

# NEWS

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Redeemer student Kyla  
DeHaan and supervisor  
Edward Berkelaar with  
tomato experiment.



KRISTA DAM-VANDEKUYT

## Redeemer Student Presents Manure Research at International Agricultural Conference

It has a smell that can nauseate, but the putrid liquid has a purpose. The fermented weed tea is part of Redeemer University College student Kyla DeHaan's research on foliar organic fertilizers using plant and manure fermentation stews. DeHaan presented her research at the ECHO International Agricultural Conference in Florida in November. ECHO assists development workers around the world by gathering agricultural techniques that can help solve hunger problems.

DeHaan, a member of Charlottetown (PEI) Christian Reformed Church, is in her fourth year of a combined honors degree in international develop-

ment and environmental science at Redeemer. "When I chose a senior research project, I wanted it to be useful," she said. So she connected with Angela Boss, food security and agriculture technical advisor at World Renew.

"We brainstormed a few ideas, and of those, Kyla picked the foliar fertilizers," explained Boss. Access to synthetic fertilizers is limited and costly, so these fertilizers can address nutrient deficiencies in crops with inexpensive materials made with plants and manures found in resource-poor regions of the world, she said.

Researching best practices, DeHaan compiled tables that outline the nutrients found in various manures and plants and

identified a basic fermentation process using water and a pail. When fully fermented, the liquid can be sprayed directly to crop leaves for optimal absorption.

The conference provided great networking opportunities for DeHaan but also confirmed that there was significant interest in her research.

Boss said that the field guides that DeHaan is producing, complete with pictures to identify plants and instructions, will be of great use for agricultural programs in developing countries. In 2016, DeHaan will present her findings and best practices documentation to World Renew teams.

—Krista Dam-VandeKuyt

## Pullman Youth Make Blankets for People Without Homes

The fourth and fifth graders of Pullman Christian Reformed Church in Chicago recently made blankets for people without homes after studying the parables of Jesus. Randy Moes, one of the group's leaders, explained that the children had been studying and reflecting on the parables of the lost son, sheep and goats, and the good Samaritan. "We have been reminded about the extravagant love of God and the kingdom calling on our lives," Moes said. That is how the group came up with the idea to make blankets.

The students made 15 blankets. The group cut fleece into two equal pieces, fringed the ends,



Fourth and fifth graders from Pullman CRC with blankets they made.

then tied them together to make a warm blanket. The blankets were rolled up and tied with a ribbon. Each included a handmade card. They were delivered to Roseland Christian Ministries, just a few miles away from Pullman CRC on South Michigan Avenue.

Moes says that the parable of the rich fool was particularly appli-

cable as the group worked on the project. "We spoke about needs and wants, and we discussed how our abundance could and should be available to others. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our neighbors."

—Callie Feyen

## Knitting a Mountain of God's Love



A mountain of mittens, slippers, and hats was donated to the Good Shepherd Centre.

Sometimes a warm hat and mittens are all it takes to show someone the love of God.

Three years ago Janet Hagen, a member of Ancaster (Ont.) Christian Reformed Church, was volunteering at Good Shepherd Centre when the organization received a garbage bag full of yarn that volunteers were not sure what to do with.

Hagen took the bag home, divided the yarn among friends, and returned knitted items back to the center. That first bag sparked a ministry that has spread by word of mouth to many others. People from other churches, including Immanuel CRC and Faith CRC, are now involved too.

Ralph Veldstra of Ebenezer CRC became part of the ministry when he watched Coby Visser knitting hats for Good Shepherd using a corking ring, also known as spool knitting. "It's something to do in the winter. Ralph will make up to three hats per night," said Veldstra's wife, Ruth, who also helps with the knitting. "This a good way to support our community and fill definite needs."

"It's really grown from that first garbage bag against the wall," said Hagen. "It's neat to see how it has spread."

The wool from the Good Shepherd Centre has been used to make thousands of beautiful scarves, hats, mittens, and slippers for people who need them. This year, 1,100 items were brought to the center to be distributed during their Christmas Hamper Program.

—Krista Dam-VandeKuyt

### IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Harry Adrian VanderWindt

1936-2015

Harry VanderWindt, teacher and pastor, greatly enjoyed the ministry and the opportunities it gave him to serve others. He offered his last sermon the Sunday before he died unexpectedly on October 30 while working in the woods, one of his favorite places to be. He was 79.

After serving as principal for two Christian schools in Ontario, VanderWindt studied for the ministry, graduating from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1978. He served four congregations in Ontario. Following retirement in 1999, he served numerous congregations as an interim pastor.

In his preaching, VanderWindt blended a strong biblical emphasis with real-life scenarios. He was particularly gifted in his home visits and providing encouragement. As a woodworker, he donated many items to various bazaars and he enjoyed spending time with grandchildren in his workshop.

VanderWindt was predeceased by two children who died shortly after birth. He will be dearly missed by Henny, his wife of 56 years, three children and their spouses, and by 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

—Janet A. Greidanus  
Further information on recently deceased ministers is available on The Banner's website.



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## Iglesia Cristiana Reformada en Cuba: The Christian Reformed Church in Cuba

I saw the old guitar on a shelf on the second floor of the tiny Christian Reformed Church in downtown Havana, so I picked it up and started strumming, then quietly began to sing one of my favorite songs—"Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord." Suddenly, I heard other voices in English and Spanish singing along. I looked up and the other people in the room—from Alberta and Toronto and Grand Rapids and Minnesota and Havana and Jaguey Grande, Cuba—we were all praising God and singing. And the eyes of my heart were opened. God's presence was real in that upper room, in that tiny storefront church not two blocks from the Cuban capital buildings."

These are the words of Dan VanKeeken, chair of Cuba Connection, a committee of Classis Alberta North (a regional group of churches). He was describing his

experience in Cuba earlier in 2015 with a number of people from the Christian Reformed Church in North America who have close ties with the Cuban CRC.

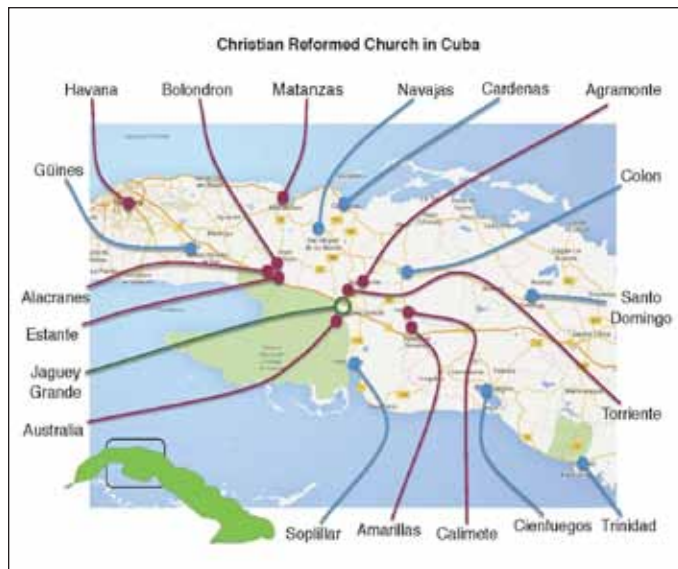
Having heard VanKeeken's stories, I welcomed the opportunity to travel to Cuba for 10 days in December to witness firsthand the work of the Cuban CRC and to meet many of its pastors and church members.

