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When did we become so mean?



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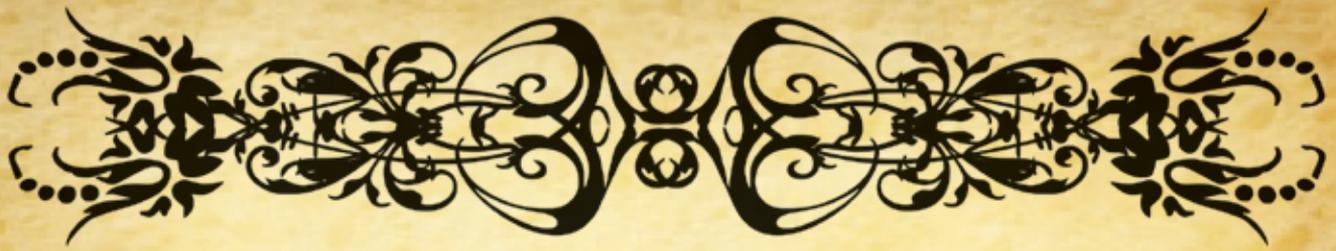
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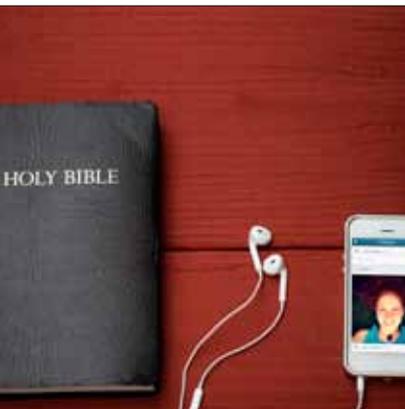
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Bridging the Denominational Divide

THROUGH MY FOUR DECADES OF MINISTRY in the Christian Reformed Church I have seen the gap widen considerably between congregations and our denomination. For all sorts of reasons. Many we probably cannot do much about, but some we can.

For example, this year's synod (the annual June leadership meeting of the CRC) will have a significant opportunity to reach across that widening divide. It will be considering a report from its Task Force for Structure and Culture that may well propose a significant restructuring of the work we do together as a denomination—or not. We won't know for sure what the Task Force recommends until the *Agenda for Synod* is published in April (see "Task Force Report on Structure Available in April," p. 11).

That's too late for churches and classes to speak into its recommendations before Synod 2015 meets to act on them. Since a decision on this task force's recommendations will set the direction for the structure of our denomination's ministries for years, maybe decades, to come, this would be a great opportunity for Synod 2015 to take a deep breath, step back, and defer a decision until Synod 2016. That would give opportunity to invite congregations and classes (regional groups of churches) to respond to the report before making any decisions. We could really use a year to pray about, discuss, and communicate our reactions to the task force's report before Synod 2016 would decide the matter.

I believe that is a sensible approach. Denominational restructuring can wait another year until we all have had a chance to mull this over. While not exactly a scintillating subject to many people, studying and responding to this report provides our church leaders with a marvelous opportunity to narrow that gulf between churches and church.

Here's why we need that.

On the local level, officebearers cannot begin to pay careful attention to any and all matters denominational. Given their local responsibilities, there's just not enough time. So they filter what catches their attention from the flood of information they receive through *The Banner*, CRC Communications, the agencies themselves, and so on. One very important filter they use is whether they need to make a decision of some kind. So when a denominational issue requires some kind of official council input, officebearers will more often than not do due diligence and bone up on that particular issue.

Bottom line: if Synod 2015 simply goes ahead and makes a decision on the task force's recommendations, then local church leaders won't give it more than a passing glance. And they will not significantly "own" that decision. The gulf will remain as wide as ever.

But if Synod 2015 invites councils and classes into that decision-making process, then officebearers will give it the attention it deserves. In so doing they will be educating themselves and gaining a much better perspective on what it is that we are trying to do together as churches and they will own how we propose to do it. Those are significant plusses.

Having the privilege and responsibility of actively participating in important decisions catches our interest like nothing else. I hope Synod 2015 provides us with that opportunity. ■



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

The privilege and responsibility of actively participating in important decisions catches our interest like nothing else.

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Where Were You?

There are moments when we all remember where we were: life-and-death moments that stop us in our tracks and throw the order of our lives into chaos. Often we carry such moments with us. The fear they produce affects us in ways we don't often realize. This fear has the power to shape our decision-making and determine where we place our trust.

Fear is part of life.

Psalm 34 teaches us that what matters is not *that* we fear but *who* we fear. The fear of God does not terrorize or cripple us. The fear of God is a fear that frees us. Instead of living in fear of the chaos of the world, we are free to live in courage, relying not on our own strength but on God's. Throughout history, the fear of God has compelled people to act not out of selfish ambition or vain conceit but out of love for God and others.

On September 11, 2001, it was fear of the power wielded by the United States that led terrorists to hijack planes, taking thousands of lives. But it was the fear of God that convicted Father Daniel Murphy,

whose brother was killed in the World Trade Center that day, to say from the pulpit, "My brother's life is too precious for me to be ruled by anger, hatred, and feelings of revenge."

It was fear that led men to torture and murder 14-year-old Emmett Till in the summer of 1955. But it was the fear of God that brought Martin Luther King Jr. to the steps of the United States Capitol, calling for equality, in 1963.

It was fear that fed Hitler's campaign of genocide against Jews, disabled persons, and anyone whose lives the Third Reich did not deem worthy. But it was the fear of God that convicted Dietrich Bonhoeffer to vocally oppose the Holocaust, even though it meant losing his life.

Forgiveness, standing up for others, giving one's life: these are a few of the acts of courage done by Christians who chose to surrender their fears and place their trust in God. When God looks at the injustice and pain in the world and asks us, "Where were you?" how will we respond?

In the story of Job, there's a memorable point where God asks, "Where were you?" In Job 38, following Job's lengthy lament and his friends' theologizing, God responds out of a storm. "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Where were you when I began a process of creation so astonishing that the stars sang and angels shouted?" God is asking Job, "How dare you place your trust, your fears, in anyone or anything other than me?"

Trusting God and surrendering our fears to him is not a one-time decision but a long obedience in the same direction. ■



Shannon Jammal-Holleman is an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church and works at the denomination's offices.

She and her family are members of Oakdale Park CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.



"All we have to decide is **what to do** with the time that is given us."

— J. R. R. TOLKIEN

Always Reforming

Both hallowed traditions and innovative ideas must be subjected to the scrutiny of God's Word.

ARTICLES AND LETTERS sometimes appear in *The Banner* advocating variations on what is known as the “two-book” view of revelation: the idea that God reveals himself in both nature and Scripture. This is sometimes linked with the slogan *semper reformanda* (always reforming). I would like to respectfully suggest that both of these principles are being misused.

It is true that God reveals himself in both nature and Scripture. The names of Augustine, Calvin, and Christian Reformed theologian Louis Berkhof have been referenced in support of this. However, a careful reading of these church fathers shows that, were they alive today, they would not recognize themselves in the positions being advocated. Berkhof, for instance, agreed with the position of the reformers that God's revelation in nature has been marred by the Fall, as has our ability to read it aright. Thus, both the more perfect revelation of Scripture and the illumination of God's Spirit are needed in order to interpret nature. In other words, Scripture interprets nature, not the other way around. Cornelius Plantinga Jr. has said much the same thing in *A Sure Thing: What We Believe and Why*.

As for *semper reformanda*, Richard A. Muller pointed out in a 1992 *Banner* article that the phrase can be traced to the 17th-century movement known in the Netherlands as the Second Reformation. The idea was that the Reformation reformed the doctrine of the church, but the lives and practices of God's people always need further reformation. “Doctrinal correctness was worthless apart from the moral and spiritual reform of the person,” he said.

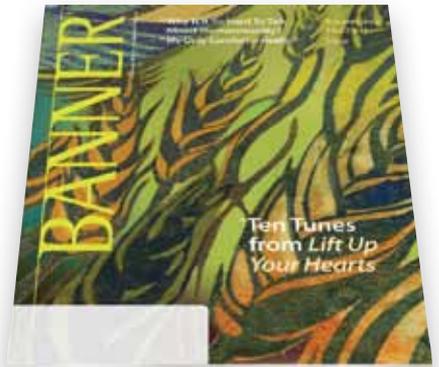
The Latin phrase is passive, not “always reforming” but “always being reformed” by the Word and Spirit. An expanded version reads: “The church is reformed and always being reformed according to the Word of God.” This motto was never intended to mean that the Word of God should adapt to prevailing theories of the surrounding culture. Quite the reverse: both hallowed traditions and innovative ideas must be subjected to the scrutiny of God's Word.

The findings of natural revelation can be legitimately used to reexamine our understanding of biblical teachings. An obvious example would be the discovery, popularly attributed to Galileo, who was building on the earlier work of Copernicus, that the earth revolves around the sun. But this is not the same as making the timeless authority of God's Word subordinate to changing scientific theories and cultural values. I do not mean to imply that this is being done intentionally, but church history shows it to be a real and persistent danger. ■



After thirty years of pastoral ministry, J. Cameron Fraser took early retirement to concentrate on writing. He serves as stated clerk

of Classis Alberta South & Saskatchewan.



Weather Wonders

Thank you to Joanne De Jonge for “Winter Weather Wonders” (Just for Kids, Jan. 2015). It is 1 degree Fahrenheit tonight and we just got home from an across-town drive. My husband said, “What are those lights?” I replied, “Light pillars. I just read about them in *The Banner*.” It was a beautiful display of white and colored pillars.

—Cheryl Buist
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Exile Experience

Mariano Avila's article “Leaving Home” (Dec. 2014) based on Matthew 2:13-14 immediately brought to mind Madeleine L'Engle's children's book *Dance in the Desert*. Beautifully illustrated by the Russian-born artist Symeon Shimin, it too tells the story of Joseph, Mary, and the young Jesus' flight to Egypt. With her wonderfully imaginative, playful way of telling a tale, L'Engle demonstrates that Jesus is the King of all creation. Visually and without dialogue she pulls together the Genesis 3:15 prophecy with the poignant words of Jesus in John 19:26-27.

—Frank De Vries
Abbotsford, British Columbia

LETTERS

I wonder how often we make the Bible fit our thoughts, feelings, or beliefs and overlook what it clearly says—for example, when we think that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus' exile to Egypt was done in poverty ("Leaving Home"). God clearly provided financial means from the magi before he told Joseph to flee to Egypt. As always, God equips us for the tasks he asks of us.

—*Jim Morren
Conrad, Mont.*

Dementia

I would like to add a few things to the article "Dad, Descartes, and Dementia" (Dec. 2014). My husband spent nine months in a Christian nursing home in the Alzheimer's unit. I often visited during their chapel time. I received such a blessing hearing the singing of people who no longer knew their families but remembered the hymns and enjoyed singing them. When we picked up his things after he died, a nurse told us, "Elmer changed my life." When he got agitated, he loved to have the Bible read to him, and then he wanted to pray. Prayer was the most important thing in his life. I can just imagine the big smile on his face when he opened his eyes and his mind was clear and he saw his Lord. God moves in ways we cannot comprehend.

—*June Walcott
Muskegon, Mich.*

Pushing, Pushing, Pushing

Amidst all change, the essence of worship remains unchanged ("Pushing, Pushing, Pushing," Dec. 2014). Worship is an encounter with God. Some contemporary services are more about the worshipers than the One who is worshiped. Notice the subjective content of many praise songs, the shift from an order of worship

to a program, and from preaching the Word to topical messages. The promise is greater relevancy. For all the faults of the past, I miss Old Testament and Catholicism sermons. What is more relevant than, for example, the second table of the law? Must we adapt to the modern world? Yes. But there is one thing the world lacks and the church has: God. Keep central what is central.

—*Nick Loenen
Richmond, British Columbia*

Lloyd Rang tells of the cathedral in Peru and the mixture of Incan and Roman Catholic art and symbolism ("Pushing, Pushing, Pushing"). Interesting. But I disagree that "echoes of Incan civilization . . . remain part of worship." The cathedral emphasizes the virgin Mary, and some Quechua (Incan descendants), when appearing to worship Mary, are instead discreetly worshipping Pacha Mama, the Incan goddess Mother Earth. In Bolivia, recently reelected president Evo Morales wants schools not to teach Christianity but rather the rituals honoring Pacha Mama. To think that syncretism is healthy is misleading and dishonors Jesus Christ.

—*Mike Frederksen
Gallup, New Mexico*

Our Story

Amen to Rev. Lou Wagenveld's In My Humble Opinion article "Immigration Is Our Story" (Dec. 2014). I fully agree that we and our politicians should show compassion and keep families together by passing immigration laws that allow paths to citizenship. This should also include the "Dreamers" that were brought into this country as young children. Our governor continues to deny driver's licenses to the Dreamers even though the courts have ruled this to be unconstitu-

tional. Dreamers have been allowed to stay by executive action.

—*Herman Klap
Sahuarita, Ariz.*

Jurassic Ark

It seems Mr. DuMez believes his views are rooted in a "literal" reading of Genesis 1 ("Speaking of Jurassic Ark," Nov. 2014). Discovering the literal meaning of a biblical text does not necessarily mean approaching it with straightforward chronological assumptions. In its traditional sense, "literal" refers to the original intent of the author. Even Augustine in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* recognized this, concluding that a faithful exegesis of Genesis 1 need not demand a six-24-hour-day creation period. One can hardly suggest that Augustine, writing in A.D. 415, was motivated by a compromising desire to "accommodate" Scripture with our current scientific theories!

—*Jon Van Hulzen
Lynden, Wash.*

With great interest I read articles such as the two on origins ("Speaking of Jurassic Ark" and "We Need Not Fear the Dinosaur," Nov. 2014). It seems that by now we should have established a building block of absolute truth to use as a foundation for the analysis of origins issues.

The science of nature is an incomplete human endeavor with many different theories that continue to disregard significant biblical nature-changing events such as Noah's flood and sin's curse. These

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Ontario Students Create Wristband Reminder: Don't Give Up

A few months after a devastating traffic collision left Wesley and Stephanie Collins seriously injured, students at Dunnville Christian School surprised the couple with donations they raised with a school project.

The grade 7/8 class created colorful wristbands designed to encourage prayer from the wider community. The bands, with the inscription "Don't give up Pastor Wes and Steph," were distributed to the whole student body, at the nursing home where Stephanie Collins worked, and to the congregation of Riverside Christian Reformed Church (Wellandport, Ontario) where Wesley Collins served as pastor.

The accident on August 28, 2014, left the couple with severe trauma requiring weeks of hospital care and later specialized brain injury clinic care for Wes, who was released to continue recovery at home in mid-November. Both are now walking and improving their mobility day by day with physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Wes continues with speech and other therapies as well.

The wristband project started as a math application problem in teacher Hannah



Students at Dunnville Christian School created and distributed wristbands in support of Rev. Wesley and Stephanie Collins.

VanderWeir's class after a student suggested ordering bracelets as a prayer reminder for the Collins. A group was assigned to research the details of how many bracelets to order and how much various features cost. After a parent donated some seed money, the production became a reality.

To date, the project has raised \$850. "We exceeded what anybody thought we would," said Kristen Oudman, 13, who attends

Riverside CRC with her family. "I was happy with the amount of donations that we have collected. The prayer that Pastor Wes and Steph have been receiving is amazing!"

Wes said he was uplifted by the gifts and knowing that his community is holding him and his wife in prayer. "It's dependence on God that has got us through this," he said.

—Alissa Vernon

World Renew Appoints New Disaster Response Team Leader



Ken Kim

World Renew, the relief and development ministry of the Christian Reformed Church, recently announced the appointment of Kenneth (Ken) Kim to head its Disaster Response Team. He succeeds Wayne De Jong.

Kim will direct response to international disasters and rehabilitation work, as well as guide the work of the organization's Disaster Response Services (DRS) in North America. Based in Burlington, Ontario, he will report to World Renew's co-directors.

Kim has extensive experience in community development and disaster response. Since 2006, he served as director for Presbyterian World Service & Development, which acts on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

"World Renew will be called to respond to more frequent 'natural' disasters as well as to deal with complex and protracted conflict-related humanitarian needs of today," he said.

Kim will start in his new role on April 1.

—Gayla R. Postma

Synod 2016 May Include Deacons

Deacons may soon be delegated to synod (the annual leadership meeting of the Christian Reformed Church). For over 150 years, only elders and ministers have been synod delegates. But if proposed changes to the Church Order are adopted at Synod 2015, at least 25 percent of the nearly 200 delegates at Synod 2016 will be deacons.

Synod 2013 proposed these changes to the Church Order after receiving a report called *Diakonia Remixed* from the Office of Deacon Task Force. The authors of that report envisioned a diaconate that departs quite dramatically from the status quo, a diaconate that is highly involved in community outreach, with the time and talent that takes. The task force recommended that the changes be adopted in 2015 and implemented in 2016.

