considers himself a comic book author and artist, he has been at the forefront of pushing the graphic novel’s boundaries.

In 2006, he published *American Born Chinese*, an imaginative reflection on racism and “fitting in” that has become a staple in high school English classes. Yang’s recent *Boxers & Saints* (First Second) traces the 1898-1900 Chinese “Boxer Rebellion.” The first volume presents the Boxers, the poor rural teenagers who fought against Western domination in China. The second volume offers the perspective of the “Saints,” the Chinese Christians who struggled to survive the Boxers’ violent attacks. Yang asks readers

The more I read about this war, the more fascinated I became.

to take both perspectives seriously in order to understand their deep-seated call for compassion. These books are best suited to readers in high school and older.

I had the opportunity to interview Yang during Calvin College’s Festival of Faith and Writing.

Q. Why did you decide to focus on the Boxer Rebellion?

A. There are a number of reasons. First, in 2000 John Paul II canonized a group of Chinese Catholic saints. That was the first time that the Roman Catholic Church had ever recognized Chinese citizens in this way. I grew up in a Chinese Catholic community, and my home church was really excited about it. They had all sorts of celebrations for it—and then these celebrations led me to look into the lives of these saints. I discovered that many of them were martyrs. They were martyred during the Boxer Rebellion, specifically because they were seen as traitors to their own people.

Their canonization was also controversial. After the Vatican made the announcement, the Chinese government actually issued a letter saying that they disagreed with it, that the Roman Catholic Church was honoring a group of people who were traitors to China. The more I read about this war, the more fascinated I became with it. I felt like it really mirrored this conflict between Eastern and Western ways of thinking that I experienced in my own life. It was like an embodiment of a struggle a lot of us feel.

To find out what that “struggle” is, and to read what the Reformation might have to do with the way we view comic books, see the fascinating full interview at www.thebanner.org. ■



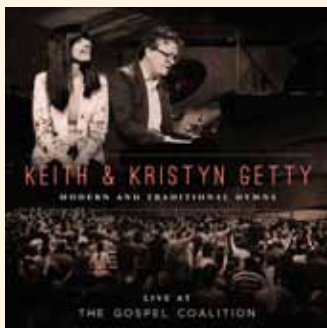
Otto Selles teaches French at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., and attends Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church.



The Railway Man

reviewed by **Kristy Quist**

Colin Firth is quietly intense as Eric Lomax, a British POW treated brutally by the Japanese military police while forced to work on the Burma-Thailand railway during World War II. The trauma he endured there had long-lasting effects on his life. This thoughtful film swings from a sweet romance to horrific flashbacks as Eric’s new wife, Patti, finds herself in an incomprehensible situation. Eventually, Lomax faces a decision. Will he live in the pain of the past and take revenge or move on to forgiveness? *The Railway Man* offers fodder for discussion both of forgiveness and of wartime ethics. On disc August 12. (Weinstein)



Live at the Gospel Coalition

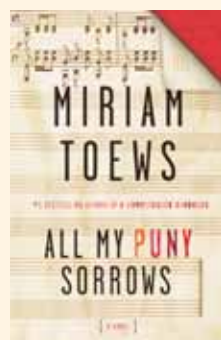
by Keith and Kristyn Getty
reviewed by Robert J. Keeley

Over the past decade the Gettys have not only become seasoned composers but also outstanding performers and worship leaders. Getty events are equal parts worship service and concert. *Live at the Gospel Coalition*, their fifth album, is an excellent example. While it features many of their most-loved songs (“In Christ Alone,” “Power of the Cross”), it is more than a greatest hits collection because they build their concerts to tell the story of the gospel of Jesus. This album does just that. (Getty Music)

For the Benefit of Those Who See: Dispatches from the World of the Blind

by Rosemary Mahoney
reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

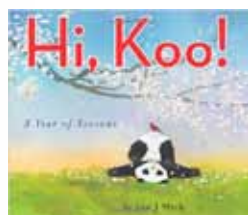
Rosemary Mahoney travelled to Tibet to write about Sabriye Tenberken, who founded Tibet’s first school for people who are blind, and then to India to teach at Tenberken’s international school for social entrepreneurs. With humor and vivid attention to detail, this master storyteller shares the participants’ wrenching yet heartwarming narratives. Interspersed throughout reports of her personal experiences she relates stories of people throughout history who had visual impairments, as well as fascinating scientific evidence that “the experience of newfound sight is extremely difficult.” (Little, Brown)



All My Puny Sorrows

by Miriam Toews
reviewed by Jim Romahn

Only Miriam Toews could write a novel so lovely, so sad, so true—and yet incorporate quirky humor. It’s about the love of sisters and family, about striving for improvement, and about suicide. This last subject fascinates some readers because the author’s father and sister both committed suicide; it also brings to light some anger with God. Strands from Toews’s Mennonite roots permeate the book, yet be cautioned that some sex and profanity show up as signposts pointing to deeper issues. (Knopf Canada)



Hi, Koo! A Year of Seasons

by Jon Muth
reviewed by Jenny deGroot

Jon Muth treats us again with his latest picture book, which features the return of his lovable panda named Koo. Here, Koo and two young children play their way through the seasons. The text is written in haiku, capturing moments in time with Koo and his playmates. An alphabet path is woven through each of the haiku as winter follows fall and spring becomes summer. Inspired by his own twins, Muth’s delicate watercolors express childlike delight, discovery, and concentration. Ages 4-8. (Scholastic)

THE LOWDOWN



Released: Lois Lowry’s young adult novel, *The Giver*, is a modern dystopian classic. The movie version will be coming to a theater near you on August 15.



Tough Love: Chuck DeGroat’s new book, *Toughest People to Love*, will give readers insight into how to deal with difficult people, including themselves. (Eerdmans)



Perfect Match: For some of the better drama writing on network television, you can’t beat *The Good Wife*. Season 5 will be available on disc August 19. (Paramount)



Poetic Times: For an unusual source of “found poetry,” go to haiku.nytimes.com, where you can find sentences from the day’s news turned into haiku.

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