I was surprised, as many people are, that there are Christian Reformed churches in Cuba, having assumed that churches disappeared after Cuba's Revolution in 1959. In fact, today there are around 14 organized CRC congregations and numerous missions with a combined membership of 1,500 people.

Daniel Miller chronicled the beginnings of the Cuban CRC in 1941 (see *Banner*, Feb. 2010), with the arrival of a young Bessie



Felix Lazaro (left), pastor and president of the Cuban CRC, receiving a CRC logo from Rene Hebers of Edmonton, who made one for each church.



BRUCE MULLER

Vander Valk from Bethel CRC in Paterson, N.J., and her subsequent marriage to a preacher by the name of Angel Vicente Izquierdo. Together they established La Mision Evangelica al Interior. In 1951, a church building was constructed in Jaguey Grande. By 1958, there were 12 organized congregations and a pressing need for money.

That was when the people of LaGrave Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich., were approached by Izquierdo and subsequently began to help the Cuban mission. In 1959, synod (the annual leadership meeting of the CRC) adopted the Cuban church as a mission of the CRCNA. That original church in Jaguey Grande just celebrated its 64th anniversary, and LaGrave Avenue has continued to support the Cuban CRC in many ways. Many of the house churches we visited are properties purchased through LaGrave's Henry Beets Cuba Committee. The church has also been

Red dots show established Cuban CRCs, and blue dots show mission churches. Jaguey Grande is where the Cuban CRC national office and a small seminary are located.

involved in providing education and materials to churches.

The years following the 1959 Cuban Revolution were very difficult. Christian schools were closed and many church buildings were confiscated, leading to the establishment of discreet house churches—literally a room for worship inside a pastor's house. In 1962, the government even cancelled Christmas as a national holiday. "Many older Cuban Christians say their 'Babylonian captivity' began then," said Jim Dekker, a retired pastor with a long history of ministry in Cuba.

Things improved slightly in the 1980s. In the 1990s, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of its subsidies to Cuba,

churches became important to the government as providers of social services and importers of medical supplies and other scarce goods from supporters abroad. As a consequence, the government relaxed its anti-religious policies somewhat. The number of Christians who worshiped openly on Sunday began to grow.

Today, the focus of the Cuban CRC is on planting churches in small cities rather than in rural areas. These churches are served by young pastors educated at the

support of its many sister churches across North America and Europe.

Plymouth Heights CRC in Grand Rapids fosters fellowship between its adults with disabilities and those in Cuban churches. Hillside Community CRC in Cutlerville, Mich., sends mission teams to teach English and train church musicians. Alberta's Cuba Connection Committee is involved in a \$30,000 parsonage project to replace the dangerous, dilapidated home of the pastor of the Torriente congregation. A con-

It is widely acknowledged that the December 2014 agreement to normalize diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba will take years to realize real benefits on the ground for most Cubans. As Miller wrote earlier this year, "Cuban Christians are probably somewhat ambivalent. . . . The conservative ones in particular may view it as a concession to the Cuban government without sufficient recognition of what the island's religious community has suffered and still suffers in terms of discrimination and persecution. On the other hand, Cuban Christians of all stripes are eager to deepen their connections to theologically congenial churches in North America and elsewhere, and so they will undoubtedly welcome the opportunity to travel

Cuba will be flooded with morally objectionable media in a culture whose isolation has limited access to such things in the past, Miller wrote. He concluded, "I think that Cuba's Christians can teach us North American Christians much more than we can teach them about what it means to be faithful followers of Christ."

Everyone in the group I traveled with would agree with Miller. The pastors and church members we met, like most Cubans, live in small houses that look more like concrete bunkers, uncluttered with material possessions. Most pastors get around and make pastoral visits on old donated bicycles or by horse and cart. The government provides food ration cards that usually run out mid-month. The average income is around \$20 a month. But from what little they have, Cuban Christians tithe and do much good work in the name of God—boldly preaching the gospel and worshipping, planting house churches, reaching out to youth through music, and feeding seniors.

"We want to see Jesus lifted high, a banner that flies across this land, that others might see the truth and know. . . ." Singing these words in a church in Havana was a poignant experience. We need to keep God's people in Cuba in our hearts and prayers as they continue to lift the name of Jesus in this beleaguered country governed by Raul Castro's Communist Party. They have persevered through much, and it means a lot to them to know they are not forgotten.

—Janet A. Greidanus



PHOTOS BY JANET GREIDANUS

**The group from Classis Alberta North inside the "house church" of pastor Felix Lazaro, who is also the president of the Cuban CRC.**

small CRC seminary that began in 2008 and is located in the CRC headquarters building in Jaguey Grande. Almost every Cuban CRC feeds dozens of seniors—twice a day, five days a week. The church in Amarillas runs a seniors' ministry out of a nearby house.

Finances are always an issue, however, as are other resources. One wonders how the Cuban CRC could manage without the faithful

tainer will soon leave Edmonton filled with donated medical supplies, bicycles, wheelchairs, sports equipment, clothing, and windows and doors for the Torriente parsonage.

Classis Minnkota regularly sends funds to Cuba. A team from Minnesota plans to travel to Cuba in 2016 to help construct the parsonage. These are just some examples of our denomination's outreach to Cuba. Money for property, as well as for food, also comes from the Netherlands.



**Pastor Juan inside the Jaguey Grande CRC that recently celebrated its 64th anniversary.**

to conferences and meet with other Christians for mutual encouragement and worship."

But with greater access to the Internet, there is concern that

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## Pastoral Guidance for Churches Regarding Same-Sex Marriage

**N**ow that same-sex marriages are legal in the U.S. and Canada, should the Christian Reformed Church allow couples in a same-sex marriage to be members of the denomination? Should CRC members participate in the wedding of two persons of the same sex? Should CRC clergy be permitted to officiate? Can the state force a church to let its facilities be used for such a wedding?

Those were just some of the questions that prompted Synod 2013 to appoint a committee to provide pastoral guidance to churches, back when same-sex marriage was already legal in Canada and in several jurisdictions in the U.S. The committee's recommendations will come to Synod 2016 by way of two reports. Two of the committee's members, while agreeing with much of the majority report, disagreed with some of the recommendations of the majority of the committee and are bringing forward a minority report on some of the recommendations. Synod will decide which recommendations to adopt.

What follows here is a brief summary of an extensive report that includes four appendices.

The committee's mandate stipulated that guidance provided by the committee be in line with the CRC's position on homosexuality, adopted in 1973 and affirmed in 2002, namely, that same-sex orientation is not sinful, but homosexual activity is. "Some have suggested that the committee cannot fulfill its mandate without opening up larger issues, including the

denomination's biblical and theological position on homosexuality," the authors wrote.

The committee said that broader questions about homosexuality and the church's ministry warrant further study and discussion, but that this committee focused its attention on civil same-sex marriage.

The committee framed its recommendations within a larger discussion of the differences between civil marriage and religious marriage, and the interest of both the church and the state in regulating marriage in a pluralist society. It affirmed that religious marriage, as understood by the CRC, is a covenant relationship between a man and a woman. While authors of both the majority and minority reports cited the CRC's 1980 statement on marriage, the minority report authors do so much more extensively.