However, Synod 2013 also decided that the report of the task force left some questions unanswered: In what ways can the agendas of the major assemblies be shaped for meaningful participation of deacons? What biblical and confessional basis exists for those tasks, which on the congregational level belong distinctively to the office of elder and the office of deacon, to be assigned collectively at classis and synod? What about the revitalization of the office of elder? In addition, while *Diakonia Remixed* offered resources and plans for revitalizing the office of deacon, Synod 2013 wanted similar resourcing for the office of elder.

To that end, it appointed a new group called the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon to build on the work of

Diakonia Remixed. In addition to answering some of the questions raised, the new task force was also asked to address what Synod 2013 called “persistent concerns” about the perceived blurring of the lines distinguishing the two offices.

The report of the new task force was released last fall. In it, the task force noted that the New Testament “does not present us with a normative and rigid pattern of leadership.” Instead, the authors wrote, leadership “arose fairly spontaneously as called for in each new situation.” The authors suggest that the church must reexamine its traditional assertion, especially in its liturgical forms, that Acts 6 is the origin of an institutionalized office of deacon. “The assignment of specific tasks to distinct offices is for the church

to sort out in its context for every new age,” the report states.

The report goes on to state that while the CRC currently structures local government that distinguishes between council, consistory, and diaconate, there is no such distinction when it defines the work of broader assemblies such as classis (regional groups of churches) and synod.

It concurred with the previous task force that delegation of deacons to those broader assemblies is not about equal representation but about full representation of the whole church. The task force also judged that no “changes, highlights, or broadening of the mandate of synod” are required to make inclusion of all officebearers meaningful and beneficial.

This task force also added a list of resources for elders, similar to the list of resources for deacons included in *Diakonia Remixed*.

The task force proposed wording changes to approximately 15 Church Order articles to bring about the changes it is recommending. It also recommended changes to the liturgical forms used for the ordination of elders and deacons.

If synod adopts the changes, delegations from each classis would consist of one minister, one elder, one deacon, and one additional officebearer from any of those three offices. Currently each classis sends two ministers and two elders.

Synod 2015 will convene in Sioux Center, Iowa, from June 12-18. —Gayla R. Postma

Task Force Report on Structure Available in April

The report from the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC) will be in the hands of the churches when the *Agenda for Synod 2015* is released in April. The task force will make recommendations on how the various boards of the ministry agencies of the Christian Reformed Church should be restructured for governance of the denomination's shared ministries.

The task force was appointed in 2011 by synod (the annual leadership meeting of the CRC), following the abrupt resignation of the denomination's top two administrative leaders. Synod 2011 gave the committee the mandate “to conduct a review of the organization, structure, and leadership within the CRCNA,” and bring its recommendations to Synod 2012.

In 2012, the task force requested a three-year extension to its mandate to more fully analyze the denomination's administrative structure, which includes the Board of Trustees and various ministry agency boards and advisory committees. It would then recommend to Synod 2015 a structure that could best enhance the ministry of local churches and the global mission work of the CRC. The intervening years included reviewing and making recommendations regarding how a senior leadership team might function after a new executive director was identified, and determining how the administrative and governance structure could best reflect the binational nature of the CRC.

In 2014, the task force presented possible options for restructure. One option could be to maintain the current structure. Another could see authority centralized in the Board of Trustees and change all agency boards to advisory councils.

A third option could see the Board of Trustees replaced by a Council of Delegates, a group of perhaps 60 people from classes that would meet annually, with an Executive Council of 12 members meeting three times per year. Some or all of the current ministry agency boards could become agency committees.

The various options were discussed by synod delegates in 2014, and church members were invited to give their input prior to the task force presenting its recommendations to Synod 2015.

Synod 2015 will convene in Sioux Center, Iowa, from June 12-18.

—Gayla R. Postma

NEWS

Ryskamp to Retire from World Renew

When Andrew Ryskamp was a child growing up in rural Wyoming, Ontario, he could not leave home because of terrible homesickness. Since then, he has traveled thousands and thousands of miles over a 41-year career with World Renew, the last 17 of which he has served as its U.S. director. He will retire on July 1. World Renew is the relief and development agency of the Christian Reformed Church.

Ryskamp joined the organization, known then as Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), in 1974, working in Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Sierra Leone.

When Ryskamp talks about his work, it's all about the stories. He recounted an experience he had a few weeks earlier sitting in a community in Kenya where annual rainfall has gone from 400 ml (15.7 inches) 20 years ago to 100 ml (3.9 inches) today. "We introduced a conservation agriculture approach that allows moisture to be retained and crops to do well," he said. "The concept behind that is the biblical teaching

of being God's stewards and producing [food] for their neighbors." Ryskamp said the spokesperson at that community meeting is the leader of 100 farmers in the area. "They start the meeting with prayer and end the meeting with prayer. You're just so blessed to see the physical and spiritual impact on the community."

Ryskamp said that World Renew's focus on community development is unique because it builds on resources already in communities. "We can do that because of the support we get from the churches and donors," he said. "It allows us to work patiently with communities, and that is the most effective. It doesn't assume that knowledge and technology from the West will save these communities."

"Sometimes people suggest that there are many organizations out there, and so do we really need World Renew? While there are many good organizations, many of their programs are driven more by the desires of the donors and marketing expectations than the needs and resources of the communities."

But, he said, conveying that effectiveness is always difficult. "When we do our synod report, as an example, a common reaction we get is, 'How come we didn't know about this?'" He wishes he could sit down and have a coffee time with every congregation, just to tell those stories.

Media coverage of relief agencies increases whenever there is a natural disaster, and World Renew is no exception because it is often on the front lines of cleanup and recovery. Ryskamp has seen his share of those during his career: two major droughts in East Africa; Hurricanes Andrew, Hugo, Katrina, and Mitch; along with the tsunami in Asia; the earthquake in Haiti; Superstorm Sandy on the U.S. east coast; and most recently Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in the Philippines.

While the disasters are higher profile, Ryskamp said it is the lower-profile community development that makes communities less prone to natural disasters and more resilient when they do come.

Always More to Do

Ryskamp said there is always a need to do more. "The frustration is in knowing you have a program that gets at the heart of physical and spiritual transformation needed in our world," he said. "Having then to say no and watch the impact on staff and people in need is hard. For instance, seeing the current work in Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan halted because of insufficient funding impacts us as well as the refugees we seek to serve."

Does he ever feel that in the face of such overwhelming need,



Andrew Ryskamp

the work is like spitting into the ocean?" "You only have to visit a few communities to realize you are not," he said, referring back to his recent experience in Kenya. "We work hard at tracking impact, so we can look at this one community and say, 'This impact is now happening in over 2,000 communities.' That's something to celebrate!"

He's seen huge changes in his time at the helm of World Renew, not the least of which was the organization's name change. "The change has given us access to working with other networks, with governments, with young people for whom denominationalism is just another 'ism.'"

He said one of the biggest gifts he has received is being surrounded with people like Ida Mutoigo, World Renew-Canada's director, and Wayne DeJong, just recently retired after heading up World Renew's disaster response team. "Making that binational piece function well is a gift the Lord has allowed me to enjoy," he said.

He doesn't know yet what retirement will bring for him. He still wants to serve the church, whether at a denominational level or in his local congregation, Madison Square Church in Grand Rapids, Mich. But, he said, family will be a high priority. "I travel 25 percent of the time. That's 10 years away from family," he said.

That's a lot of time away for a kid who once couldn't leave home.

—Gayla R. Postma

Noteworthy



James K.A. Smith

Christianity Today listed *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* in its 2015 Book Awards. The book, by Calvin College philosophy professor **James K.A. Smith**, received top honor in *CT's* Christianity and Culture category.

Avenue magazine in Edmonton, Alberta, named **Carla Stolte** as one of the city's Top 40 Under 40 for both encouraging creativity in youth and for leadership in her neighborhood. Stolte is a member of Edmonton's CentrepoinTE Christian Reformed Church.

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

—Banner correspondents

Korean American Pastors Receive Church Order Training

When Synod 2014 (the annual leadership meeting of the Christian Reformed Church) approved splitting the Korean classis into two new classes, Ko-Am and Hanmi, it also arranged for mentoring for both groups. (Classes are regional groups of churches.)

More than 60 Korean pastors gathered at the TtoKamsa Mission CRC in Los Angeles for training and mentoring on January 13. They were led by Rev. Kathy Smith, adjunct professor of church polity at Calvin Theological Seminary, and Rev. Joel Boot, the CRC's director of denominational ministries.

Rev. Seungchang Choi, stated clerk of the new Ko-Am classis, said, "I learned a lot. I believe that it continues to fulfill the vision of doing something positive to help current and future Korean-American pastors as well as churches in our vital work."

Rev. Paul Im, the new stated clerk of Classis Hanmi, said, "In its new starting history of two Korean classes, we are glad to see and learn together." He hopes some day the training and mentoring will include elders and deacons too.

—Jonathan Kim



Korean-American pastors gather for mentoring and training.

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. William Vanden Bos

1928 - 2014

William Vanden Bos, 86, a man known for his warm and compassionate personality, passed away from the effects of several strokes.

Vanden Bos entered the ministry after a time of running his family's farm. Following graduation from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1973, he served Christian Reformed congregations in Washington, Iowa, and South Dakota. He also spent 11 years as chaplain in a health care center.

Vanden Bos is remembered for his thoughtful kindness to people. His sermons too showed that he was aware of people's needs and burdens. He loved the congregations he served and the church at large. And he, in turn, was deeply loved by the churches he served. God's Word was new to him every morning. Secure in the Word, he did not hesitate to discuss new ideas and methods.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Ann, by four children and their spouses, and by 12 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

—Louis M. Tamminga

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

Michigan Third-Graders Help with Bible Translation

New Bible translations commonly require much time, expertise, and a committee of scholars. One recent translation update required an additional and unusual resource—a classroom of third-graders in Holland, Mich.

When the current fifth- and sixth-grade students at Rose Park Christian Elementary School were in the third grade, they helped a group of translators and researchers with a new edition of the NIRV (New International Reader's Version).

Their work has now come to fruition, and the students were each recently presented with a leather-bound copy of the NIRV *Adventure Bible* from Zonderkidz.

The translation team included Dr. Yvonne Van Ee, a child development expert and professor emerita from Calvin College. Van Ee lives near Rose Park, which is part of Holland Christian Schools, so the school was a natural choice.

The NIRV is intended for new and emerging readers as well as English-language learners. Van Ee



Excited Rose Park students and their new Bibles.

and the translation team asked students to read certain Bible passages and give feedback and wording suggestions for easier understanding.

The goal of the NIRV is to be understandable to anyone with a third-grade reading level. Dr. Michael Williams, professor of Old Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary and the chair of the translation team, was quoted in a school publication: "What better translation partners could we have in that effort than actual third-

graders? They helped us field-test the translation and often helped us arrive at alternative ways of saying things."

In December, Williams, Van Ee, and Annette Bourland, senior vice president of Zondervan, presented the Bibles to the students, who were each called up by name.

The students were extremely excited to see the finished product, said principal Rod Brandsen. "I could see it in their faces that this was something special."

—Susan Vanden Berg

NEWS

Ministry Shares Income Down Substantially

Ministry shares revenue in the Christian Reformed Church has fallen by 7 percent compared to last year, and, if the current pattern continues, income could be \$2 million less than what was received last year. Ministry shares are the monies given by congregations for the denomination's shared ministries and usually generate revenue of about \$25 million annually.

John Bolt, the church's director of finance and operations, said that some of the shortage is due to the weak Canadian dollar, which has recently fallen to 79 cents compared to the U.S. dollar.

The fall in the Canadian dollar has an overall impact of a 3 percent reduction in revenue. "We have no control over the movement of the exchange rate, but it has a significant impact," Bolt said. "The rate synod sets for giving by the Canadian churches is not adjusted for the exchange rate."

Of more concern to Bolt is the 4 percent drop in what churches are contributing. He noted that the rate of giving through ministry shares giving is significantly lower than he has seen over the past 10 years. "I don't know why it's down," he said. "Both the U.S. and Canadian economies are stronger than they were four or

five years ago. I could go to 1,100 different churches and get 1,100 different answers."

A study as recent as 2009 showed that the ministry shares program is still the most efficient way of collecting the money to do the shared ministries which the churches themselves have covenanted to do together.

Bolt said that denominational staff continue to get out the story to the churches of how their ministry shares dollars are used to support ministry around the world. In the meantime, he said, the shortfall means a heavier reliance on individual donor gifts. "It is much more expensive to have

advancement teams raise funds through that method than the ministry shares system."

Currently ministry agency staff are reviewing all expenditures. Bolt said in the near term, they are applying more effort to increasing revenue than making drastic cuts simply because cuts have a longer-term impact and take more consideration.

As budgets are prepared for the next fiscal year, which begins July 1, all the ministries are being told to plan on ministry shares revenue being 8 percent lower than what was received this past year.

—Gayla R. Postma

Niagara Cadets Camp in the Snow

The annual snow derby competition for boys to test their abilities in fire building, axemanship, compass orienteering, and other outdoor skills is common to many Calvinist Cadet Corps clubs. For the Niagara Cadet Council, cadets and counselors enjoy the added bonus of a chilly campout.

Niagara Cadet Council president Kevin Drenth of Riverside Christian Reformed Church in Wellandport, Ontario, said the campout has been part of the Niagara Snow Derby for at least 25 years. He remembers the winter adventure from when he was a cadet. Drenth was one of the counselors who slept outside again this year along with Riverside CRC's contingent of 11 cadets and

other counselors. The temperature that night dropped to -15C (5F).

"We've had many discussions on the board on whether we should keep doing this because it's a pile of work for the counselors for a one-night campout, but it's the one thing the boys remember," Drenth said. "They don't remember if they came in 5th or 12th, they just remember that they slept over and it was fun."

The sleeping accommodations have improved over the years, and now most include a wood stove in the shelter. "This year was the first year my club brought one of the wood stoves," Drenth said. "Normally we did it the old fashioned way: we just pack everybody in with lots of sleeping bags, and [we're] good to go."

Nine of the 10 participating churches had cadets and coun-



Cadets compete to build a fire and be the fastest to bring a can of water to a boil.

sors sleeping over. Each club had its own shelter and cook tent. On Saturday, all 10 clubs entered one or more teams in the skills competition. Bethany CRC in Fenwick had the overall winning team, and the club from Jubilee Fellowship CRC in St. Catharines had the distinction of having the youngest

first-time camper. Eight-year-old Carter said he chose to attend "because it sounded really fun and I couldn't wait."

—Alissa Vernon

Kids enjoy the first Go by Bike event in Holland, Mich.

Church Beats Cabin Fever with Indoor Biking Event

Parents looking to help kids burn off energy when it was too cold to play outside found a solution at Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich.

Go by Bike, an indoor bike ride event for kids, was held at the church on a Saturday in January.

Moms in Tow, a membership-based group for active families, and Velo City Cycles, a local bike shop, sponsored the event. It was free to the public.

Kara Koster, owner of Moms in Tow, attends Harderwyk Church and thought it would be a good place to give the indoor bike ride a try. "This was our first time," Koster said. "It was a great success and a lot of fun."



More than 40 children, ranging in ages from 18 months to 6 years, enjoyed riding along different courses set up in a church activity building. They could bring their own bicycles or use some provided by the sponsors, including no-pedal balance bikes for the littlest ones. Helmet fittings were also available.

With frigid temperatures and several inches of snow outside, the event was a good way to combat cabin fever. "Families were

beginning to feel a little cooped up. Being able to get the kids out on their bikes was a great way to help them burn off some of the extra energy," Koster said. "It is also a unique opportunity for the kids to be able to ride their bike in the winter."

Another indoor bicycle event is in the works for later this winter, Koster said. "We would love to have this become a staple winter activity for families."

—Susan Vanden Berg

Michigan Church Caffeinates Tired College Students

Exam time means tired students drinking lots of caffeine. So Encounter Christian Reformed Church in Kentwood, Mich., pro-

vided caffeine as well as food and study space for students cramming in last-minute study time. The idea came from student and church member Mark Brower.

"Mark proposed it to me as a way of connecting more meaningfully with college students," said Encounter's pastor, Dirk VanEyck. "I was initially skeptical because colleges often have terrific study spaces on-campus, but Mark had a vision for free food, coffee, lattes, and WiFi—all decidedly off-campus."

About a hundred students from all over the area came to Café Day. Three pounds (1.4 kg) of espresso, four gallons (15 liters) of milk for lattes, and two pounds (.9 kg) of chai were consumed along with regular coffee. Stu-

dents heard about the event through Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and word of mouth.

Café Day was an example of an event hosted by the new College Outreach Team at the church. In addition to organizing the exam event, the team has ordered in pizza, brought lawn games, and provided carpooling to church on Sunday mornings. The team was created by Jeremy Smith and Brower.

"I think Café Day has become a new tradition at Encounter come exam time," Brower said.

—K. Schmitt



Mark Brower prepares lattes.

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. John M. Hofman

1924 – 2014

John M. Hofman, 90, a man of patient and peaceable demeanor, was concerned about issues of justice and well-being and a keen observer of church and Christian life. He passed away in December of a heart ailment.

Following graduation from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1952, Hofman served Christian Reformed congregations in Idaho and Michigan. After retirement in 1990, he served 12 congregations that were without a pastor.

Hofman served the church with respect and diligence, focusing on the pulpit ministry and congregational work. He was very much a people person.

He cared deeply about his family and successfully balanced family and ministerial life. His love for sports went back to his younger years. He developed friendships with many international families from his active involvement in campus ministry in Lansing, Mich. At Young Calvinist conventions he served as a dedicated youth counselor.

Hofman is survived by his wife, Bertha, by four children and their spouses, and by 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

—Louis M. Tamminga

NEWS

Under New Leadership: Christian Higher Education in the CRC

All five colleges supported by the Christian Reformed Church have changed leaders within the last five years.

There is a new generation of leadership at the helm of the five Reformed Christian undergraduate colleges that receive ministry shares or significant support from the Christian Reformed Church. Calvin College, Dordt College, Trinity Christian College, The King's University, and Redeemer University College all have deep roots in the CRC. And all five institutions are under new leadership within the past five years.



Erik Hoekstra

The CRC has historically placed a premium on Christian education from elementary schools to undergraduate and post-graduate levels, a commitment rooted in the deep belief that God calls humans to be agents for Christ-centered renewal in all areas of life.

The presidents of the undergraduate colleges all agree that, as a group, their five schools are fulfilling their mandate to prepare students academically and spiritually to be those agents of renewal. They see their alumni becoming leaders in their churches, communities, and professions.

Melanie Humphreys, in her second year as president of The King's University in Edmonton, Alberta, said the quality of the students and alumni and the difference they are making in the world is the proof of the pudding. Michael Le Roy, president of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., for almost three years, said what he hears from most alumni is that "Calvin 'taught me to think well through the lens of faith.'"

Doing More Together

The presidents also agree that there are things they could be doing better. When the schools were started, it was in large part to have distinctively Reformed Christian higher education located geographically near communities where there were high concentrations of CRC families. "It made sense [for us] to have all the same kind of majors," said Erik Hoekstra, president of Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, for three years. But now that all the schools draw students nationally and internationally, that may not make as much sense.

Hoekstra sees collaboration as one of the ways to provide more of the programming students are seeking. "None of us are doing much to help students work for Christ-centered renewal in, for example, manufacturing. None of us have a major in that," he said. "How are we claiming that square inch?" He wonders whether the schools should consider diverse fields but perhaps with some differentiation based on qualifications or geography.

	Founded	Enrollment*	CRC**
Calvin College	1876	3,826	36%
Dordt College	1955	1,363	43%
Trinity Christian College	1959	997	24%
The King's University	1979	715	17%
Redeemer University College	1982	763	28%

*Full time equivalent in undergraduate programs
** Percentage of students from a Christian Reformed Church

Liz Rudenga, who was appointed interim president at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Ill., six months ago, said she would like to see more of that collaboration. "In one sense we are competitors, but how do we share with each other in meeting our mission?" she asked.

Le Roy said they also need to find ways to share the gift of Christian higher education with a wider audience. "We are reaching out to Christian young people from a variety of faith traditions," he said. "We have to do that in a language that invites people in while remaining distinctly Reformed and Christian. It's a challenge and an opportunity."



Melanie Humphreys

Financial Pressures

All of the schools face financial pressures to varying degrees. They face shrinking demographics: smaller families, fewer young people in the church, and fewer young adults seeking a liberal arts education. "All of our colleges are tuition dependent," said Rudenga. "We need enrollment, and enrollment in higher education [in the U.S.] peaked in 2011."

"It's basic supply and demand," concurred Hoekstra. "There are just too many colleges in America chasing too few students."

Several of the schools also fight a perception that they are too expensive, when in fact they are only marginally more expensive than comparable options.

But there is also a deeper question about cost. "The demands for education have become somewhat more utilitarian," said Hubert Krygsman of Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario. "The first question parents ask is, 'What job can my son or daughter get with a Redeemer degree?'" Rudenga hears that too. "Parents and students are looking for . . . increased job opportunities, increased income."



Hubert Krygsman

In answer to which all the colleges can point to compelling statistics. For example, Dordt has a 98 percent employment rate for its students six months after graduation. Calvin students are more likely to complete their degrees and do it faster than they would at a public university. In Alberta, where only 26 percent of applicants to medical school are accepted, the medical school acceptance rate for King's students is 90 percent.

The schools can show they are worth the money economically, but they want parents and students to know it isn't just about economic value. Krygsman asks students to "think about what your lifelong role will be as a parent, a member of a faith community, what kinds of organizations you want to work for and with, what kind of impact you want to make in life." He said there is no better place to prepare for that than Redeemer or one of the other Christian colleges.

Rudenga echoed that. "It's upfront investment in a lifelong commitment to follow God's calling," she said.

Partners in Success

To a person, the five presidents note that the generosity of donors in the CRC is essential to that mission of preparing students to be lifelong agents of change. "The Reformed community contributes to educational institutions like no other," said Krygsman. "We couldn't exist without that support."

Le Roy has seen that generosity firsthand in the past couple of years as Calvin has faced a financial crisis due to a large debt. "The goodwill I encounter when I'm out is humbling and very positive," he said.



Michael Le Roy

But it isn't just about financial support. Humphreys appreciates that Christian Reformed people are intellectually engaged. "They read, are thoughtful, and have the ability to engage with everything from social issues to theological issues," she said.

That's not to say there are not challenges associated with that relationship. All of them note that the hot-button issues in the church (age of the earth, homosexuality)

are also felt at the schools. "We hear from the denomination loud and clear that it wants the college to be working on challenging and difficult issues and that that engagement needs to be well grounded in confessional commitments," Le Roy said. "It wants us to be reassuring of our fidelity and courageous about doing that work. That's challenging space."

Krygsman said that the growing range of views on such issues puts institutions like theirs in the crosshairs. "It is very challenging for us to navigate between different views on things like homosexuality."

Declining Loyalty

The paradox is that while the CRC as a community has been so generous in its support of the schools, there is less loyalty to institutions in new generations. For example, Dordt has the highest percentage of its students coming from the CRC, but it has seen that drop by 20 percent over the past 10 years alone. "There is a lower level of commitment to Christian day school education and Christian higher education than there was 25 years ago," said Hoekstra. He thinks pastors and parents haven't been strong enough mentors in helping students make the choice for Christian education.

Le Roy echoes that. "I would like to see pastors and parishioners lean in on each other a little more to take the challenge of Christian higher education more seriously," he said. "It used to be unthinkable [to go elsewhere]."

These days, many view higher education as a commodity, that one university is just like another."

Rudenga said she knows it sounds self-serving, that of course the college presidents want students to select one of the colleges most closely connected to the CRC. "It's really said out of care for the church," she said. "I think [Christian colleges] help with the future of the church."



Liz Rudenga

"I think the health of the denomination depends on having young people going to these institutions to return to these churches to serve, lead, and participate in the renewing vision of the church," said Le Roy.

Krygsman agreed that the institutions and the church need to recognize the absolutely critical alliance of church, school, and family. "Young adults are making critical life decisions. Why not put them in an environment where they grow and deepen in their discipleship and discernment?"

—Gayla R. Postma

When did we become so mean?



The Trouble with Outrage

WHEN DID WE BECOME SO MEAN? These days, it seems like we can't talk about anything anymore—even with our brothers and sisters in Christ—without becoming defensive, making snap judgments, or interrupting each other with our well-rehearsed justifications. Whether online or in person, we hurl insults (“You don't respect the authority of Scripture!”) and quickly dismiss each other with blanket labels like “liberal” or “conservative.” Then no one feels heard and everyone screams louder. And the good news of love and new life and hope in the gospel is drowned under the weight of so much mean-spirited noise.

We could blame the relentless cycle of news pushed through social media and the 24/7 cable channels for creating a climate in which only the loudest, most extreme voices get heard. We

could also point to our stressed-out, un-Sabbathed ways of living as the source of our hair-trigger offence and easy outrage. But the trouble with outrage is that it leaves us stuck with an inward-focused defensiveness; it does nothing to encourage love of God or neighbor. Our outrage leaves us drowning in self-righteousness and pride, which are harmful to our souls and devastating to our communities. We seek out the people who agree with us and avoid those who do not. Most of the time, if we're honest, we put a higher value on being right than on being loving.

Our Witness Is Broken

I know we don't mean to be so unkind. I know that all over North America, church members are volunteering in Sunday school and setting up for coffee hour and terrified about the shrinking numbers in their congregations. I know we want to make sure that our churches are places where the love of God

Most of the time, if we're honest, we put a higher value on being right than on being loving.

shines out to the world, even if sometimes we have no idea how to do that. I also know this denomination values rigorous intellectual exploration and well-reasoned arguments. But this is the sad truth we must face: our inability to have truly hospitable conversations with one another is affecting our witness.

Last spring, I spoke with a woman who was close to receiving parole after serving seven years in a federal correctional facility. We talked about some local churches she might attend. She hesitated before asking, "Would they be nice to me?"

"Of course they would," I said. "Churches are great places for second chances." But even as I said it, I wondered what a typical congregation would make of someone with this woman's traumatic background and her nontraditional appearance. Then she told me the reason for her fears: "You know how Christians are—they're so mean about what they believe."

And here is the biggest problem with our meanness: our witness is broken. It's one of the top two words people use to describe Christians—*judgmental* and *hypocritical*. Like it or not, this is how the church is defined by many people who stand outside of it.

Despite how well-meaning we are, very few of us regularly come into contact with the kinds of people Jesus spent so much of his time with—the outcasts of our society, the "tax collectors and sinners" of today, the lepers, those tormented in mind and broken in body. That makes it easier to dismiss them with our judgment, because they remain abstract "issues," easy to pick apart from a distance. But a church that does not draw itself up to befriend the outsider and risk loving across the lines we set for ourselves is not the church of Jesus Christ. A gospel that exists to exclude, to judge, and to control is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to do better with our meanness or we will never do better with our mission.

What Does Love Require?

We need to stop asking, "Who is right?" and start asking, "What does love require?" We need to take the risk of drawing near to real-life human beings whose lives are tangled up in the issues we so hotly debate—and listen, listen, and listen some more. We need to ask God to grace us with the fruit of the spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We need to let our table fellowship be what defines us.

The Lord's Supper is the ideal place for us to let go of pride and self-righteousness and recognize that we are all sinners, equally in need of God's grace. When we come to the table, there is no room for defensiveness, no room for control or hostility, impatience, fear, or judgment. Around the table, we

remember: "Christ himself is our peace. He has made Jews and Gentiles into one group of people. He has destroyed the hatred that was like a wall between us" (Eph. 2:14-16, NIV).

One time at a church meeting I ended up seated next to someone who holds the opposite view from me on women in ministry. Inwardly I groaned, anticipating an awkward conversation full of thinly veiled judgment and scorn. I could not have been more wrong. Immediately after the blessing, my seatmate turned to me and said, "So tell me what it's like to be a woman in this denomination." He was gentle and kind, asking one thoughtful question after another. At the end of the meal, he said to me, "Well, you've certainly given me a lot to think about." And while I doubt that conversation changed his long-held view (or mine), it certainly changed my heart.

With a faith that proclaims incarnation as a central theme, there is no excuse for denying that the "issues" we debate do not float in some kind of abstract ether but are rooted in real human beings with complicated life stories. This brother in Christ taught me that we don't need to *agree* to be loving—that the opposite of judgment is not tolerance, but love with a nearness and ferocity that could only come from Christ.

Here is a challenge: seek out someone who holds the opposite view as you on a major question facing the church today, a view she has come to with the same seriousness about God and Scripture that you hold. Pray for humility. Then bite your tongue, sit on your hands, and open your heart to the person you disagree with. Ask questions. Be curious not only about what this person is saying, but what she is not saying—the fear and grief behind the words. Honor her with your full attention. If we practice this enough among ourselves, perhaps we have a hope of offering the same kind of loving hospitality to others.

Is there really any danger in too much love? God's mercy is extravagant. God's grace is deep. God's forgiveness is miraculous. What if, 50 years from now, we asked "outsiders" what they thought of the church and instead of "hypocritical and judgmental" the first thing people said was "authentic and loving"?

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God" (1 John 4:7). Let us love even those with whom we most strongly disagree. Let us repair our witness and change the world with God's radical hospitality and grace. It's not just a good idea. It's the gospel. ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE



Rebecca Warren is a member of Fellowship CRC in Edmonton, Alberta.

FAQs

Outreach

Q I feel so inadequate and timid. I have read books on how to share my faith with others and have a sincere desire to declare that Jesus is for real. But I don't want to mess it up. What should I do?

A When Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples and said, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised. . . . For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:4-5, 8). The book of Acts goes on to explain that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and receiving his power came as the disciples devoted themselves to prayer. In prayer the disciples turned a key in the gates of heaven, and the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them. The Spirit empowered Jesus' followers with the resources of divine power and transformation, turning them from a bunch of cowards into fearless witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord. What the church needs today is not so much "knowing how to do evangelism" as being on our knees in prayer for the power and outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Praying is the means through which we partner with the Holy Spirit in the work of outreach and witnessing.

Dr. John DeVries writes, "Prayer is also the key that unlocks the gates of Satan's resistance to the spread of the gospel," reminding us of the biblical truth that a spiritual warfare is being engaged. The apostle Paul empowers the church with this strong admonition: "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5). What are these divine weapons? The Holy Scriptures and prayer!

I hear an old gospel song—"It's me, it's me, it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer."

—Victor Ko is a church planter with mosaicHouse in Edmonton, Alberta.

Your father's deathbed was also a holy language lab.

Faith Formation

Q Last month my 96-year-old father passed away. He was raised on a prairie farm during the Depression and served in World War II; he had seen it all, and faith language shone through his everyday speech with natural grace. His final week was a holy one as every day four generations of us were gathered in his room. Moved by gratitude for his life, I was also struck by the difficulty the three younger generations had in using faith language as he did. What has changed?

A What a gift of grace the Lord gave in your father! I'm not sure that his ease in using faith language can be ascribed to his generation, but your question rings with poignancy nonetheless.

Using faith language naturally is indeed a grace—and a challenging discipline to grow into. Our everyday speech tends to either lean to the secular in which God is absent, or to a kind of detached spirituality in which God somehow floats above the ordinary messiness of everyday life.

When I was in elementary school, we had to learn 20 vocabulary words every week for spelling, meaning, and usage. We were also trained to use them in the classroom so they become part of our "normal." After many weeks and even years of this, we grew to use rich vocabularies naturally.

Faith language also requires learning new and deeper vocabulary and phrasing that we are trained to use through disciplined practice. Your father's deathbed was also a holy language lab. I know one congregation whose pastor coaches the congregation to speak naturally in faith language as your father did. Maybe more of us should do what he does.

—Syd Hielema is a team leader for CRC Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries. He is a member of Meadowlands Christian Reformed Church in Ancaster, Ontario.

Justice

Q Is any form of torture acceptable?

A Reports on the use of torture to extract information from prisoners of war raised ethical questions about treatment of offenders in the United States. In Canada, excessive use of solitary confinement, resulting in prison deaths, did the same. Public debates highlighted the fact that both fail the test of effectiveness. The global reputations of the U.S. and Canada are damaged by the use of "cruel and unusual punishments" that violate human rights standards, but they fit with "tough on crime" talk that responds to fears about security among voters at home. While "hot-button" news stories fade away, the deeper questions continue to fester within our societies.

In some cases, specific biblical texts such as "an eye for an eye" are used to justify harsh punishments as payback even though, in context, they were expressions of the principle of proportionality. The main message of the Bible is restoration, not payback or vengeance. A focus on restoring relationships broken by crime or violence is missing in many of the current debates.

A little-known report on restorative justice adopted by Synod 2005 provides a sound framework for genuine reform of criminal justice systems at all levels. It takes crime and violence seriously; this is not cheap grace. It offers a path of restoration and hope for both victims and offenders.

Many Christians minister to individuals in prisons. Maybe it's time to raise a louder voice for restorative justice at the systemic level.

—Kathy Vandergrift is a public policy analyst living in Ottawa, Ontario. ■

From Beggar to Brother

COMING IN FROM A FREEZING WINTER night I said, “I feel so bad for that guy begging.” My Christian friends responded, “Those people aren’t homeless!” “I hope you didn’t give him money!” I felt attacked for having empathy for a panhandler.

Having worked with people who are homeless, I know that most panhandlers are genuinely poor. But even if some are not, ignoring them certainly doesn’t help them change.

From Fear to Friendship

When I moved to Chicago, well-meaning people concerned for my safety trained me to put on a “Chicago face”—a “don’t bother me” look—to discourage solicitors. I got really good at it. In fact, I felt kind of proud that panhandlers would ask others for money but wouldn’t bother me.