The committee wrote that "the church in its ministry is moving in shifting cultural waters. . . . If there is a primary message from the committee's listening sessions and survey, it is that a wide variety of experiences and social settings exist within the CRC." It further cautions that any set of guidelines will leave "a great number of people unsatisfied in some way or another."

So what guidelines are recommended? Here are just a few of them.

Regarding same-sex weddings, the authors recommended that attending a same-sex wedding or providing a commercial service for a wedding be left up to the discre-

tion of an individual. For officebearers, the decision is more complex. "Attendance does not necessarily mean approval of every aspect of a relationship. It would be wise for a pastor to consult the church consistory regarding attendance at the ceremony."

Solemnizing a *religious* same-sex wedding is precluded by the CRC's understanding of marriage. Regarding a concern that pastors could be forced to officiate a same-sex wedding, the authors of the majority report wrote that "pastors would be wise to state clearly on their church's website the CRC understanding of marriage and adopt a policy statement regarding officiating at weddings." However, the authors of the minority report deemed the majority report to be insufficiently strong on this point. "To enjoy the protections of religious freedom, it is important for the pastor and church to make clear in the church's documentation and website their identity as belonging to the Christian Reformed Church."

The authors of the majority report noted that they were not of one mind regarding a CRC pastor officiating a *civil* same-sex marriage. Some felt that in very limited situations, some latitude should be given based on circumstances. The authors of the minority report disagreed. "Pastors cannot officiate a civil same-sex wedding ceremony. Were they to do so, the ceremony would, in some way, have the marks of a religious ceremony, because the pastor would be officiating on the basis of ecclesial office," they wrote. "Guidance that suggests there may be, under certain circumstances, latitude for a pastor to officiate at a civil same-sex

wedding is in conflict with the theology and polity of the CRC."

Regarding playing a role in a same-sex wedding, such as being an attendant or participating in the liturgy, the majority report authors wrote, "We judge any participation short of officiating to be a discretionary matter in which a person's own conscience before God should guide their decision." For ordained leaders, they continued, potential involvements are too complex to create blanket rules. "Suffice it to say that ordained and commissioned church leaders should exercise caution and discretion in their public roles."

The authors of the minority report disagreed with the majority report on the involvement of officebearers. "[Officebearers] must be held to a different standard. Since those in that office will be seen as operating out of their ordained roles, they should avoid accepting roles in same-sex wedding ceremonies because such acceptance and participation can easily be seen as supporting a sinful pattern of sexuality."

Apart from same-sex weddings, many communities face questions regarding day-to-day participation in the life of the church by same-sex spouses and their families. Should a spouse in a same-sex marriage serve as an usher or teach Sunday school? Should he or she be allowed to volunteer in the church office or be on the praise team? The committee concluded that "one size does not fit all and that it would be unwise to attempt to parse out advice for multiple potential situations in a report such as this. Decisions of this nature rightly belong to the discernment of the local church, where the persons involved are known and loved."



The authors of the minority report added, "Those in same-sex marriage relationships should be allowed, and encouraged, to participate. The level of participation should be no different from what has been made available to any other person desiring to explore life in the church community. It cannot be repeated enough that all people are to be welcomed into participation in the worship and other aspects of the life of the church. Soundness in life and doctrine is not a precondition for participation."

However, ministry leadership roles should be limited to members in good standing. What if a same-sex couple requests membership? The reports notes that following the logic of the Church Order and the 1973 report on homosexuality, "a person or a couple in a same-sex sexually active relationship should not be accepted as members in good standing in the church." However, they continued, if a person or couple agree to accept the CRC's teaching on same-sex sexual relationships and bring their lives into conformity, no obstacle prevents their acceptance as members. "The current position [of the church] does not require dissolution of a civil marriage; nor should the church be heard to require or encourage the dissolution of functioning families."

The committee wrote that "our pastoral guidance is bound by the mandate to our committee. A pastoral observation, however, to the church at large is that the complexities of ministry will keep membership issues a point of tension. A number of CRC churches are already navigating the challenges of integrating same-sex couples into the life of the church,

and for them the logic of being denied membership is experienced as damaging rather than life-giving."

Regarding baptism, the committee affirms Church Order Article 56, that at least one of the parents must be a member in good standing. The authors wrote that the question of participation in communion is complicated by the diversity of practice within the CRC. "Restricting access to the sacraments is a fearsome thing. . . . Only with the greatest reluctance and with the greatest procedural safeguards should the church take the step of forbidding access to the sacraments as means of grace. The Lord's Supper and its meaning may well provide an opportunity for conversation with those new to the church, including those in a same-sex marriage, to speak of the relationship between sin, grace, and a life of gratitude."

The report has much more to say about discipling and discipline, supporting Christian marriage, and other related issues, including how to present the conclusions of the 1973 and 2002 synodical reports in truthful and gracious ways.

It also noted that if the 1973 and 2002 reports are to remain useful to the church, they need to be revisited to deal with some of the language and terminology used, such as *homosexuality*, and suggestions that conversion/reparative therapy be the first strategy for dealing with same-sex attraction.

The full report will be published in the *Agenda for Synod 2016* and is also posted at [crcna.org/sites/default/files/same-sex\\_marriage.pdf](http://crcna.org/sites/default/files/same-sex_marriage.pdf). Synod 2016, the CRC's annual leadership meeting, will discuss the report when delegates gather in June in Grand Rapids, Mich.

—Gayla R. Postma



Representatives from World Renew visit Randolph, Wisc.

## Wisconsin Church Helps Feed the Hungry

First Christian Reformed Church of Randolph, Wisc., may be a small church, but it has a big heart for feeding people who are hungry. The congregation has raised thousands of dollars to combat world hunger.

The church is home to the Randolph Growing Project, in which local farmers designate the proceeds of some of their land and crops for the Foods Resource Bank.

FRB is a world hunger program that partners with World Renew, the relief and development agency of the Christian Reformed Church, as well as other partnering agencies.

The church hosted a breakfast to tell local farmers about the program. "I simply mentioned how in biblical times, farmers left some of the crops standing at the edge of the fields for gleaning by the poor

[and] widows," said church pastor Ken Prol. Prol anticipates the farmers will raise \$5,000 this year for world hunger.

In November, 200 church members and friends from the surrounding community also held a fundraising chili supper and raised \$2,090 for the program.

Prol said, "I believe this has given us a new sense of identity and a mission that involved a very large percentage of members."

The congregation plans to continue hosting farmers' breakfasts to raise money for the Foods Resource Bank through similar projects.

—Amy Toornstra



**Foods Resource Bank**  
A Christian Response to World Hunger

First Randolph CRC supports the Foods Resource Bank.

Celebration Community CRC celebrates its new home in a car dealership.



Joanne "Jo" Ilbrink

## Long-Time Calvinette Director Dies

Joanne "Jo" Ilbrink, who served for 20 years as executive director of the Calvinette program for girls, died on January 3, 2016. She was 82.

Ilbrink, who lived in Grandville, Mich., led Calvinettes (now called GEMS) from 1975 to 1995, and was also a Christian school teacher. Carol Smith, a former assistant program manager and leadership trainer with Calvinettes, remembered Ilbrink for her humility and ability to connect with people. "Every year (in Calvinettes) we'd adopt a different theme, and she'd give the theme speech. It always enlightened everyone in the biblical sense of how that year's theme would go," Smith said.