Every time I stood waiting to cross the street to my internship, I put on my “Chicago face” and ignored the man who was sitting in a wheelchair, shaking a McDonalds cup. Meanwhile, at church I was hearing sermons about how Jesus pursued the people society had ignored.

I realized my behavior didn’t look like that at all.

I got up the courage to look at the man and nod. Pretty soon saying “good morning” to him became the highlight of my commute. Occasionally I brought him homemade bread or an apple. One day, my friend wasn’t there and I worried about what had happened to him. The next day I told him I had missed him and was glad to see he was okay. Panhandlers are used to people wishing they weren’t there; what an opportunity instead to remind this person that he’s valuable!

From Judgment to Generosity

Instead of judging, Jesus reached out and gave generously, especially to those on the fringes.

So how do we move from judgment to generosity? First, by shifting the way we

think. When you see a panhandler, try to stop worrying about why the person is begging. Instead, pray for him or her. Remember that Jesus offers rest to “all who are weary and burdened” (Matt. 11:28). Consider the moment an opportunity to share the kindness of Jesus with someone who might not know him.

Next, challenge yourself to treat such people with dignity by not ignoring them. Build your confidence by starting small: look the person in the eye and wave. Work up to offering a granola bar, bus pass, or slice of pizza. If you pass the same person regularly, learn his or her name.

From Greed to Giving

Giving helps me tune in to the needs of others and fight my own tendency toward consumerism and greed.

Recently I exited the highway to see a man holding a “homeless and hungry” sign. Rain was pouring down, and I felt God prompting me to give him my umbrella. Looking at my husband’s nice golf umbrella, I sighed. Then I rolled down the window and handed it to him. His eyes widened, as if to say, “Really? For me?” He said, “God bless you,” and popped open the umbrella.

For a while I kept thinking about that umbrella. I was annoyed that I’d given away our best umbrella. Then I began to wonder why it felt like such a sacrifice when I had several more umbrellas at home!

I’ve been practicing showing love to panhandlers for several years now. It’s still hard. It’s never easy to interact with those I’d rather ignore, or give away things I’d rather keep. But I’m convinced it’s what Jesus would do. I’m going to keep working at it. ■

Lindsay Wieland Capel is a social worker at Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services and a volunteer for Christian Reformed Disability Concerns. She’s happiest when she’s with her husband, Tyson, and son, Levi.



ELECTRIC FILMS STUDIO

I got up the courage to look at the man and nod.

Being Barnabas

by Joella Ranaivoson

We sat around the dining table: seven seminary interns from the past year, four new interns for the coming year, Calvin College chaplain Rev. Mary Hulst, and Nate and Aminah Bradford, co-associate chaplains at the college.

Coffee had been poured, eggs and waffles passed, and eating begun. It was the hand-off breakfast, where the team of seminary interns of the current year

passed the baton, so to speak, to next year's team.

The "old" interns talked about the best and the hardest parts of their year with their "Barnabas students"—a team of seven college student leaders in each residence hall. Then the new interns shared what they were looking forward to in the coming year.

This sharing of food and drink, communal reflection, prayer, and preparation was a foretaste of what being a Calvin Theological Seminary intern for Campus

Ministries at Calvin College would be like.

The seminary intern program, in the words of program supervisor Nate Bradford, is "a wonderful opportunity for seven seminarians each year to gain experience in college ministry."

Seven students from Calvin Seminary are selected to be interns in campus ministries for the following school year. Students often hear of or are prompted to apply for the program by word of mouth. Those with experience as semi-



You add.
God multiplies.

“ The seminary intern and Barnabas programs form an interwoven fabric of collaborative care, formation, and leadership. ”

nary interns tell a peer or a friend, someone they think would be well-suited for the task of walking alongside college students for a year in their respective journeys.

At Calvin College, each of the seven residence halls has a team of seven students called Barnabas (Barnabi, plural; or Barns, for short). Each of the three women's and men's floors has one Barnabas student dedicated to leading Bible study and helping to facilitate community on his or her floor.

They are joined by a seventh student—a worship Barnabas—who leads in planning and implementing a weekly dorm worship event. Barnabas students are spiritual life facilitators on their floors and in their dorms.

The interns are appointed, one to each hall, to walk alongside the Barnabas students for the duration of the year. They help to ensure that each “Barn” grows spiritually and feels supported, and they guide the Barnabas students as they lead Bible study and dorm worship.

The seminary intern meets regularly with each individual Barnabas in a one-on-one mentoring meeting and with the

◀ **Seminary Interns 2014-2015 (Back row, left to right) Jana Stob, assistant to the college chaplains; Rev. Mary Hulst, college chaplain; Jon Kool, Corey VanHuizen, and Michael McCarty, interns; (front row, left to right) Joella Ranaivoson, Michael Weller, and Bailey Sarver, interns; Nate Bradford, co-associate chaplain for residence life. Not pictured: Benjamin McKnight, intern.**



Intern Jon Kool during a prayer walk around several residence halls.

Barnabas team. Interns also meet biweekly with Nate Bradford for one-on-one meetings and weekly as a seminary intern team.

The seminary intern and Barnabas programs form an interwoven fabric of collaborative care, formation, and leadership.

“I hope and pray that the Holy Spirit uses this time to shape and form these believers to be a faithful presence in whatever they do once they leave Calvin College,” said Michael McCarty, an intern from Confluence, Pennsylvania.

Bradford describes the essence of the Barnabas program as mentoring, with

the purpose of answering the question “How can individual or small group meetings help shape people such that they become better, kingdom-aware disciples of Jesus?”

He added, “The hope for the Barnabas students is that we take them at whatever place they are in their faith life and move them further down the path of discipleship.”

As they partner with Barnabas students, the seminary interns join the students on their faith formation journeys.

“College is a critical time for faith formation because research shows that 18 to 24 are the years when a person most often establishes their religious pattern,” Bradford explained.

This year's crop of seminary interns are in the midst of their seminary journey, most just a few years older than the students they serve. Some are discerning callings to chaplaincy, others to parish ministry, others to parachurch ministry. What they share is the desire and conviction to walk alongside college students in this critical time in their lives.

“I am particularly passionate about this age group because I believe that this is a time when they are forced to own their faith and answer questions for »

Please pray . . .

- for the Barnabas students weaving spiritual practices and activities into the community life of the residence halls.
- for the Calvin College students navigating the challenges and experiencing the joys of life together in the dorms.
- for the Calvin Seminary interns who work among and learn from the Campus Ministries team of the college.
- for the formation of dynamic and durable faith among college students and seminarians alike as they seek discernment of their callings.

Meet Joella Ranaivoson

I stumbled upon Calvin College six weeks before my high school graduation from Rosslyn Academy in Nairobi, Kenya.

I'm Malagasy—from Madagascar—but grew up in Papua New Guinea and the United States, then Kenya, with my missionary family.

When my carefully wrought college plans came undone, I didn't have a place to go. My older sister, who was in college in the U.S. at the time, told me to look up Calvin College, as she had a high school classmate attending there.

It was quite disarming walking into the Calvinist, Dutch Reformed world from the international Lutheran world I was raised in.

During my time at Calvin, I was stubborn, determined, and thought I knew very much. But I dipped my hand in some places and plunged head-first into others, trying to suck the marrow out of the college experience. Four years later I was rich from it, but also utterly exhausted.

In my junior year I was part of the Jubilee Fellows program, a regenerative gift during my time at Calvin. In this program, 14 of us students learned about ministry, pastoral identity, calling, and serving the church, the bride of Christ.

Then, in the summer, we embarked on a 10-week internship to a church somewhere in the country. My internship took me to New York City to serve with Dwell Church, a CRC church plant in the Bowery neighborhood, and to be mentored by pastor Peter Armstrong.

During those 10 weeks in New York I learned many things. Among those that have stuck: I am called to the city; international and global cultures, concerns, and people are and always will be in my blood and heart; and I am compelled by the church.

In a series of events during my senior year at Calvin it became clear to me that God was prompting me toward seminary. I finally heeded that call and applied to Calvin Theological Seminary.

I'm the type to get restless from being in one place for too long, yet there was relief at not having to uproot and plant again just yet by staying in Grand Rapids, staying in the Calvin community.

I'm currently in my second of three years in the M.Div. program and serving this year as a seminary intern. It's interesting to interact with, listen to, and mentor students whose shoes I was in not four years ago.

Seminary is challenging—for your whole person, not just your mind—but it's well worth it. I am still stubborn and determined, but it's focused in specific directions, with a purpose. We'll see what God has in store for the future. ■

—by Joella Ranaivoson



Joella Ranaivoson and Calvin Seminary President Jul Medenblik at the fall donor appreciation dinner.

themselves,” Jon Kool from Grand Rapids, Michigan, said when asked what appealed to him about this job.

Another common theme among the seminary interns is how important their time in college was for their own faith and identity formation.

“Having learned and grown so much while I was in college, largely because of their [the chaplain and theology department at Dordt College] influences, made me really interested in chaplaincy in a college setting,” said Bailey Sarver, a Dordt alumna and former admissions counselor from Pella, Iowa. “When I heard about this internship, it seemed like a wonderful way to test the waters.”

Similarly, Michael Weller from Charlotte, North Carolina, said, “College was an important time and place in my own life that shaped me for ministry, and the chance to be that for someone else was extremely exciting for me.”

Benjamin McKnight from Grand Rapids, said, “I remembered how moldable I was, how much I wanted to be mentored and poured into.” For him this job became a way of paying forward, returning what was given, meeting a need that he had experienced not too many years earlier.

So what is it exactly that the interns do?

“If you asked my wife what I do for a living, she would say I drink coffee and talk to people,” said Corey VanHuizen from St. Catharines, Ontario.

“Now, that’s not completely untrue. But it’s more than that. I invite them informally into a discipling relationship. . . . I walk alongside [them with their] stress, baggage, joy, jokes, and sorrow. Everything from feelings of inadequacy in prayer to completely missing the point of the gospel; from sexual assault victims to [people with] addictions of many different kinds to the joys and ups and downs of dating relationships. I walk alongside college students.”

You add.
God multiplies.



Jon Kool, Michael Weller, and Corey VanHuizen focus on specific needs during a prayer walk led by Matt Postma, interim associate chaplain for upper-class students.



A Barnabas team meeting led by Joella Ranaivoson for Noordewier-Vanderwerp residence halls. Around the table (front to back): Hannah Black, Lena DeJong, Adam Fischer, Edoh Akwei, Josiah Markvluer, Joella Ranaivoson, Mikaela Deur.

When they meet one-on-one, each Barnabas student sits with a seminary intern, and together they plumb the depths of whatever the student feels pressing upon him or her: exploring and practicing spiritual disciplines; sharing deep pains and deep joys; sharing questions, doubts, and convictions; delving into a text from James for the campus-wide Bible study each Barnabas student leads.

During the rest of the week, the seminary interns witness the Barnabas students at work in their campus communities. The interns lead retreats with the Barnabas students, cook meals with them, and have them over to their homes to listen to their stories, dreams, and future plans.

It isn't about the intern bestowing hard-won wisdom on a younger college student. Rather, it's a case of exploring together.

As Weller said, "I really love getting to ask questions that I don't have answers to. I'm pretty sure at least half of my sentences begin with 'Why do you think . . . ?' and end with me not knowing what to expect as a response."

The principles of pastoral care learned in the Foundations of Pastoral Care course in the semester that precedes beginning this position becomes a well from which interns draw to cultivate their pastoral care and mentoring skills. It's also a chance to further round out one's identity and discern God's call.

"I think that God is actually shaping some of my calling through this . . . this job has been shaping and smoothing out my pastoral identity through pastoral care, active listening, leadership, and mentoring," McKnight explained.

The downside to this work? "Seeing my students struggle and hurt [and realizing] that I can't fix or change those things," answered Sarver.

"I only get a year with the students . . . it will be a tearful departure at the end of this school year," answered McKnight.

"The end is hard," says McCarty. The interns journey with the students for a year, then entrust them fully to the Lord as they separate and continue on in their respective journeys to wherever God leads. ■



Joella Ranaivoson is a student in the M.Div. program at Calvin Theological Seminary who is serving as a seminary intern at Calvin College.

Calvin College was birthed from Calvin Theological Seminary, and for most of their shared history, the two were one institution. That changed in 1991. But there is still much that binds the schools together, including a robust theological heritage, a shared library, and the same geographical location.

Another remarkable intersection is that of the seminary internship program with the undergraduate Barnabas program offered in the residence halls and overseen by the college's Campus Ministries Office. This feature was written by one of the interns whose own faith formation journey of young adulthood was lived out in the college and now the seminary.

—by Jinny De Jong,
Calvin Theological Seminary

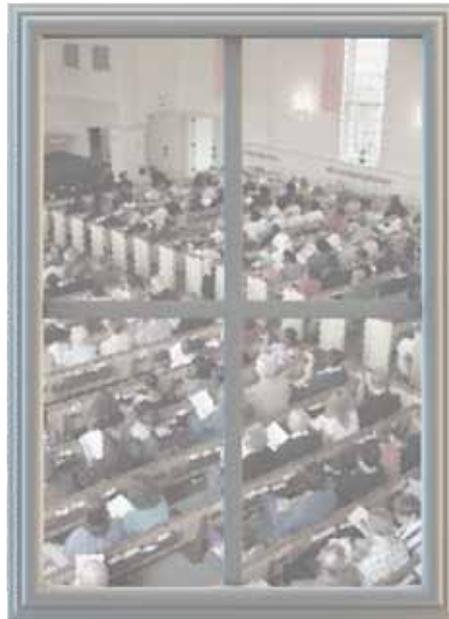
Looking through the Johari Window

Years ago, two psychologists pioneered a therapeutic technique called the “Johari window.”

It’s a window into the self with four panes. The first pane includes both what I see about myself and what others see of me. The second is what others see about me but I can’t see myself. In the third pane, I see the part of me that others can’t see. The fourth pane is the hidden self not seen by myself or by others.

I suspect that churches and denominations could benefit by looking at themselves through this window. Let’s take a fictional suburban Christian Reformed congregation as seen by a faithful, active, and lifelong member.

- **Pane One:** I see a church that’s been a fixture in a subdivision that was once new. I see dedicated members, although I’m worried about slippage in the younger generation. The community sees a stable congregation that has continuously filled a role in our community for decades.
- **Pane Two:** I’m not fully seeing it, but some in the community describe our church as remote and only for a certain type of people. It’s probably the same way I view the Church of the Latter Day Saints: separate from my world and for people unlike me.
- **Pane Three:** When I’m really honest, I’m conflicted. We love the Lord and seek to do his will, but our minister is entering his 15th year here and seems tired; we lose more young adults and young families than we gain, and our evangelistic efforts happen only by proxy as we give faithfully to CRC mission agencies and those of others.
- **Pane Four:** I don’t really see it, nor do I have confirmation from others in my community, but a church consultant



working with our council has told us that we’re entering into a period of significant decline.

So what is the identity of this church? Solid and stable? Clannish and set-apart? Faithful yet searching? In trouble? In fact, all four descriptions make up this church’s identity.

We could complete the same exercise with our denomination.

The first pane alone gives rise to conflicting views. I see a denomination that is doing amazing things through the Holy Spirit, yet some suggest we are a denomination in trouble.

My hunch is that neither I who see the glass half full nor those who see it half empty are getting the whole picture. We must take into account all four panes.

Recently the CRCNA’s Strategic Planning and Adaptive Change Team (SPACT) found that one of the challenges we face—identified by listening to you—is that we are losing our sense of shared identity. We need to see more clearly who we are and find our unity in a shared vision. And we should begin with the first step suggested in Matthew 16:15-18.

When Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.’”

The church is built upon confession—the confession that we serve the Messiah, the Son of the living God. What should always be seen—by each of us, all of us, and those in our communities—are churches and a denomination that make this confession.

From this confession we will rediscover our shared identity, an identity based not on ethnicity or immigration, nor on political agendas, nor on seeking to model the success of some other church or denomination. God has promised: we will not be overcome but will flourish, providing light so that all may see. ■

“God has promised: we will not be overcome but will flourish, providing light so that all may see.”



Dr. Steven Timmermans is the executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

OUT AND ABOUT

Assisting Flood-Stricken Floridians

Edward and Helen (not their real names) were at home in April 2014 when three feet of water began pouring through the back of their house in Pensacola, Florida.

They eventually had to be pulled to safety.

Their community had been hit by a massive weather system that produced severe storms, tornadoes, and historic rainfall throughout the Florida panhandle.

Edward and Helen are among hundreds of people still suffering as a result of the storm. According to the Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies (BRACE), at least 150 houses are still in need of major repair one year later.

World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS) volunteers have been active since after the storms. They started by conducting interviews with survivors and helping with sanitization and cleanup.

In the fall of 2014, DRS volunteers conducted a needs assessment, meeting with storm survivors to make sure the needs of vulnerable people would be met. In January, DRS opened a long-term reconstruction site.

The homeowners receiving recovery assistance are the most vulnerable—the elderly, people with disabilities, people with medical issues, and single-parent families. Most of the homeowners are also without adequate insurance, since the area is not histori-



World Renew Disaster Response Services workers pray before going out to work in Pensacola, Fla.

cally prone to flooding and mortgage companies do not require flood coverage.

For Edward and Helen, it would be impossible to cover the costs of the major repair

work. Edward is a veteran with disabilities; the couple has an annual income of less than \$20,000. They received \$25,000 between insurance and FEMA, leaving a gap of \$100,000 for necessary repairs.

In this effort, BRACE is providing case management, materials, and the work permits needed for home repairs. DRS is providing self-contained teams of reconstruction volunteers, tool trailers, construction supervision, site management, and cooks.

Habitat for Humanity is donating the use of four houses to provide accommodations for DRS volunteers. ■

—by Adele Konyndyk,
World Renew

Alina Finds Jesus on YouTube

Alina was born to a Christian family in Russia but rejected the faith and life of her parents.

“My parents prayed for me,” she told the Back to God Ministries International Russian outreach team. “But I left the church. . . . I did drugs and was completely sinful.”

Then someone gave Alina, 22, a video produced by Russian ministry associate Lika Roman.

“I thought I was too dirty, that there was no chance for me to ever be pure again,” said Alina. “But the video message talked about spiritual purity. It’s not what I have done, but what Jesus does for [me].”

Alina watched several other videos in the series on You-

Tube. She said, “It brought life to my heart. Right there by the computer, I repented.”

Alina moved away from the city where she had fallen into destructive relationships. She resumed contact with her parents and is now involved in a local church.

Some time later, Alina heard Lika speak at a church conference and told her, “I’m here because I heard about Jesus through you.” ■

—by Nancy Vander Meer,
Back to God Ministries
International



Back to God Ministries International is reaching people in Russia through YouTube.



Pastor Sammy Nila is a church planter in Kenya.



Pastor Gideon Mbithi

Growing Leaders in Kenya

The church that Pastor Gideon Mbithi leads in Machakos, Kenya, might look ordinary. But then you notice the mango trees.

The trees are one of many ways the church has grown. Growth in church membership. Growth in stewardship. Growth in the mangos, oranges, and other crops that provide the church with income.

“Churches here are more than a place of worship,” said Mbithi. They are an outreach to the entire community, and the government even gives money to many churches to help fill that role.

Knowing that his community looks to him as a leader, Mbithi participated in a leadership training event led by Christian Reformed World Missions missionaries.

Mbithi improved his abilities as a pastor, and now he shares the skills he has learned with other pastors, such as Pastor Sammy Nila. ■

—by Brian Clark,
Christian Reformed World
Missions

Planting Skills, New Confidence

At the first church he planted, Pastor Sammy Nila entered the community and simply started preaching and calling people to the Lord. Those who responded started attending the church.

“Building a church that way wasn’t easy,” said Nila.

Then he took part in a CRWM leadership training event using materials from the Timothy Leadership Training Institute.

Along with the connections Nila made, he realized that planting a church would be more effective if he got to know community members before trying to start a church.

“It’s so intimate when you’re visiting someone in Christ’s name, hearing their stories, and praying with them,” said Nila. ■

—by Brian Clark,
Christian Reformed World Missions

You add.



Pastor John Hoekwater held a communion service in a Chicago park to bring awareness to race relations.

A Church for the Community

Pastor John Hoekwater held a Christmas Eve service in a north Chicago coffee shop, not in the nearby building where his congregation, Many Peoples Christian Reformed Church, rents space for worship on Sunday mornings.

Many of the church’s members were out of town for the holidays. Gathering in The Common Cup coffee shop made sense, especially since the service would be particularly for community members—people who are elderly or poor, people with mental disabilities, and those dealing with drug addictions—who had no other place to go.

Many Peoples was founded in 2001 and was helped on its journey for several years by Christian Reformed Home Missions, which has increasingly put its focus on helping churches to do mission in their neighborhoods.

“Many Peoples is a good example of a church that sees its neighborhood as its mission field,” said Peter Kelder, a Home Missions regional leader for the Chicago area. “They have partnered with their neighbors in a variety of ways and shown compassion for people and a zeal for justice.”

Among the church’s ministry efforts has been turning an unused greenhouse in the local public school into a working greenhouse at which young people can work. Many Peoples Church also coordinates a partnership with the school so that the greenhouse helps support A Just Harvest, which provides meals for up to 200 people every day. ■

—by Chris Meehan, CRC Communications

Rascals with Values

Derek Dufendach remembers two “road not taken” moments—one an encounter with a deer, the other with kids at a soccer camp. Both changed his life’s direction.

Dufendach was headed to the University of Michigan after high school graduation. That summer, while riding his motorcycle, he collided with a deer. The resulting injuries and time for reflection caused him to consider what was ahead.

“I felt a strong spiritual tug that summer,” he said. “I reconsidered my plans and enrolled at Calvin College in the pre-dental program. Turns out that in my sophomore year I was able to play a little soccer too.”

A couple of years later, as Dufendach began applying to dental schools, he stopped playing soccer at Calvin and began coaching kids in local soccer leagues. Another direction shift occurred.

“I fell in love with coaching,” he said. “Being a mentor and a guide for those younger than me became singularly important. I decided to finish at Calvin and then, for a time, simply coach. I haven’t stopped coaching since.”

Dufendach not only started coaching but also shifted vocations and began his own soccer enterprise, which has grown over the last three years.

The Little Rascals Soccer Academy founded by Dufendach is for kids ages 3 to 8. The popularity of the organization led to Dufendach starting the River City Rascals Futbol Club for kids ages 6 to 14.

“We now have 19 teams and 13 coaches—and 12 of them are Calvin alumni or current students,” he said.

“They’re not just soccer coaches, they’re life coaches.”

Dufendach said that what he tries to do in his programs is teach and mentor beyond soccer skills. He doesn’t want to produce “soccer robots” because “kids have hearts,” and he wants hearts to grow as well as footwork. His goal is developing young adults with character. ■

—by Mike Van Denend, Calvin College



Derek Dufendach jokes with the “rascals” he coaches.

Go Green.

What does it mean to be green? It doesn't mean smearing your face with green paint or wearing a cool green shirt on St. Patrick's Day. *Wearing* green does not make you a green person. A "green" person is someone who takes good care of our planet Earth.

Why Be Green?

Genesis 1 tells us that God created the heavens and the earth. God made the clear blue sky and the mighty mountains. God made the emerald forests, calm rivers, and teeming oceans. He made all the swarming, crawling, flying, swimming, walking creatures that live in the air, in the water, and on the land. Then God commanded Adam and Eve to take care of the world he had made.

Now it's our turn! God has given us the job of caring for his beautiful world so that our children and grandchildren can enjoy it too. Being green is one big way we show our thankfulness and praise for God's good green world!

Kala! Come back in here! We are not recycling your little brother!



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY

Green Crafts

Instead of going to the craft store to buy craft materials, see what cool things you can make using materials you already have! Look for things like toilet paper rolls, paper towel rolls, recycled paper, bottle caps, empty jars, milk jugs, empty cereal boxes, and oatmeal cylinders. Use scissors, crayons or markers, and school glue to make a cardboard robot, paper monsters, or other cool crafts!

Recycling reuses items like plastic, metals, and paper to make new things. Many of the products your family uses are made of recycled materials. Go on a scavenger hunt to **find at least five things in your house that are made from recycled materials.** *Hint:* Look on the bottom of things like cereal boxes or packages of paper towel for the recycling symbol pictured here. Most newspapers are made from recycled paper, and water bottles are made from recycled plastic. One ton of recycled paper saves 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, 4,000 kilowatts of energy, and 7,000 gallons of water. **Recycling** is a great way to go green!



Reuse, Reduce, Recycle

These three "R's" are ways to go green: **reuse**, **reduce**, and **recycle**.

When the garbage truck comes and collects the trash from your house, where does it all go? Trash collected from homes, schools, and other businesses is taken to a landfill. A landfill is a large area of land that is used to store garbage. To create a landfill, bulldozers dig a huge pit. A special layer of material is added to cover the bottom of the landfill. Then all those trucks empty their loads of trash into these pits. Layers of trash are covered with soil and other materials to help keep the trash from leaking harmful gases and liquids into the ground. Did you know that the average North American produces almost 1,600 pounds (726 kg) of trash each year? That's a lot of trash!

We can reuse many of the things in our homes to cut down on the amount of trash that is added to landfills each year. Think of five things you can reuse at your house. We'll get you started:

1. Next time you have a birthday party, ask your parents to use regular plates and silverware instead of buying paper plates and plastic forks.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Energy is the power we use to cook our food, turn on the lights, keep the furnace going, run water, and generate electricity for all the machinery used in factories, farms, and homes. Much of this energy comes from materials like natural gas, petroleum (oil), and coal. These are called natural resources. Many natural resources are non-renewable, which means that one day they will be used up. Others—such as energy harnessed from the sun and stored in solar panels or generated by the wind by wind turbines—are renewable. Either way, we can reduce the amount of energy we use in our homes to help save the earth's natural resources. Saving energy at home also saves your family something green—money! Think of five ways to **reduce** the amount of energy you use. Here's one idea:

1. Turn off lights in the rooms you are not using.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Great Green Smoothie

This healthy and delicious smoothie tastes fruity, even though it has green vegetables in it! (If you're not allowed to use the blender, please ask an adult to help you.)

- 2 cups baby spinach
- 2 cups frozen peaches
- 1 cup frozen mango
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 cup vanilla yogurt

Add orange juice and yogurt to a blender. Carefully blend in baby spinach, pouring a little bit in at a time. Add the frozen fruit. Share your smoothies with a friend. Enjoy!



10 Ways to Go Green

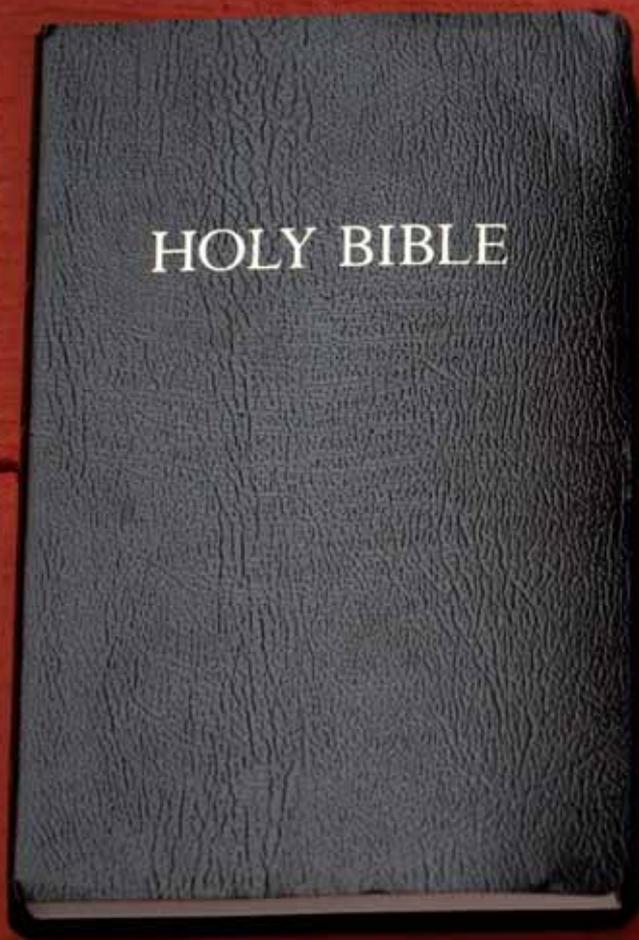
Here are 10 ways to take care of God's world by reusing, reducing, and recycling.

1. Give old toys away rather than throwing them away.
2. Clean up trash in your local park or neighborhood.
3. Reuse gift bags for holidays and birthday parties.
4. Plant a vegetable garden in your backyard.
5. Buy food from your local farmers' market.
6. Borrow books from the library instead of buying new ones.
7. Take showers instead of baths (showers use less water).
8. Recycle paper, plastic, glass, and metal products from your house.
9. Use only cold water when washing your clothes.
10. Take reusable bags with you when you shop for groceries.



Christin Baker is a full-time stay-at-home mom. She is a member of Resurrection Fellowship Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.





Doing Church in a DIGITAL WORLD



I AM ON THE UPPER EDGE of being a digital native. As defined by Wikipedia, a digital native is “a person who was born during or after the general introduction of digital technologies and through interacting with digital technology from an early age, has a greater comfort level using it. . . . In most cases, the term focuses on people who grew up with the technology that became prevalent in the latter part of the 20th century and continues to evolve today.”

Technology is essential in my life. This means that, as a digital native minister of word and sacrament, church is not just what happens on Sunday morning. Church is also what happens in the digital world. Technology is woven into my understanding of how I practice my faith. The church, the body of Christ, is vibrantly alive. And every time I’m on Twitter, I see the people of God wrestling with difficult topics in the company of fellow pilgrims.

Church leaders sometimes bemoan the ills of social media. But I want to offer another perspective. I want to encourage the church to faithfully consider ways we might integrate social media into the care and development of God’s people.

Let me share with you one very practical experience of how I used social media in the church I serve as a minister in the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The church does not have screens in its sanctuary and probably never will. We are warmly liturgical and value being together in the flesh. Earlier this summer I was preaching on Luke 24, where the resurrected Jesus appears to his disciples and tells them, in verse 48, “You are witnesses of these things.” Essentially Jesus was telling them, “Yo! You are storytellers of the faith. Each of you has a story about your encounter with the resurrection. Go and tell people your story!”

Inspired by *Smith* magazine’s “Six-Word Memoir,” I took a faith twist and tweeted my followers, “If you had to tell your story of faith in six words what would you say? #MySixWord-StoryOfFaith.” The hashtag allowed us to curate a conversation that quickly went global. My Twitter followers tweeted their six-word story of faith, and their followers tweeted . . . and pretty soon it wasn’t just a conversation among Christians. Muslims began sharing their faith, and Jews began sharing their faith, and people of all different faiths began sharing their six-word story of faith. I used examples from Twitter during my sermon on Sunday morning, and then I invited my congregation to go

on Twitter and add their six-word story of faith after worship. Social media helped facilitate this very cool experience.

Being the church in the digital world means we must be open to the many ways God's people gather. We gather in a pew and we gather online. In each of these places we can find the living Christ present.

FACEBOOK IS REAL LIFE. SNAPCHAT IS REAL LIFE. INSTAGRAM IS REAL LIFE. *Sitting together in pews is real life.*

So here are a few ideas to consider as you and your fellow church members focus your creative processes on ways to “do church” in a digital world.

1. Meeting someone online is just as much real life as meeting someone in person is. Twitter is real life. Facebook is real life. Snapchat is real life. Instagram is real life. Sitting together in pews is real life. This is very important to understand. *Real* doesn't mean just what happens in the flesh; real also means what and who I interact with on my screen. We need to develop a theology that integrates these virtual experiences.
2. You need to stop saying, “You use Twitter/SnapChat/Kik/Facebook too much.” Nope, you don't get it. Being a digital native means these are our hangouts. These are the spaces we live in.
3. The front door to your church is not only the one made of wood or metal in the building. The front door to your church is also your website, your Facebook page, your Twitter. Just as you have greeters at the door on Sunday morning to welcome people, make sure you have people who are tending to your social media presence.
4. Don't just promote events. Relationally show up in your social media spaces. Theologically speaking, incarnationally inhabit your social media spaces. Get to know the people who are your online “neighbors.”
5. Ministers, remember that pastoral care doesn't only happen in your office with two wooden chairs and the coffee table. Pastoral care can happen in 140 characters, and it can also happen in a 10-second Snap. I especially think this is true for Facebook messages. I have ministered

to people in my congregation who have reached out to me through Facebook messages. I have even prayed with people through the medium of Facebook messaging. I don't want to neglect the “in the flesh” meeting, but if we are to be a people who care about others, we need to be open to caring for people in the neighborhoods where they hang out. This includes social media.