Ilbrink led many women's Bible study programs in the communities where she lived and volunteered at Crossroads Bible Institute. She is survived by her husband, Robert, and by three children and their spouses, nine grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren

—Greg Chandler

## Former Car Dealership Repurposed for Worship

**A**n old used car dealership nestled between a car wash and a bar has found new life as home to Celebration Community Christian Reformed Church in Muskegon, Mich.

The church had been meeting in part of the building for seven years—but only recently were they able to finish major renovations to make it their home.

Initially begun as a church plant, Celebration spent its first several years without a permanent place to call home, moving from a library to a church basement to an old school. When the church's realtor pitched the car dealership to them seven years ago, it had been the last place they had thought to look. The building had sat empty for several years. The owner happened to be a Christian Reformed man from nearby Grand Rapids who agreed to put together a land contract for Celebration. They finally had a place to call home.

However, their dreams of renovating the building hit more than one setback, including a lawsuit brought against them by the city disputing a particular bylaw. The suit was later dropped.

Pastor Matt Eenigenburg, who has been with Celebration for four years, said, "We had been meeting in the former showroom, which was simply too small, and we wanted to move our services into the service bay area. But that

wasn't going to happen unless we owned and outfitted the building and had the money to do so."

Several benefactors stepped up, and Celebration was finally able to move forward with the renovations with cash in hand.

"Most people will come to a church on a Sunday morning if a friend invites them, and we wanted to be a place where that could happen," said Eenigenburg. "We doubled the size of our worship area and created a narthex where people can gather before and after the service to just be together as a community. Those were the two things at the top of our list that we got done. There's still a third of the building left to complete—a multipurpose area and a kitchen."

Thelma Bergman, who Eenigenburg describes as the matriarch of the church, has been involved from the beginning. "It was an exciting, scary, fabulous, sad, happy, exhilarating, humbling event," she said. "I had no clue it would take this long. I was beginning to think it would not happen in my lifetime since I am now 86. But it's here. It was worth all the prayers, all the work."

Eenigenburg says the building reflects Celebration's philosophy of church, that God can repurpose anyone or anything, even an old used car dealership, to serve his purpose of bringing all people to him.

—Krista dela Rosa

## Moms Share Ups and Downs of Special Needs Parenting

In 2011, Bev Rozeboom found her role as a mother to a teenage son with special needs could be lonely and just plain difficult. So she wrote a Bible study and invited other mothers of special needs kids to work through the study with her. Rozeboom is a member of the Christian Reformed Church in Pella, Iowa.

The women named themselves Moms of Special Treasures (MOST), and they continue to meet monthly in Pella. The group includes almost 20 members ranging from 30 to 60 years old.

"I think what draws the moms to MOST is that it's safe," said Rozeboom. "[It] is a safe place to open up about our fears for our children, discouragement over a child's lack of progress, weariness over yet another hospitalization. We can all relate to



**MOST mom Carrie Andringa and daughter Emma.**

the stresses and strains we face in our marriages, the challenges of meeting the needs of our other kids, and so forth."

Tricia Van Zee is the mom of Davis, age 7, who has a seizure disorder. She has found tremendous support in the group. "I have been encouraged many times by my fellow MOST moms—sometimes via prayer, sometimes a meal when my life

is overwhelming, and even with hospital deliveries when my special treasure was in the hospital."

"Mealtimes and just going out in public with our kids can be very emotional because we never know what someone will say to us about our child or how they will look at us," said Carrie Andringa, whose daughter Emma, 3, has Down syndrome. "It is also just different because of the amount of work [parenting] can take. It is so great to have a support group of moms encouraging each other. And we pray for each other and for our kids. It is incredibly valuable to have Christian communities and groups that can support and encourage each other through hard times."

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## British Columbia Church Screens Documentary about Sexual Exploitation

Maple Ridge (British Columbia) Christian Reformed Church recently screened the documentary "Red Light Green Light" in an effort to educate church and community members about how people can be sexually exploited and what can be done to combat this exploitation in their city.

Tim Sheridan, pastor of the church, said that the event hit home in Maple Ridge. British Columbia's first human trafficking conviction, just a few weeks prior to the screening, included the case of a girl from Maple Ridge, and there had been reports of attempted luring at the local

high school. The event was attended by about 50 people from the church and community, including two city councillors.

The documentary follows two filmmakers across 10 countries as they attempt to discover how to prevent sexual exploitation. "We felt that this screening could be one step toward changing the tone [of the public discussion] and raising awareness about the exploitation of vulnerable women through trafficking into the sex industry and prostitution," Sheridan explained. He said some attendees were surprised but grateful that a church was facilitating this discussion.

After the screening, a discussion was led by Rev. Mary-Lee Bouma, executive director of education and development at

REED (Resist Exploitation Embrace Dignity), a Vancouver-based group working to end sex trafficking and to support the women affected by it. Bouma is the pastor of downtown friends, a Christian Reformed outreach ministry in Vancouver.

Sheridan said the discussion focused on whether the city is implementing Canada's new federal prostitution laws, and about how women are objectified and why their sexual exploitation has become "normalized" in our society. Participants recognized the need to educate young people about the realities of this problem.

"I hope to engage with all the churches in the CRC about how to address the male demand for sex and pornography, instead of solely serving the women who are exploited," Bouma explained. "It's not just a moral issue, but an issue of justice for women."

—Tracey Yan

**Maple Ridge CRC movie screening provided time for education and discussion.**



### IN MEMORIAM



**Rev. Henry Morgan DeRooy**  
1929-2015

Henry (Hank) Morgan DeRooy was the eighth of 10 children, sometimes introducing himself as Henry VIII. A high-energy extrovert of quick wit who loved being around young people, DeRooy emphasized the gift of God's grace in his ministry and with his family. DeRooy died on November 9.

Following a brief stint in the printing trade, DeRooy felt a call to ministry, which he described as one of the clearest moments of his life. He subsequently attended Calvin College and Seminary. Following graduation, he served four congregations in South Dakota, Michigan, Washington, and Missouri. His ministry also included working in various roles for Christian Reformed Home Missions. DeRooy retired in 1994.

DeRooy was a voracious reader. A favorite quote from C.S. Lewis appeared in the bulletin for DeRooy's service of remembrance: "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

DeRooy is survived by his wife of 62 years, Sylvia; by his three children and their spouses, 10 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus





## ‘Recognizing the Racism in My Own Heart’

by Chris Meehan

**M**ike Hogeterp was riding in the back of his softball coach’s pickup truck when he joined in yelling racial slurs at a group of Indigenous men standing outside a bar in a rough part of Saskatoon, Sask.

Only years later, while attending university, did he realize how wrong he’d been.

“That’s when, as a student, a passion for social justice was stirred in me,” said Hogeterp, chair of the Doctrine of Discovery task force and director of the CRC’s Centre for Public Dialogue. (See [crcna.org/sites/default/files/doctrine\\_of\\_discovery.pdf](http://crcna.org/sites/default/files/doctrine_of_discovery.pdf) to view the task force’s report.)

“This included some learning about the history of the oppression of Indige-

nous people and recognizing the racism in my own heart and experience.”