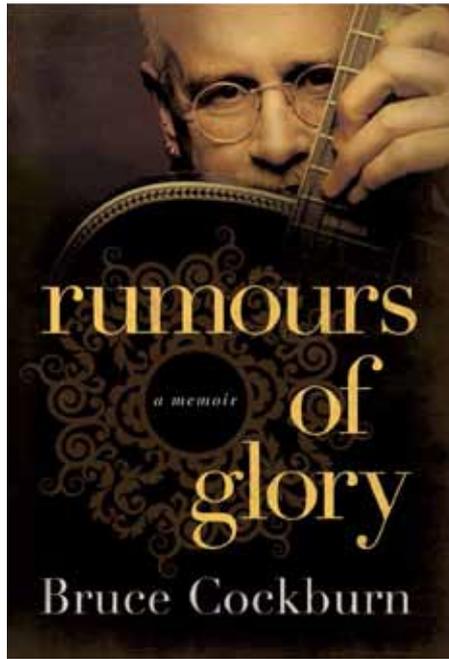
6. Watch the video “*Christ Has No Online Presence but Yours*” written by Meredith Gould.
7. Consider how the gathering of God's people on Sunday can be woven into their daily digital lives. For example, create a Tumblr account for your church. Invite people to post pictures or quotes of the ways people see Jesus Christ in the world. Obviously you will need someone to curate this. Perhaps you are doing a sermon series on compassion, and you decide to invite your congregation to take pictures of places and people where they see compassion in the world. Create a hashtag related to your church to collect the pictures—i.e. #WestEndCompassion.
8. If you don't have a YouTube channel, explore the possibility. You can post video segments of worship so that people who are not able to come to worship have access to worship. Perhaps you want to invite people in your congregation to make videos to share their stories of faith and post them on your channel. Think of the possibilities for extending community!
9. Consider creating a Pinterest board for your church. Use it to post prayers, symbols, Scripture passages, and other things that can help people feel connected to the body of Christ. This would be especially meaningful to homebound members.
10. My best friend, Rev. John Russell Stanger, and I have created a new YouTube channel called *The Real Reverends of NYC*. We wanted to create a show that is as much silly as serious, where we can talk about our engagement with Scripture as much as our love of pop culture. It's new and we are in the process of dreaming what this could possibly be as we try out different ideas. Check it out!

What about you? What ways of “doing church” would you add to this list? Invite the digital natives in your church to help guide the conversation. What would you want the church to know about your connection to faith and technology? ■



Jes Kast-Keat is associate minister at West End Collegiate Church in New York City. You can follow her @jeskastkeat where she tweets about church, New York City, and pop culture.

Bruce Cockburn's Sonic Life



MY INTRODUCTION TO BRUCE COCKBURN came over 30 years ago upon hearing a live acoustic guitar instrumental, “Water into Wine,” during an FM radio interview. I wondered aloud to a friend, “Could this artist be a Christian?” And so I, like many over the years, met the legendary Canadian Music Hall of Fame singer and songwriter. Over the course of 29 albums, Cockburn became a bit of a spiritual lodestar for many believers, who resonated as much with his jazz-influenced folk music as his introspective lyrics tackling personal, spiritual, and sociopolitical concerns.

Stories trace his evolving and waning faith, his travels across Canada, and his social activism.

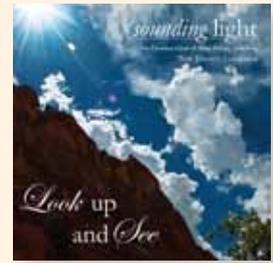
In his autobiography, *Rumours of Glory: A Memoir*, Cockburn offers a sprawling 500-plus-page chronicle marked by the political, romantic, and spiritual highways and byways that have informed his songwriting, activism, and life over several decades. His peripatetic ways are evidenced in stories that trace his evolving and waning faith, his travels across Canada, and his social activism. Readers are taken on a world tour, visiting places like Chile, Guatemala, Mozambique, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and more as Cockburn speaks out on diverse issues, from Native rights and land mines to American and Canadian foreign policy and global warming. He claims he has not written “protest songs” but those of “personal lament . . . I want to paint sonic pictures of what I encounter, feel, and think is true.”

Fans of Cockburn’s music will enjoy how his story is punctuated throughout with dozens of full-lyric song interludes—with the stories behind many, showing how scenes from his life connect with his lyrics—and introductions to industry insiders. (A nine-disc companion box set is also available via his record label, True North.)

For Christians, *Rumours of Glory* ironically reveals a Cockburn who, while still spiritual, “has become less specifically Christian” in his later years, turned off by fundamentalist and right-wing believers. He speaks now often of “the Divine.” But in diverse ways and times, Cockburn has provided the soundtrack for my life. To this day, whenever I take the Lord’s Supper, I still recite lines from “Gavin’s Woodpile”: “The earth is bread, the sun is wine. It’s a sign of hope that’s ours for all time.” (HarperOne) ■



Robert N. Hosack is executive editor for Baker Academic and Brazos Press and attends First Presbyterian Church (EPC) in Beaver, Penn.



Look Up and See

by **Sounding Light**; Tom Trenney, conductor
reviewed by **Randall D. Engle**

Everyone who has followed Sounding Light from its inception will be thrilled with the group’s second recording. The choral artistry is unmatched; the repertoire selection tasteful and innovative. The music and texts take the listener on a journey first of lifting up the eyes (Psalm 121), then down the road of the troubles and joys of life, ending with two poignant choral prayers for Christian pilgrimage. A modern-day “disc of ascent,” this recording leaves the listener looking to the heavens. (Available at manyvoicesonesong.org.)



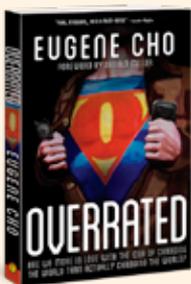


The Secret Sky

by **Atia Abawi**
reviewed by **Jenny deGroot**

Samuillah and Fatima are modern-day counterparts of Romeo and Juliet in this harrowing story of young love and hope in contemporary Afghanistan. Childhood friends Sam, a Pashtun boy,

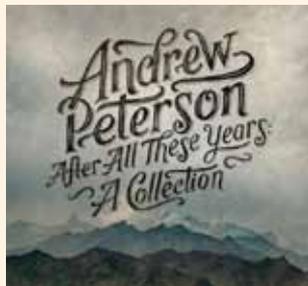
and Fatima, a Hazara girl, know that their maturing love will be denied because of family pride and class differences. The author draws on her heritage, journalism experience, and understanding of a place wracked by war and torn apart by differing understandings of traditions and faith. Although painful, *The Secret Sky* is sensitively written for older adolescents. Grades 7 and up. (Philomel)



Overrated

by **Eugene Cho**
reviewed by **Adele Gallogly**

In 2009, Seattle pastor Eugene Cho and his wife, Minhee, founded One Day's Wages—a grassroots movement aimed at alleviating extreme poverty around the world. His book *Overrated* is, in part, a look at the convictions and issues that led to this organization's creation and that drive its work today. While the book is deeply personal, it is a call for all followers of Christ to examine the attitudes and actions that arise as we attempt to impact the world for the better. (David C. Cook Publishing)



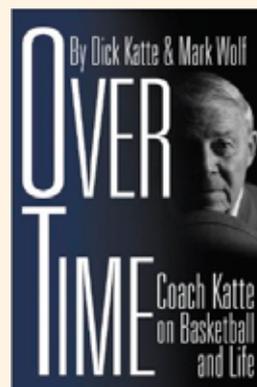
After All These Years

by **Andrew Peterson**
reviewed by **Adele Gallogly**

Singer-songwriter Peterson's newest album is a retrospective collection of early songs re-recorded alongside a handful of new tracks. There are songs of gratitude to God for his faithfulness as seen through the gifts of relationship and the beauty of creation. But when it comes to expressing the wounded state of the world—from broken marriages to war to grief—Peterson does not balk at the pain and fear that can arise when God seems silent or hidden. This album is Peterson at his best. (Capitol Christian Music)

Over Time: Coach Katte on Basketball and Life

by **Dick Katte and Mark Wolf**
reviewed by **Dave Baker**



During his career, basketball coach Dick Katte served the community of Denver Christian High School in a variety of different leadership capacities. He had a good understanding of the challenges that students face. In

this autobiography, Coach Katte shares his journey as a coach. Most noteworthy are the relationships he developed and his way of leaving people in better condition than he found them. Katte includes several principles of character development and teamwork in the book as well as his coaching technique and philosophy. (Blue River Press)

Coach Katte took a moment to answer a few questions for us; see the full interview at thebanner.org.

Q. Have expectations of coaches changed over your 48 years?

A. Not as many coaches today are educators, so the expectation is not to “grow people.”

Q. You have faced a couple of major medical issues—a brain aneurysm and cancer—that have given you a renewed appreciation for a healthy life. What's your take on the current concern about sports injuries, particularly concussions?

A. The medical issues were a timely reminder to me that sports and success are *not* to be “our life”—I was reminded that God is in control. Some of the current concern and emphases are a reminder that life is more important than the game, and that we must keep a proper perspective in our expectations of participation.

Olive Kitteridge

reviewed by **Carol Rottman**

Rarely has a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel been turned into a satisfying HBO movie, but *Olive Kitteridge* is an exception. The lives of Olive and Henry Kitteridge in small-town Maine are as common as they are complex. The miniseries, spanning over 40 years, proclaims that there is no such thing as a simple life. Actress Frances McDormand plumbs the emotional depths of blunt, stern Olive. There is depth of understanding in this dark portrayal of life, which never offers easy answers. Repeated viewings will continue to unpack the layers of emotion, tragedy, commitment, redemption, and finally peace. On disc this month. (HBO)



**MORE REVIEWS
ONLINE**

Miracles: God's Not Supposed to Do Stuff Like That

I WAS SITTING IN MY USUAL SPOT at the pastors' prayer meeting, listening to the prayer requests and preparing to join in prayer. Often the requests made by this interdenominational group of pastors are for God's blessings on events and programs, mission trips, or other exciting happenings these dedicated pastors are organizing in the community. I rarely have such requests to bring up since our little church, with its limited budget and manpower, does very few big or exciting things.

But that day the tone of the conversation was downcast. A few pastors had just conducted some very difficult funerals. Others were trying to help congregants battling alcoholism and drug addiction. With each contribution, our hearts were getting heavier. We all needed a little encouragement, so I decided to share one of the recent testimonies I'd heard at our church. An 83-year-old man in our church had broken his hip; a few weeks later his wife got up in church and testified that his hip bone was completely healed. The doctors couldn't even see a break.

The quick turn of heads and the looks on the pastors' faces shouted a collective, "Are you serious?" Then came the half-serious question: "God's not supposed to do stuff like that in a Christian Reformed church, is he?"

I probably don't speak up often enough about the miracles God does in our congregation. I tend to check my motives to a fault before sharing. So often I've seen the work of God proclaimed in a way that glorifies the individuals or churches who received the miracle instead of simply giving all the glory to God.

But God doesn't receive glory from fear or silence either.

Raised from the Dead?

It started in the spring of 2008. My family and I had just left for Michigan. Somewhere en route we got a phone call from a member of the congregation who told us her cousin's heart surgery had gone badly. His brain had been deprived of oxygen long enough to put him into a coma and destroy any possibility of quality of life. She asked for the congregation to pray. Her cousin had been a faithful attender at our church for quite some time. Shocked and horrified, we prayed that he would

somehow recover. Weeks later, his condition was deteriorating. Given no hope of his survival, the family eventually made the heartbreaking decision to "pull the plug" of the machinery keeping him alive and to let him go.

We prayed as the family gathered. But instead of dying, he came out of his coma and began to breathe on his own. After a few weeks, he left the hospital to enter a rehab center. By the time I saw him again, he was functioning quite well. When he showed up in church for the first time, the congregation went wild—well, as wild as a group of Dutch and Navajo folks can get. There were a few unsolicited "Amens" and some good healthy nods. Really, we were all blown away.

God doesn't receive glory from fear or silence.

Miracle Babies

Two years later, a woman in our congregation was having a very difficult pregnancy. At 22-and-a-half weeks her water broke. She contacted me, and by email and text I was able to get the whole church praying. She desperately wanted her baby to wait one more week to be born. This tiny human being, smaller than an iPhone, was born 17 days later, breathing with his own little lungs. Doctors soon had to put him on a respirator because his lungs were too tiny to handle breathing. After about a month, he was hanging on to life by a thread. Facing his likely death, we somehow received the grace to keep praying. The nurses, calling him a fighter, gave him the name "Eli the Prophet Edwards."

Eli is now almost 2 years old. He's still on a ventilator part of the time until his lungs heal completely but has no signs of brain damage or hearing loss. I don't believe that this little guy survived because he was a fighter—but because a miracle-working God was fighting for him.

That same year another mother in our congregation had a baby. Delivered full term, the child wasn't breathing. Doctors told them he wouldn't survive. The grandfather of the baby, however, called his son to say that he believed he had heard a word from the Lord: "Peace be with you. Do not fear. You shall not die" (Judges 6:23). He called upon the church to pray. Once again, prayers were prayed, faith was stirred by the Holy Spirit, and baby Gideon came home a few weeks later, thriving.

Marveling at God's Wonders

By this time, our congregation had begun to believe that God does great and mighty things. A sense of joy and hope arose during our gatherings as people were reminded of God's love for them and his power to work on their behalf.

It had always been our practice to set aside a section in the bulletin for prayer requests so that members of the congregation could lift those requests up in prayer throughout the week. I honestly didn't know if anyone other than a few prayer team members took the time to pray over those requests. But suddenly that section of the bulletin was in high demand. People wanted to make sure they knew about all the latest challenges to pray for and they wanted to make sure their requests got into the bulletin. Never in my wildest dreams had I imagined that a church bulletin would get so much attention! People in our church were starting to believe with all their hearts that when the people of God pray, God moves.

There is no human logic to what we have experienced. I have served in churches with more charismatic, faith-filled leadership and congregations where people believed and waited passionately for God to move among them but saw very little in the way of miracles. Perhaps God has chosen to show his power among us in these ways because our weakness makes his strength so obvious. Our congregation has certainly faced its share of disappointments, and there are many people who struggle and receive no miracles. But we have seen what God can do, and it's changing our lives.

We have become a congregation that testifies regularly about the great things God has done. Not long ago a woman told us

that her son, who has had a heart condition since birth and has undergone several surgeries, received a report from the doctor that his heart was "in perfect condition for a boy his age." Within the last few years, a woman's grandson and two others were healed of cancer. A man who was saying final goodbyes to his relatives because his organs were shutting down showed up in church on Easter Sunday, to our great astonishment. People testify about financial miracles, salvation, deliverance from drug addiction, and many other works of God's power among them.

So I really didn't feel like I was saying anything surprising when I reported that God had healed an 83-year-old man's hip bone. It was just one of many incredible things I've seen God do for his people. Is God supposed to do this in a Christian Reformed church? I don't know. All I know is that he's doing it, and we are grateful witnesses. ■

[STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE](#)



Susan LaClear is the pastor of Maranatha Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Farmington, New Mexico.

And God Said Softly, “Music”

It must have been early in the morning of the fourth day that God in the pre-dawn, deep-blue-blackness whispered to himself, “Music,” though it wasn’t the English word, *music*, English not yet existing, nor for that matter any other earth language. God said “Music” softly in God language, as he imagined all those birds at dawn— though why it had to be birds that sang and not, say, rodents or cats or large non-human mammals—I don’t know. (Blue whales, of course, sing and have actually made a best-selling album, still it’s birds that are the earth’s primary singers—they do it for a living, so to speak.) But he must have heard in his mind’s ear all those birds waking up, breaking the silence with their first hesitant chirps and cheeps, trills and gurgles, then gradually gaining confidence and soaring into songs of dawn.

What a good idea, music, maybe his best creation though it’s hard to pick one best thing, humans being a pretty good idea, in spite of the fall, and marriage and sex, and all the tasty foods, and language, all languages, but especially English—and here I know my bias is showing—English being my native language and the only one I speak.

But back to music. I suspect it was birds who planted in humans the notion that they could sing, and then pretty soon Jubal was tinkering with strings and whistles and not long after that in God time, I stood in the Chorus of The Siouxland Oratorio singing with others the great choruses of Handel’s *Messiah*. He knew what he was doing—I mean God, not Handel—though Handel certainly did all right and so did the Chorus and Orchestra—but we’re all just birds, really, all of us warbling as best we can in praise of the Creator, who back in the darkness of pre-creation thought how nice it would be to hear his creation sing. And perhaps he also thought then how much his creatures might be comforted by the songs they sang to him.

I’ll bet he did. ■

Reprinted from *Illuminated Manuscript* (2012) with permission of Dordt College Press.



David Schelhaas is a retired Dordt College English professor and a member of Covenant CRC, Sioux Center, Iowa. This poem is from his collection of poems titled *Illuminated Manuscript*, available from Dordt College Press.

ADS

Deadlines: April issue is 3/9/15; May issue is 4/6/15. 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

Agenda for Synod 2015

Synod has established the following deadlines for materials to be received by the office of the executive director of the CRCNA for the synodical agenda:

- Reports of standing committees and affiliated youth and educational agencies are due on February 15.
- Reports of agency boards are due ten days after the conclusion of the board meetings, but no later than March 1.
- Overtures and appeals are due no later than March 16.
- Names and addresses of delegates to synod on the Credentials for Synod, as well as the completed information sheet on each delegate, are to be submitted by stated clerks of classes as soon as possible but no later than March 16.

Materials will be included in the printed Agenda if received before the synodically established deadlines.

Steven R. Timmermans, Executive Director

Annual Day of Prayer

Synod has designated Wednesday, March 11, 2015, as the Annual Day of Prayer. All CRC congregations are requested to assemble to ask for God's blessing upon the world, our nations, crops and industry, and the church worldwide. Councils are reminded that if it is judged that the observance of the Annual Day of Prayer can be more meaningfully observed in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer (U. S.), they have the right to change the date of service accordingly (*Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 578). The National Day of Prayer (U. S.) is Thursday, May 7, 2015.

Steven R. Timmermans Executive Director

Available for Call

REV. ARTURO "EDDY" OLGUIN Following the suspension of the ministry Comunidad Agua Viva, the council of Bethel CRC of DeMotte, IN would like to acknowledge the faithful service of Rev. Arturo Olguin, recognizing his heart for the Lord and His children! Arturo is fluent in Spanish. He is now available for call and we commend him to the churches. Arturo can be contacted at 219-869-3254 or at eolguin82@aol.com

REV. JOHN MATIAS Classis Grand Rapids South announces that Rev. Matias is available for call. Classis enthusiastically recommends him to the churches. Contact Pastor John at jmatias@comcast.net.

REV. PABLO CANCHE The Council of Roosevelt Park Community Church announces that Rev. Pablo Canche is available for Call. He can be contacted at revcache@gmail.com; 148 Surrey Oak Dr., Holland, MI, 49424; 616-355-0225.

Financial Aid

CLASSIS ZEELAND STUDENT AID Classis Zeeland invites students from our classis who are preparing for ordained/non-ordained ministry in the CRC to apply for financial aid for the 2015-2016 school year. If you are interested please contact Dan Kinnaas at (616) 772-2390, or by email at daniel.kinnaas@bethelzeeland.org. All applications need to be received by April 1, 2015.

Meetings of Classis

CLASSIS ZEELAND will meet in regular session on Thursday, May 21, at Eagle's Wings Church in Allendale. Agenda materials are due by April 9.

Congregational

Church's 50th Anniversary

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION Visalia CRC will celebrate 50 years of God's blessings on Sunday, March 22, 2015. Former members and friends are invited to join us for a celebratory worship service at 10:00am. We will be meeting in the Visalia Convention Center rather than our sanctuary so that there is room for all. Call the church office, (559) 625-0444, for more information.

GRACE CRC CHATHAM, ON will be celebrating their 50th anniversary Apr. 25 & 26/15. Former members and friends are invited to an evening of dinner and remembrance on Sat. and Sun. for a special church service. Dinner tickets \$25. Email anetazondervan@yahoo.ca or call 519-351-6428 to RSVP for dinner.

Announcements

WINTER CHURCH SERVICES In Mesa, AZ. Please join us for our 10am Sunday Worship Service at Maranatha Comm. CRC, 6159 E University, Mesa, AZ. We are a winter church and our services start the 1st Sunday of December through the 2nd Sunday of April. For more information contact Gary Hutt @ 509-499-4561

Birthdays

100th Birthday

EUNICE VANNETTE (Reitsma) celebrated her 100th birthday on January 23, 2015. God has blessed Eunice with 2 children, Barbara Vriesman and Walter Vannette Jr., 7 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and 6 great-great-grandchildren. Please send cards to The Suites at Clermont Park, 2480 South Clermont Street, Denver, Co. 80222

LEWIS VAN NOORD will celebrate his 100th birthday on March 4, 2015. His family is grateful for his faith, his godly example, and God's faithfulness throughout the past century. Lewis resides at the Rose Garden, 3391 Prairie SW, Grandville, MI 49418.

95th Birthday

HENRY DYK plans to celebrate his 95th birthday on February 24, 2015. Giving thanks with Louise (married 68 yrs) and family for God's blessings. Cards may be sent to 6151 Shady Rest St. #17 Manhattan, MT 59741

90th Birthday

ANNIE HOGAN of Artesia, CA celebrated her 90th birthday with friends and family on January 24, 2015. On this day her 5 children, 12 grandchildren, and 13 great grandchildren "arose and called her blessed" as she knows no "bread of idleness" but exemplifies a Christ-like heart with the cheerful "spinning" of quilts and funds for those in need and the very faithful remembering of each offspring's birthday and anniversary. Birthday greetings may be sent to 11614 E. 183rd #218, Artesia, CA 90701.

ANNIE (NOORDMANS) MEYER celebrated her 90th birthday on February 17, 2015. Her family gives thanks for the gift of her life. She has modeled faith, generosity, and hospitality for us. Happy Birthday, Mom! 420 Ida Red Parkway, Apt 112, Holland MI 49423

HENRY TERPSTRA 4715 Trillium Springs Blvd, Apt 107, Fremont MI 49412, on March 13, 2015. His wife, Marie; five children and their spouses; 15 grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren praise God for the gift of so many healthy years with this Godly, industrious, humble, precious man. Dad, you are the BEST! We love you

DENNIS VANDEN HEUVEL celebrates 90 years of life on March 3. His wife, Angie, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren praise God for his wonderful Christian example and love for all of us.

Crossroad Bible Institute

CBI is seeking writers in the following disciplines for its distance education college program:

English
Mathematics
Art History

Sociology
Philosophy
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85th Birthday

GEORGE J. KOSTER retired chaplain of the Kent County Jail, celebrates 85 years on March 17. He and Ruth (married 58 yrs) give thanks for God's faithfulness. God blessed them with 3 children, 9 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. 2491 Red Maple Dr. G. R. MI 49512

Anniversaries

70th Anniversary



TIMMER Gerrit & Fannie (Jager), 1919 Boston SE, Apt 218A, Grand Rapids, MI 49506 will celebrate 70 years of marriage on March 30, 2015. They & their daughters: Cheryl & Jay Seadorf, Connie & Paul Dungey, Carol & Doug Tiemeyer, and Cindy & Winn Jewett praise God for their many years together. They have been blessed with 14 grandchildren (one is waiting in heaven with Jesus) and 19 great-grandchildren.

65th Anniversary

KRAAL Ben & Jenny (VanDyke) of Drayton Ont will celebrate 65 yrs of marriage on March 24. They with their children are thankful for God's faithfulness and blessings through out the years. We love you mom and dad! Theresa & Jack VanderLaan, Sharon & Gene DeJong, Ed & Jeanette Kraal, Yvonne & John Deen, Rob & Shar Kraal; 31 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.

60th Anniversary

VANDERLAAN Rev. Jack and Millie (Mildred VanderMarkt) will celebrate their 60th anniversary on March 24, 2015. Children: Cheryl Gill (granddaughters, Gloria and Kelli, and great grandson Leander Tupper), son Douglas (deceased 1987), son David (wife Patricia, granddaughters Jaclyn and Tara), son Dwayne (wife Lisa, grandson Travis and wife

Kimberly, granddaughter Britney, and grandson Douglas). We thank God for our family and friends, and gratefully acknowledge His blessings and grace! 12380 SW Keating Dr; Port St. Lucie, FL 34987.

50th Anniversary

WYNALDA Marvin and Suzanne (Huls) 8900 Sorrento Ridge Dr. Byron Center, MI 49315, and also Bradenton, FL. will celebrate 50 years of marriage on April 9, 2015. They and their children; Bradley & Kimberly Wynalda, Christopher & Sherry Norman, Kevin & Karen Gabrielse and eleven grand children, share their joy and gratitude to God for all of his many blessings thru the years, especially the blessings of good health and happiness.

Obituaries



ARNOYS Allen Lee, aged 73 of Caledonia, MI, passed away peacefully on Friday, January 9, 2015. He is survived by his wife, Joanne; sons, Rob (Dawn), Eric (Anne LaGrand), Marc (Angela); grandchildren, Travis, Jake, Noah, Natalie, and Beatrice; brothers: Marlan (Alida), Gord (Marge),

brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Sherman (Judy) Van Solkema, Grace Nyenhuis, Jeanne (Roland) Kraag Barchinger, Wilma Schnyders, Jack (Leona) Nyenhuis, Betty (Ron) Tymes, Ron (Carole) Nyenhuis, Marjorie (Dick) Haines, Lynn (Dave) Setsma, Ken (Bev) Nyenhuis.

BAAR Willard Jay, aged 83, died on Sunday, January 25, 2015. Survived by wife, Cornelia (Corrie) Baar; children, Marvin Baar & Evonne Donald, Kathy (Bob) Vanderson; grandchildren; Daniel & Abby Vanderson, Adam & Kelli Baar, Rachel & Matthew Perry, Ashley Baar & Alex Baar; great grandchildren; Landon & Nolan Perry, Fitzgerald & Zuri Vander-son, Olivia & Savannah Baar.

BRATT Daniel, 94, of Lynden WA, died on Sept. 25, 2014. He is survived by his children: Ruth (Jim) Buteyn, Daniel (Kathy), Connie (Vance) Hays, Calvin (Melinda), Phillip (Landiss), Mark (Carol), James, Timothy (Carol); 32 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by wives Betty (1987) and Bertha (2011), daughter-in-law Cheryl (2011) and grandson Derek (1995). He was a World War II veteran, Christian schools teacher/principal for 31 years, beloved father and husband, and among the last of his generation of extended relatives.

CLARK Rev. H. Dexter, 87, of Phoenix, AZ, went to be with his Lord on December 28, 2014. Rev. Clark was converted through the radio ministry of The Back to God Hour with follow up mentoring from Rev. Peter Eldersveld and served as a pastor in Cincinnati, Ohio, Escalon and Palo Alto, California and Phoenix, AZ. He is survived by his loving wife, Louise, 3 sons and their spouses, 1 grandson and 1 great-grandson.

DYKSTRA Jackie, nee DeBoer, age 82, of Highland, IN entered heaven January 16, 2015. Survived by her husband of 62 years, Donald Dykstra; and children: Richard (Linda) Dykstra, Valerie (David) McWilliams, David (Ruth) Dykstra, Diane (Brian) Ebbes; eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Jackie is also survived by two brothers: Edward (the late Ann), Elmer (Tini) DeBoer; two sisters: Tena (Richard) Poortinga, Betty (the late Marvin) Dykstra; sister-in-law, Alice DeBoer; and many nieces and nephews. Preceded in death by parents: Art and Julia DeBoer; and brother, Andrew DeBoer.

FRIDSMAN, William (Bill), 87, died January 18, 2015 in Grand Rapids, MI. Survived by children: Brenda (Phil) Veen; Tom (Karen) Fridsma; Sue Fridsma, & Jim (Anna) Fridsma; 8 grandchildren; & 4 great grandchildren; sister: Ann/Joey Fridsma; in-laws: John Vanderbilt, Tom De Vries, Janet Cok, Elena Cok, Marilyn Gjeltema, Paul (Marilyn) Cok, Earl (Jan) Cok & Diane Cok. Bill was preceded in death by his parents; step father, Philip Lindeman; wife Audrey; daughter Kathy De Young; son-in-law Gary De Young; grandchildren Andy De Young, Sarah De Young

Church Position Announcements

SENIOR PASTOR Fellowship CRC, Brighton, ON, is a large multi-generational congregation searching for a Senior Pastor with a servant heart. Providing spiritual leadership for our staff ministry, equipping and training leaders for service in God's kingdom, and preaching God's Word in a relevant and dynamic manner are among the gifts we are seeking to find. For more information, please contact us at bfcrc@nexicom.net (www.brightonccrc.org)

WORSHIP & ARTS DIRECTOR First CRC Crown Point, IN is seeking a worship leader to provide leadership for all aspects of the music & arts ministry of the church. Applicants should have worship leading experience preferably some formal music training, and the ability to lead and develop band members, musicians and vocalists. For more information, please visit our website: www.cpcrc.org and go to the "about us" tab. Or, email jsheeres@gmail.com

PASTOR POSITION at Grant CRC in Grant Mi. We are located in Grant Mi. in rural community in West Michigan. Our Church profile is available from the Ministerial Information Service of Pastor-Church relations @ crcna.org. For email info contact search committee chairman Bob Scholtens bncscholtens@gmail.com

WORSHIP DIRECTOR Lombard Christian Reformed Church is seeking to fill a full time worship director position. For more information please contact Al Diepstra at adiepstra@aol.com or 630-740-0035.

PASTOR/LEADER FIRST CRC TORONTO Urban church located in the multicultural city Toronto seeks a new pastor/leader who feels called to our small, vibrant, and diverse congregation. We seek a leader to partner with us in fully engaging our minds and hearts as Christians in the contemporary world. Further information can be found at firstcrtoronto.org Contact Rika VanderLaan: rikavdl@gmail.com

SENIOR PASTOR The Crossroads Fellowship Church, a regional fellowship of Reformed Christians serving the Des Moines (IA) metropolitan area, has begun a search for a new Senior Pastor. For more information contact Sam Hamstra here: info@chapter-next.com.

PASTOR OF COMMUNITY POSITION Covenant CRC of St. Catharines is a staff-led ministry called "to be Christ's family transforming lives and culture." In keeping with this mission we are seeking a full-time Pastor of Community who will lead and nurture a culture of care. The pastor will guide and develop a growing vibrant youth and young adult community, equip and enable members to use their gifts in building the community of care at Covenant, and lead and develop a program of outreach. The successful candidate will minimally meet the requirements for ordination as a Commissioned Pastor. For more information please contact our Search Team secretary, Carolyn Schilstra, at pastorsearch@covenant-church.ca

VISITATION PASTOR Prairie Edge CRC in Portage, MI is seeking a part-time (10hrs/wk) pastor of visitation. Ideal candidate would be a retired CRC or RCA pastor with a love for people, living in the greater Kalamazoo area. Job description available upon request; call 269-327-1570 or email pecoffice@charter.net.

WORSHIP COORDINATOR Westwood CRC (Kalamazoo, MI) is seeking a half time Worship Coordinator to help plan and lead both traditional and contemporary worship. Applicants must have worship leading experience with the ability to sing, play the piano, and develop musicians/vocalists. Some music training and sound/projection proficiency is desirable. Contact Randy De Jong at ranjodejong@att.net.

YOUTH PASTOR/DIRECTOR Drayton CRC, located in beautiful southwestern Ontario, is seeking an outgoing, highly relational youth pastor/director who will engage the youth of DCRC in spiritual growth by developing, coordinating and administering an effective and comprehensive youth ministry. As a member of the pastoral team you will also provide discipleship and pastoral care for the youth and young adults as well as lead the congregation through preaching. Church profile upon request. Please contact Teresa Rumph at rumph@hsfx.ca.

CHURCH PLANTER/ CAMPUS Ministry Seeking full time Ministry Leader for a Church Plant with a special focus on Campus Ministry. The goal is to develop a new self-sustaining Christian community.

Key roles will include developing relationships and nurturing spirituality, evangelizing and discipling new Christians, establishing a permanent presence in the community where people can regularly worship and hear God's word, creating missional ministry opportunities and developing Christian leaders in service to Christ's church. The ministry will be located in Oshawa, Ontario near the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT). For more information please contact us at NOCP@gmail.com.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Lakeside Community CRC in Alto, MI is searching for a new administrative assistant. Professional experience preferred. Computer proficiency needed. Position requires 20 hours per week. For more info, contact Dave Bosscher at pastordave@lakesidecommunity.org.

WORSHIP COORDINATOR Lakeside Community CRC, a growing church in Alto, MI, is searching for a gifted part-time worship coordinator. Guitar skills are preferred. For more info, contact Dave Bosscher at pastordave@lakesidecommunity.org.

PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR Lakeside Community CRC in Alto, MI is looking for a youth director to lead our high school and middle school ministries. Must love Jesus, love students, and be able to teach from the Bible. For more info, contact Dave Bosscher at pastordave@lakesidecommunity.org.

PASTOR: 2nd CRC of Fremont, MI is in need of a Pastor to share the good news of Jesus Christ to our congregation and community. For more information and our church profile, please contact Jason DeKuiper at jdekuiper@comcast.net.

SENIOR PASTOR Sonlight Community CRC, located in beautiful Lynden, WA, is seeking a Senior Pastor who is gifted in preaching, as well as attentive to the administrative and pastoral needs of the congregation. Current experience as a Senior Pastor strongly desired. To review our church profile and vision and learn more about the pastor position, please visit our website at www.sonlightchurch.com.

and Matthew Fridsma; siblings & spouses: Effie Vanderbilt, Hilda & Engel Cok, Jake & Ruth Fridsma, Til/Terry Fridsma, and Coby & Ralph Cok; & in-laws: Dorothy (Cok-De Vries) & Glenn Vander Sluis, Stanley Cok, Allan Cok, Bert Gjeltema & Marvin Cok.