In June 2012, Hogeterp attended a national event of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, held across the street from Bethel CRC, Saskatoon, where his parents had served during the late 1970s and early ’80s.

“In that town hall event, with the relationships and convictions I developed over the years, I felt prompted to publicly confess my sins of racism as a preteen and teen in the streets of Saskatoon,” he said.

“After I sat down, a First Nations Elder offered me forgiveness . . . a pretty moving experience.”

Hogeterp said he has come to realize that lasting forgiveness only comes over

**Mike Hogeterp (center) was among those marching in Ottawa to highlight reconciliation with Aboriginal people in Canada.**

time, as the process of reconciliation unfolds among people.

First, people must confront and understand the past, which he said is one of the goals of the task force report.

“We hope the church recognizes that the Doctrine of Discovery—and its legacy—is something in our history that requires continuous discernment and response,” he said. ■



**Chris Meehan** is a staff writer with CRC Ministry Support Services.

You add.  
God multiplies.

## Report Asks Synod to Repudiate Doctrine of Discovery

The 71-page Doctrine of Discovery Task Force report that is coming to Synod 2016 chronicles the history of a colonialist doctrine dating back hundreds of years.

According to the report, the so-called Doctrine of Discovery began with a series of papal pronouncements in the 15th century “that granted dominion over non-Christian peoples and lands.

“It evolved as a legal construct alongside colonial history, was encoded in the judiciary of settler nations, and continues to influence legal and policy decisions today.”

The report asks synod to repudiate the doctrine.

Among other issues, the report describes the formation of church-run Indian boarding schools in Canada, where many instances of abuse happened, and where the Truth and Reconciliation Commission worked to heal deep wounds.

Although the CRC did not operate boarding schools in Canada, it did operate a boarding school in Rehoboth, N.M. The report is critical of the Rehoboth boarding school. It says that Native children were punished for speaking their language and were forced to cut their hair and to wear non-Native clothing.

Rev. Al Mulder, a former pastor at Bethany CRC in Gallup, N.M., said the report serves the CRC well by digging into North America’s historical underpinnings.

But, he suggested, it would have been better to have withheld the judgment that “the CRC was wrong to establish and run a boarding school named Rehoboth.”

“The CRC sent its first missionaries to Arizona and New Mexico when a lot of people still thought that ‘the only good Indian is a dead Indian,’” Mulder said.

“While we may cringe today at some of the language and methodology of these early missionaries, clearly their motives were to serve the Navajo and Zuni people in the name of Christ.”

Carol Bremer-Bennett, a Navajo who serves as director of World Renew-U.S., said she appreciates that the report helps to focus attention on the injustices committed when Europeans took the homelands of Native peoples.

But it is important to understand the Doctrine of Discovery in the context of history, she added, noting that Native Americans also were guilty of wrongdoing, both before and after Europeans arrived.

“We need to realize that all of us are both victims and oppressors,” Bremer-Bennett said. “I need to be humble and admit I have done wrong, and need to forgive and be forgiven.”

She said the report relies too much on the European version of history and fails to fully express how God’s grace can work in the lives of all people.

“Anyone who has been to Rehoboth Christian School knows that God is strongly present there,” said Bremer-Bennett, who served as superintendent of the school before joining World Renew.

“We are called to confess our sin, but not to stay there,” Bremer-Bennett said. “God overcomes our failings, even using them to work his eternal good. I celebrate the reconciliation and healing that is possible through our Savior.”

*Note:* At Rehoboth Christian School today, students are encouraged to explore their Native heritage and no longer live on campus.

—Chris Meehan

## ‘History Has Implications for How I Live’

Calvin College student Tonisha Begay says she often feels torn as a Navajo woman in a mostly white world.

Begay grew up in the Christian Reformed Church in Gallup, N.M., and attended Rehoboth Christian School.

“It was a huge culture shock when I came to Calvin,” said Begay, a senior majoring in sociology. “Having been at Rehoboth, I thought it would be easier.”

She said many of her teachers at Rehoboth were from West Michigan. They were mentors and helped to develop her faith.

And while she has learned a great deal and grown as a Christian at Calvin College, she has done this among people who generally know very little about what it means to be Navajo.

“I have had to ask questions about my own identity as a Navajo woman in a school where only three other students were Native,” she said.

She also found it hard when she returned home, where people wondered if she had adapted to the white world, leaving her Native heritage behind.

She said the Doctrine of Discovery task force report has helped her sort through how to live in both worlds. By learning the history of relations between the white and Native American worlds, she has been able to gain a better perspective.

“The report talks about a lot of the trauma and separation that happened to my people over the years,” said Begay. “We see that the church had a hand in that history. I’m trying to understand how that history has implications for how I live today.” ■

—C. M.



Tonisha Begay grew up in Gallup, N.M., and is studying at Calvin College.



## Stories Can Bring Healing

**H**arold Roscher said that listening to Indigenous people describe how they were abused as children in church-run boarding schools in Canada was profoundly disturbing. “There are times where you are boiling mad over what happened.”

As chaplain and director of the Native Healing Centre in Edmonton, Alta., one of three Aboriginal ministry centres the Christian Reformed Church supports in Canada, Roscher attended many of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s hearings at which Native people shared their stories.

He also helped to prepare the Doctrine of Discovery report that will be going to synod this year.

“Thinking about the commission and the Doctrine of Discovery becomes hard,”



Edmonton Native Healing Centre director and chaplain Harold Roscher presents a painting to police officer Dan Jones as part of a healing ceremony.

said Roscher, a Cree who was adopted and grew up in the home of a white CRC family.

But he said that the power of people telling their stories can help to bring healing—both for the storyteller and for those who hear the story.

He said he hopes that people in the CRC will read and discuss the task force

report and allow it to reshape their view of history, even if it means stirring up intense emotions.

“It is okay to be in turmoil over this,” he said. “As we live into this report, we remember that Jesus is the only answer, and the work Christ did on the cross is the crucial tie that binds us together.” ■

—Chris Meehan

## Blanket Exercise ‘a Mind-Opening Experience’



Caleb Dickson was sergeant-at-arms for Synod 2015. Here he hurries delegates back to a meeting.

**C**aleb Dickson, a Nez Perce Indian and pastor who serves Naschitti Christian Reformed Church in Naschitti, N.M., says that participating in the Blanket Exercise at Navajo Ministries, a nondenominational center in Farmington, N.M., was “a mind-opening experience.”

“I wasn’t totally surprised by the things that they talked about during the exercise, but the depth and extent of what happened (to the Indians) did startle me,” said Dickson.

“Clearly, we weren’t viewed as people. We were seen as heathens, as less than human to the extent that we were people without rights,” he said.

In the exercise, blankets are spread on the floor. As people walk on the blankets, someone reads a narrative of the wars, broken treaties, epidemics, and other ways in which Native Americans were removed from their ancestral lands.

Slowly, people are asked to step off the blankets, illustrating people dying or being forced to move. At the same time, blankets are taken away until only a small square of cloth and a few participants remain.

Different versions of the Blanket Exercise are used in the U.S. and Canada.

Dickson said he hopes CRC churches and members will consider taking part in a Blanket Exercise.

“This could help get a dialogue going, just like the Doctrine of Discovery report, I hope, can do,” he said. ■

—C. M.