HELDER, Gertrude (Diekevers), age 82, of Kentwood, Michigan, went to be with her Lord on Saturday, December 27, 2014. Survived by her husband of 65 years, John, 2500 Breton Woods Dr. S. E. #1000, 49512; Children: Karen, Ron, Mary Van Noord, Bob (Cathy); 5 grandchildren; 2 great grandchildren; Sister: Sharon (Nelson) Morren, Brothers: John (Delores), Bernie (Carol), Roger (Lillian), Dennis (Dee) Diekevers, Sisters-in-law: Marilyn and Pearl Diekevers, and Brother-in law and Sister-in-law, Harry and Marge Helder; many nephews and nieces. Gert's love for others, her kindness and her warm smile are missed by all who know her.

HILBRAND Henry Jr, age 81, of Hudsonville, Mich, passed from this life to eternal life on January 19, 2015. Survived by wife Bermayne

(nee Miedema); children Gail, Dave, Randy (Laurie), Phil (Jane) and Jeff (Cheryl); eight grandchildren, two great-grandchildren; brother Simon (Sharon), sisters-in-law and brother-in-law.

MINNEMA Dr. Theodore, went to be with his Lord, on Sunday, January 18, 2015. Ted will be dearly missed by his wife of 54 years, Tena; his sons and daughters-in-law and grandchildren: Tom and Sondra, David, Benjamin and Anna; Hank and Cindy, Crystal, Shelby and Dalton; Ted and Courtney and Greta; and Rick and Vivian, Breighanna, Payton, Anneke, Delanie and Tobias. Luke 2:29, 30.

MULDER Marian (Monsma), 99, of Grand Rapids, Mi, Dec 26, 2014. Pre-deceased by husband, Lambert, in 2007. Survived by children, Lowell (Connie), Ellen (Ken) Byle, Julie (Ed) Rusticus, Bruce, Bob (Marcia), Dave, grandchildren and great grandchildren; brother, Dwight (Lois) Monsma; Sister-In-Law, Hilda Shoemaker. Psalm 31:28

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- MAR 7** Rehoboth, NM, 7 pm, Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church

- MAR 8** Phoenix, AZ, 7 pm, Phoenix Christian Preparatory School

- MAR 9** Escondido, CA, 7 pm, Calvin Christian High School

- MAR 10** Visalia, CA, 7 pm, Central Valley Christian High School

- MAR 11** Ripon, CA, 7 pm, Ripon Christian High School

- MAR 13** Ontario, CA, 7 pm, Ontario Christian High School

- MAR 15** Denver, CO, 6 pm, Third Christian Reformed Church

- MAR 20** Sioux Center, IA, 7:30 pm, B.J. Haan Auditorium

For more details, go to www.dordt.edu/arts/music/tour



RUSSELL Marilyn Elaine, age 85, passed away Wednesday, December 31, 2014. Preceded in death by husband Clayton; brothers, Herm & Bernie Medema; sister, Janet Horton; granddaughter, Lark Van Assen; survived by children, Karen (Wayne) Vogel, Phyllis Russell, Lisa (Greg) Van Assen, Todd (Julie) Russell; 9 grandchildren; 7 great grandchildren; brothers, John Medema, Paul (Irene) Medema, Ken (Karen) Medema, sister-in-law Joyce Pratt.

SCHUILING Sarah Juliana (Witt) went to be with the Lord on December 20. She is survived by her husband, Clarence, brothers: Laurence (Marilyn) and Paul, 5 daughters, Cheryl (Gregg) Steensma, Sharon (Ron) Alton, Sheila (Steve, Thompson, Shellie Schuiling, Sharleen Sharleen, 13 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her daughter, Shirley and sister-in-law, Jesse.

VANDER KAM Elaine, 95, died January 27, 2015 in Kalamazoo MI. Preceded in death by her husband, Rev. Henry Vander Kam and son Henry. Survived by 4 children, 9 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren.

VANDERMEER Harry, age 86, of Jenison, MI. Survived by wife Betty, sons Gary (Jan), Dan (Nancy), David (Carol), stepchildren Dale (Leslie) Cammenga, Kim (Curt) Longstreet, Lynda (Gene) Esteban, Dave (Jennifer) Cammenga, 16 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren. Preceded in death by first wife Helen and daughter Carol.

VELDMAN Richard John "Moon" Veldman, went to be with our Lord on January 31st, 2015, 200 Village Dr, #439, Lombard, IL 60148. Beloved husband of Marthann, nee Vos. Loving father of Ginny (Jim) Van Til, John (Jane) Veldman, Vicki (Tim) Zwier. Devoted grandfather of Chris (Becky) Van Til, Robyn (Mark) Bowne, Mike, Dan, and Ben Veldman, Jessica (Jeff) Jantos, Megan (Jeremy) Zuidema, Abby (Lucas) Tillman; great-grandfather of Tristan, Reese, Tyler, and Tripp Bowne, Mia, Haley, and Zac Van Til, Emma, Gabe, and Michael Jantos. Fond brother of Joan (Ron) Vanbeek and the late A. Wayne "Bud" (the late Theresa) Veldman. Uncle of many nieces and nephews.

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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

HEAD CUSTODIAN Western Christian High School in Hull, Iowa is accepting applications for the position of Head Custodian. If interested in this opportunity, contact Dan Barkel, Principal, at (712) 439-1013 or at dan.barkel@westernchristians.com

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ADMINISTRATOR London District Christian Secondary School located in London, Ontario, Canada is seeking a person with a deep sense of passion and dedication to their faith for the position of Principal in our school. We are seeking a strong spiritual leader with a deep commitment to Christ and Christian Education who meaningfully articulates this in

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Dr. Eric Forseth, Provost
Dordt College
498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697
Fax: (712) 722-6035
E-mail: provost@dordt.edu
Web: www.dordt.edu/prospective_employees/faculty/

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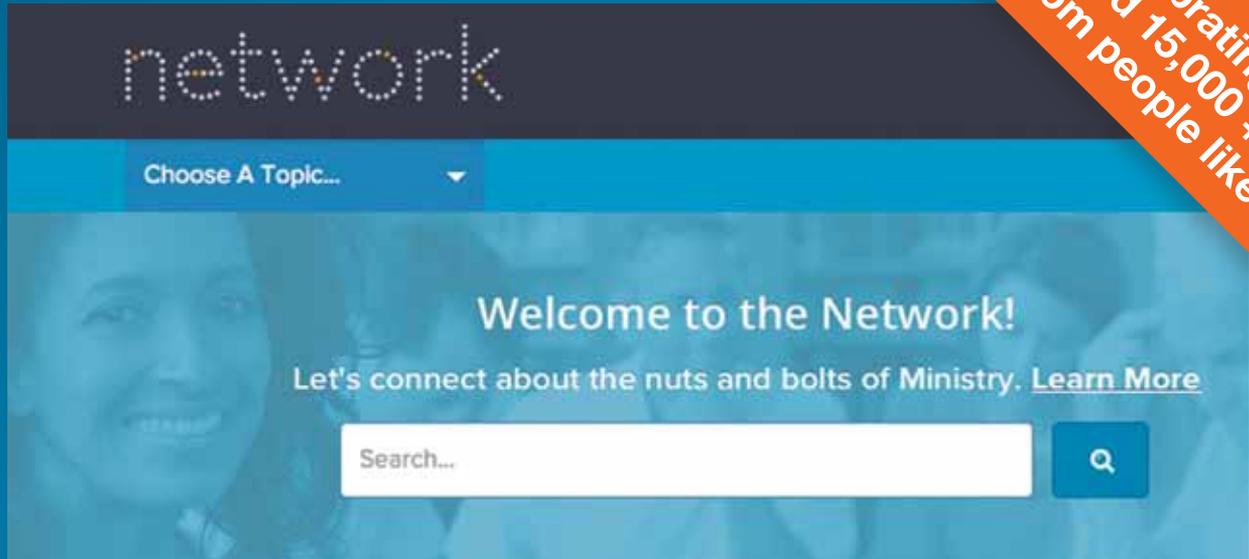
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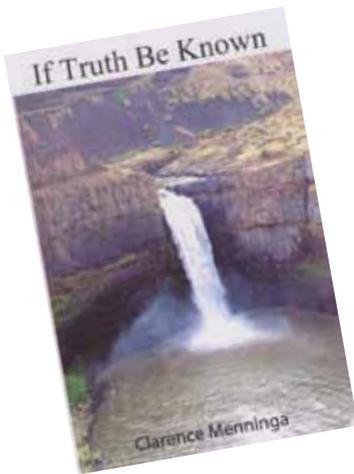
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Dordt College Phone: (712)722-6011
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Sioux Center, IA 51250 E-mail: hr@dordt.edu

For more information: www.dordt.edu – Employment

Dordt College endeavors to diversify its staff within the framework of its mission. The commitment of the college to nondiscrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national or ethnic origin, or race is consistent with federal and state requirements for nondiscrimination in employment.

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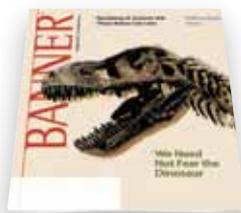

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Punch Lines

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 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407; or email it to editorial@thebanner.org. Thanks!



Q: What did people find so controversial about the dinosaur skeleton on the cover of *The Banner*?

A: The sight of *The Banner* with a backbone!

—Kevin William Walker

A minister waited in line to fill his car with gas just before a long holiday weekend. There were many cars ahead of him, and an attendant was directing the flow of cars. Finally the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump.

"Reverend," said the young man, "I'm so sorry about the delay. It seems like everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip."

The minister chuckled. "I know what you mean," he said. "It's the same in my business."

—Peter Haagen

A dollar bill met a \$20 and said, "Hey, what's up? I haven't seen you around lately." The \$20 bill replied, "I've been hanging out at the casinos, went on a cruise, saw a couple of baseball games, visited the mall—that kind of stuff. How about you?"

The dollar bill said, "You know, the same old thing—church, church, church."

—Ernest Dykema

Years ago, on our way to a Christmas Eve service with our grandsons Calvin, 5, and Cameron, 3, we were excitedly talking about what we were about to experience: the music, the message, decorations, and more. Suddenly Cameron felt compelled to warn us, "It's a Lion's Church," he said. "But don't worry, there's no lions there, it's really just a name."

The name of the church in question? Cobourg Alliance Church in Cobourg, Ontario.

—Lillian Hoftzyer

Our young pastor and his wife have an adorable 1-year-old son. Recently they have been teaching him "Soooooo big!", raising their arms overhead to show him. Imagine his mom's surprise at a church service to see her son raise his arms on high as his father prepared to give the benediction!

—C. and J. Gravenhof

Because of a medical condition, Grandpa could no longer drive. His wife had to drive him everywhere. A caregiver from church asked her, "How are you doing?" She replied, "He drove me crazy for 57 years, and now it's my turn!"

—Adrian Vander Starre

Two U.S. ministers traveling in Germany visited a church. Not speaking German, they decided to sit behind a dignified-looking gentleman and do whatever he did.

During the service, the pastor made a special announcement, and the man in front of them rose. The Americans quickly jumped to their feet too, only to be met by peals of laughter.

Later they went to shake the pastor's hand. When they learned he spoke English, they asked what all the laughter was about.

"Oh," said the pastor, "I was announcing a baptism, and I asked the father of the child to stand."

—Simon and Sharon Hilbrand

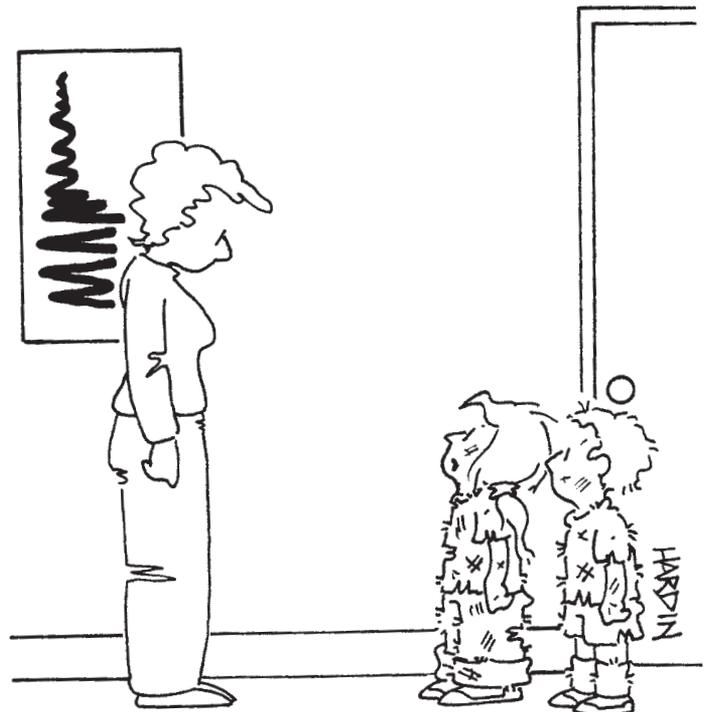
The advantage of exercising every day is so that when you die, people will say, "Well, he looks good, doesn't he?"

—Sue Lauritzen

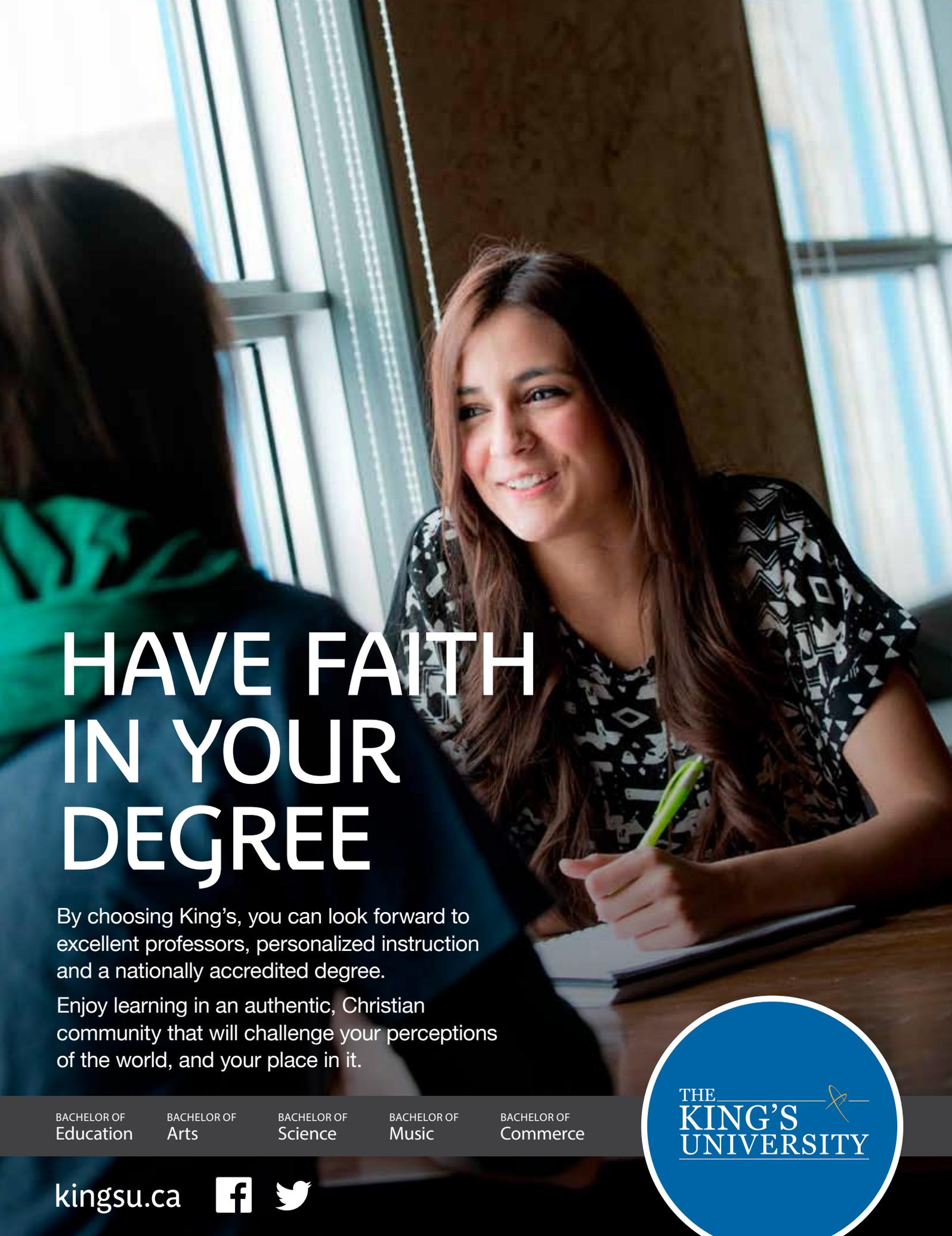
After the Sunday school lesson about Adam and Eve, the teacher asked the children to draw a picture that would illustrate the story. Bobby drew a picture of a car with three people in it. In the front seat was a man, and in the back seat were a man and a woman. At a loss to understand how the picture related to the story, the teacher asked Bobby to explain.

"This is God driving Adam and Eve out of the garden," he quickly answered.

—Jack Bloem



"You know, Mom—you just can't baptize a cat."



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