*You add.  
C... 15/15/15.*

# Renewal Lab Helps Revitalize Local Churches

In its first three years of pilot programming aimed at revitalizing local churches, Calvin Theological Seminary's burgeoning Church Renewal Lab has impacted about 40 congregations of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Now the Church Renewal Lab and participating churches are benefiting from a new pilot partnership with Calvin College's Jubilee Fellows program, an initiative that encourages high-potential students to explore the call to ministry.

A half-dozen Jubilee Fellows are serving year-long internships in congregations from California to New Jersey in a "gap year" between graduation from Calvin College and the decision to enter seminary or some other career pursuit.

Among the current group of six interns, two have been assigned to historic congregations in northern New Jersey: Madison Avenue CRC in Paterson and Unity CRC in Prospect Park, both of which are among the Renewal Lab congregations.

"This has been a great experience," said Jon Bosma, a 22-year-old Jubilee Fellow assigned to Unity in Prospect Park. "It's given me a year off from school, and it's helping me develop a greater passion for doing mission work while helping me discern my calling."

Bosma, who grew up in Zeeland, Mich., expects to enroll at Calvin Seminary in the fall of 2016, with pastoral ministry his intended goal. He noted that his daily encounters with the cultural diversity of the urban sprawl of greater New York City has changed many of his preconceptions about the nature of building a church community.

"Unity's neighborhood has changed from predominantly Dutch American to



**Pastors and interns at a retreat center on the Jersey shore for Renewal Lab training.**

Latino and Muslim," he said. "The church is much smaller than it used to be, but people are really dedicated to being a church that makes a difference in the community, and to changing the focus so that it's more about Christ and less about us."

Claire Dornbush, another Jubilee Fellow who also hails from Zeeland, called her assignment at Paterson's Madison Avenue church a "big learning curve and a very interesting and extremely good transition from college to the real world."

"Paterson is nothing like Zeeland," she said. "I've taken myself out of my old context and put myself in a dramatically different one."

"It's given me more of a real-life look at what a lot of churches are going through and the roadblocks they often face. It's helped me see that being in a multicultural setting is a top priority to me, no matter what kind of ministry I might be called to do."

One of the northern New Jersey pastors who lobbied hard for the Church Renewal Lab process to come to his area, Rev. K.C. VandeStreek of Faith Community Christian Reformed Church in Wyckoff, N.J., praised the efforts of Calvin Seminary to come alongside churches in decline or distress.

"I've noticed that the seminary increasingly sees its role as not merely training people to serve churches but to actually partner with churches in ministry," said VandeStreek.

"It shows me the seminary wants to be on the front lines, not just training and sending, but being more involved in doing the

work of God in our communities—whether through Church Renewal Lab engagements or distance learning opportunities."

The Church Renewal Lab, launched through the auspices of Calvin Seminary's Institute for Global Church Planting and Renewal, is directed by Rev. Keith Doornbos and a team of pastors, church planters, and professors. Doornbos modeled the renewal journey for many years at his congregation, Providence CRC in Holland, Mich.

"Our purpose is to develop intentional missional congregations that make more and better disciples who transform lives and communities for Christ," Doornbos explained.

"When churches are willing to embrace God's vision and mission, [to] come together and put differences aside and embrace a larger calling, those churches are changed. Then we can begin to imagine a more interesting and Christ-centered future." ■

—Bruce Buursma is a freelance writer in Grand Haven, Mich.

## In Praise of Going Slowly

I recently read an article written by Susan Delacourt that spoke well to how I see the healthiest parts of our current leadership working in the church locally and denominationally. It was an opinion piece evaluating the style of Canada's newly-elected Prime Minister.

You may or may not like Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party platform or his stance on particular issues, but there is something in the posture of his leadership that bears a resemblance to the leadership in the Christian Reformed Church and the Ministry Plan that is being developed for the CRC.

Delacourt writes, "Trudeau needs help from people and institutions outside his government to make good on his campaign pledges—help from premiers, from other countries and, perhaps most importantly, from Canadian citizens themselves."

The article goes on to say, "The responsibility for making things work in government belongs to citizens as well as politicians. In this version of government, citizens aren't merely passive 'taxpayers'—they're participants." She concludes with comments about how this approach is "daring" and "could go slower," and she admits that "much could go wrong." But she remains convinced that this new approach is the right way to go. It is reminiscent of John F. Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for you . . ." style of leadership.

In a way, this reminds me of what I see in the CRC. Our leadership is taking the time to listen, to learn, and to invite the voices of the local church to speak loudly so that we might walk a journey together and accomplish great things with and for God. It's a risky and slower approach. It might be easier to have a half-dozen denominational people "command" the next ministry thing into existence—but that doesn't work, ultimately.

I know that many people throughout the CRC expect things to move faster, but that's not biblical leadership. The command approach might work corporately on occasion. But it does not fit with the oft-forgotten Reformed tenet of the "priesthood of all believers" and it certainly does not fit Jesus' style either.

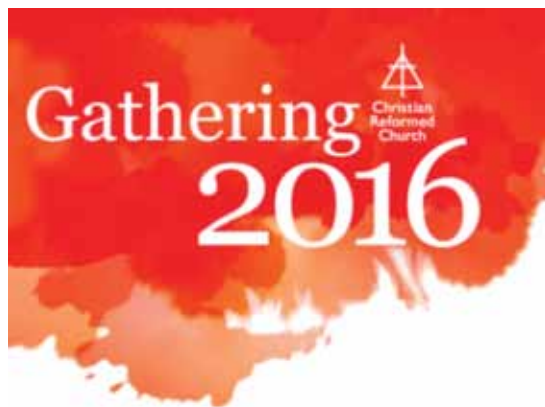
Imagine if Jesus had come to earth and done all he needed to do in three months instead of 33 years! Jesus himself slowed things down and invited others into the journey.

So, fellow priests, let me propose a few things for your consideration. First, think about finding time and occasions to develop an understanding of how we might grow together in the areas of justice available to us locally and nationally. For example, participating in the Blanket Exercise will allow you and your church to set the tone for reconciliation in your community.

Second, get proactive in your local church. Whether by connection to your council, participating in a ministry, or actively praying for your community and its leaders . . . get involved! As a priest—as well as prophet and king—you are meant to be at the center of the action.

Third, let me encourage you to attend the National Gathering in Canada, to be held in May 2016, where we will unite our voices as CRC people and determine the ministry priorities in a uniquely Canadian context. (Our American members will have an opportunity to participate in three regional gatherings with similar goals.)

All in all, this is a time when we are praying, planning, and participating together. We need your help. This process is daring and goes a tad slower, but it seems right, doesn't it? ■



### Gathering 2016

May 6-8, 2016

Wilfrid Laurier University

Waterloo, Ont.

The purpose of the gathering is to bring the church together and stimulate conversations about God's plan for the local church, the CRC in Canada, and the CRCNA as a whole. We'll share stories, identify priorities, and look to the future. Each church is asked to nominate someone to attend. To find out more, go to [crcna.org/Gatherings](http://crcna.org/Gatherings).

“We must tell our story by words and deeds.”



Rev. Darren Roorda is the Canadian Ministries director for the Christian Reformed Church in North America.





## Young at Heart Seniors Mentor Youth

**S**hirley Raterink, 75, joined members of Fairway Christian Reformed Church's seniors' group, Young at Heart (YAH), last summer for a workshop on mentoring youth in faith.

The workshop at the church in Jenison, Mich., was led by Rev. Steven and Deb Koster of Back to God Ministries' *Family Fire* outreach.

"How do we make sure the faith of our generation actually makes it to the next generation?" Deb Koster asked the group. "Research shows that it takes five

adults with consequential faith to be involved in a young person's life in order for their faith to become real to them."

The Kosters challenged YAH members to get to know the young people who sit around them in church.

"Engage in their world, and pray specifically for them by name," Deb Koster encouraged. "We underestimate how much of an impact we make on others," she said.

Fairway youth director Brian Davis is enthusiastic about the YAH group's desire to be intentional as they influence youth.

"Students long for the kinds of conversations the seniors offer, to learn from what they've been through [and] their daily walk with God."

Fairway young people and YAH members signed up to be prayer partners for each other.

"It's good for us to see what they are dealing with," said Raterink. "Their lives are a whole lot different than when we were that age." ■

—by Nancy VanderMeer,  
*Back to God Ministries International*

## Home, Sweet College

**K**atherin "Kat" Stahl works in Heide, Germany, near her childhood home, teaching German in an immigrant and refugee center.

"Teaching German is one thing. But accepting and loving [people] is the main objective. These families are welcome," said Stahl, a 2009 Calvin College alumnus.

Her path to Calvin College—and to Christ—is inspiring.

Calvin German professor (now emerita) Barbara Carvill was bringing a group of students to Husum, Stahl's hometown on the North Sea, for an interim term off-campus experience. One host family

fell through, and Stahl's parents agreed to house a Calvin student.

That initial interaction with Calvin was positive, and Stahl's parents were ready to sign up for another year of hosting.

Then Carvill surprised the family with a phone call. Would Stahl be willing to be a language assistant in the German department for a year?

After the initial shock, Stahl came to Calvin to assist and to take a few courses during her year on campus.

By the end of the year, Stahl wanted to enroll as a student. Finances presented a big hurdle, but after a year she was able to return.

Stahl majored in psychology with a media design minor, spent a semester in

New Mexico, and grew in her faith.

And she started and developed a ballroom dance club still popular at the college.

Shortly after graduation, Stahl returned to Germany and earned a master's degree in teaching German as a foreign language.

"I marvel at how much beauty I have seen God create in people and in the world he made," she said. "Now I think I may be that person to light the spark in someone else." ■

—by Mike Vandenend,  
*Calvin College*



**Katherin "Kat" Stahl teaches German in an immigrant and refugee center in Germany.**



## Mentoring and Transforming in Cambodia

A few Sundays each year, members of New Life Fellowship Church in Cambodia head to the nearby pool. One by one, up to 30 young believers enter the pool and are baptized while onlookers sing and cheer.

Although Buddhism and traditional beliefs permeate Cambodian culture, celebrations like this demonstrate the gospel transformation taking place among Cambodian youth.

“From the world’s perspective, the Cambodian church might be counted as small and Cambodian believers as insignificant,” said Gil Suh, who



Gil Suh (left) meets with Tep Samnang (right) as a one-on-one coach and in small groups of Cambodian leaders.

serves with Christian Reformed World Missions in Cambodia. “But there is a saying in Khmer, *toj tai klum*, which translates to ‘small but sufficient.’”

Since Suh began serving in Cambodia at the end of 2008, he has focused on developing younger leaders in the city of Phnom Penh. Tep Samnang is one such leader.

Among the many people who were displaced and orphaned during Cambodia’s bloody oppression under the Khmer Rouge, Samnang became a Christian while living in a refugee camp in Thailand. When he returned to Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge lost power, he joined other first-generation Christians at the Phnom Penh Bible School.

Samnang later became the Bible school’s principal. But he recognized the need for a mentor.

Seeing the impact that Suh had in mentoring others, Samnang asked Suh to mentor him. Suh began coaching him and helping him with common leadership challenges.

“Mentoring usually means telling what to do,” says Samnang, “but Gil’s methods really help me to grow by myself.”

As a sign that Samnang’s leadership skills have been growing, he recently became the youngest executive director of the largest Christian organization in Cambodia. ■

—by Brian Clark,  
Christian Reformed  
World Missions

## Making God Known

Areopagus, the campus ministry at Iowa State University, takes its name from the hill on which the apostle Paul reasoned with Greek philosophers and leaders.

Partially funded by Christian Reformed Home Missions, this ministry is headed by Tyler Helpers, whose goal in ministry is to “reflect the ongoing relevance of the Christian faith, and the gospel in particular, to all parts of life for the students and the faculty.”

Helpers focuses the ministry on teaching, service, and fellowship. Areopagus hosts Tuesday-night Bible studies, volunteers with a food pantry, and has regular fellowship and a partnership with the local Trinity Christian Reformed Church, where the group worships on Sunday mornings.

Areopagus is invested in spreading the Word on a larger scale, as well as making God known on the Iowa campus.

Last spring break, a group of four students traveled to West Jackson, Miss.,



Members of Areopagus on their trip to restore homes in Mississippi.

with Helpers to restore homes in the area. The students experienced transformation in the neighborhood as well as themselves. The relationships they built with the community opened their eyes to what God is doing in the world.

One student came back and donated \$100 worth of backstocked seeds from the garden store where she worked to the community in Mississippi.

Helpers was happy to hear her say, “I’m just excited because [those seeds are something] they can use in the neighborhood, and when we go back down there we can see how they’ve been used to help further the community.” ■

—by Annemarie Byl,  
Christian Reformed Home Missions

You add.  
God multiplies.

## Elsa Bakes Her Way to a Successful Livelihood

Elsa's corn *rosquillas*—donut-shaped, hard-baked, savory cookies enjoyed with coffee—are well known in her Honduran community.

When Elsa (not her real name) bakes a batch, they sell out quickly. In fact, they are so popular people buy them to send to family members in the United States as a little taste of home.

Despite Elsa's hard work and reputation, she has struggled to make a living. For years, all of her profit was used to keep her 10 children clothed, fed, and in school. There was nothing left to invest in the business or to save. Balancing the needs of her family with the costs of running a business was difficult.

One day, Elsa was visited by a member of a local savings and loan group started by World Renew's partner *Diaconía Nacional*.

This woman explained to Elsa that several business owners worked together to save and pool their money. Through this group, they could take out small loans to invest in their businesses. Elsa decided to join.

Since then, Elsa has used a small loan to grow her baking business and is able to produce enough to meet orders.

Not only has she repaid her loan, but she is actively saving money for the future.

She also has learned to read and write through a *Diaconía Nacional* literacy class, which



Elsa shows off her corn *rosquillas*.

has allowed her to access training in business management. Her income has increased, and her self-esteem has grown.

"Now I am able to provide better for my family," she said. "I am a happier person." ■

—by Adele Konyndyk,  
*World Renew*

Longer versions of these and other stories are online at [thebanner.org/together](http://thebanner.org/together).

## SHORT TAKES



### CRC Gatherings Seek to Bring Churches Together

The Christian Reformed Church in North America will hold three Gatherings in 2016—one in Canada and two in the United States—for the purpose of bringing churches together to stimulate conversations about the mission and purpose God has for local congregations and for the CRCNA at large.

The Gathering in Canada, which will be a national event, is set for May 6-8 at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont.

The initial Gathering in the U.S., the first of three regional events, will occur June 8-10 just before Synod 2016, which meets June 10-17 on the campus of Calvin College in Grand Rapids.

Another U.S. regional Gathering will be held later in 2016, while the third will occur early in 2017. Likely, one will be held on the East Coast and the other on the West Coast of the U.S. The locations and dates for those events are to be determined. ■

—Chris Meehan



## The Inside Story



ISTOCK PHOTO

**C.S. LEWIS ONCE WROTE:** “Aim at heaven and you will get the earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither.”

He was talking about the Christian’s journey toward sanctification, but I have found this to be true in every part of life. I exercise harder when I tell myself, thus far falsely, that this year I’m finally going to run that triathlon, than when I show up at the gym thinking about “health.” I’m a better teacher when I think about the flourishing people I want my students to be than when I think about some bureaucrat’s list of decontextualized “skills.”

When I began editing the *Michigan Review of Prisoner Creative Writing*—a journal made up of exactly what the title says—it was important to me to downplay the rehabilitative or therapeutic aspects of prison arts programs. I assumed that there were people in Michigan prisons who loved writing, as I do, for its own

I assumed that there were people in Michigan prisons who loved writing.

sake, and I wanted them to have a place to publish. Loving an activity for its own sake is rehabilitative, is therapeutic. And it’s no accident that America’s enormous prison population is drawn mostly from the ranks of people whose schools and cities never offered them a chance to discover what it is they love to do.

I am now three years deep into editing the *Review*, and one thing is clear: I was right about there being serious writers in prison. (Interested readers are hereby directed to [prisonarts.org](http://prisonarts.org), where you can purchase current and back issues of the *Review*. Pieces by Cozine Welch, Chris Dankovich, Nicole Deschermeier, Dylan Pruden, Steven Montez, Tarajee Maynor, and the late, much-missed Tom Engel all make good starting points.)

But my thinking has also shifted. I still view the journal as an outlet for serious writers. I now realize that it is also, in its way, a charitable work. The charity is enacted by our writers, who gift a society that utterly scorns them with work that, at its best, enriches that society with its sensitivity and imagination. It is the readers’ responsibility—and privilege—to receive those gifts. ■



**Phil Christman** teaches English at the University of Michigan and attends St. Clare’s Episcopal Church in Ann Arbor, Mich.



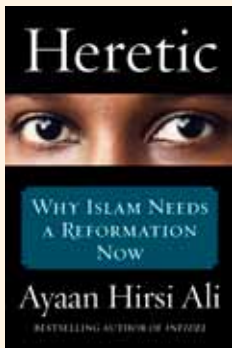
## The Wonderlands

by **Jon Foreman**  
reviewed by **Adele Gallogly**

Foreman, lead singer of the popular band Switchfoot, has created a four-part EP (extended play) series on the theme of darkness and light. Entitled *Sunlight*, *Shadows*, *Darkness*, and *Dawn*, each disc offers quiet acoustic tracks balanced with louder, livelier tracks. The energetic “You Don’t Know How Beautiful You Are” builds from verses about our tendency to hide our true selves to a soaring, soul-stirring chorus celebrating individual beauty and self-acceptance. It’s a fine example of how Foreman’s music is informed by his deep faith in a loving God in whose image all of us are made, even when he is not addressing God or using the language of worship songs. Foreman is a solo artist worth watching. (Word)







## Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now

by **Ayaan Hirsi Ali**  
reviewed by **Jim Romahn**

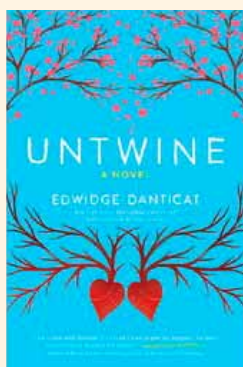
For 13 years, former radical Islamist Ali has been arguing that the violent acts of extremist Islamic groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS cannot be divorced from the religious ideals that inspire them. They will not be defeated on the battlefield. What's required is an Islamic reformation that brings Muslims into the mainstream of modern society, including respect for women, free speech, and peaceful coexistence with people of other faiths. According to Ali, that reformation must come from within the Muslim community. This is another brave and thought-provoking book from Ali. (Harper)



## The Martian

reviewed by **John Williamson**

When an accident forces his crewmates to return to Earth without him, botanist Mark Watney (Matt Damon) must survive on Mars until he can be rescued by NASA's next mission to the planet—four years later. His survival, and the film's success, depend on the character's good humor, and Damon's ability to oscillate between grief and hope is essential. In fact, despite the bleak premise and reliance on hard science, Watney's optimism make the film remarkably fun. While the plot is fictional, its restriction to the possible, or at least plausible, hooks the audience into the stirring, extraordinary story. PG-13 primarily for language; on disc now. (20th Century Fox)



## Untwine

by **Edwidge Danticat**  
reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**

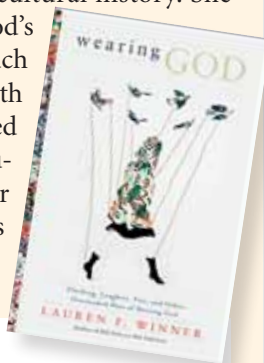
Sixteen-year-old identical twins Giselle and Isabelle Boyer were born holding hands so tightly that the doctor had to untwine their tiny fingers. The Haitian American sisters feel each other's pain and have the same nighttime dreams.

Tragedy leads to an irrevocable separation in which Giselle must struggle to come to terms with her relationship to Isabelle, her parents and extended family, and her friends. This young adult novel deals deftly with a somber theme within the context of the healing and transforming power of love offered in families and friendships. (Scholastic)

## Wearing God: Clothing, Laughter, Fire, and Other Overlooked Ways of Meeting God

by **Lauren F. Winner**  
reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**

After a period of indifference, Episcopal priest Lauren Winner became newly fascinated with Scripture. She began to consider the images and metaphors that the Bible uses for God. She augments her exploration of those metaphors, such as clothing, bread, and vine, with their social and cultural history. She concludes with a humble confession: "God's utter difference from the world is too much to describe, and God's nearest intimacy with the world is too near to name." Reformed readers might not agree with every conclusion. However, her willingness to share her struggles and to ask hard questions is admirable. (HarperOne)



## THE LOWDOWN

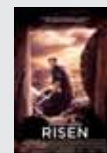


**Going Deep:** Worship leader and singer/songwriter Meredith Andrews releases her new album, *Deeper*, this month. (Word)



**Spy Swap:** Tom Hanks stars as a lawyer negotiating a Cold War exchange of

prisoners in *Bridge of Spies*; see our review at [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org). On disc this month. (Disney)



**True Story?** *Risen*, due in theaters this month, is sure to raise some questions and maybe some hackles. Joseph Fiennes stars as a non-believing centurion who investigates the disappearance of Jesus' body from the tomb. (Sony)



**Shine On:** Christian singer Natalie Grant debuts the first two titles for *Glimmer Girls*, a new children's book series for the Faithgirlz line, in which three young sisters have mystery-solving adventures. (Zonderkidz)

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