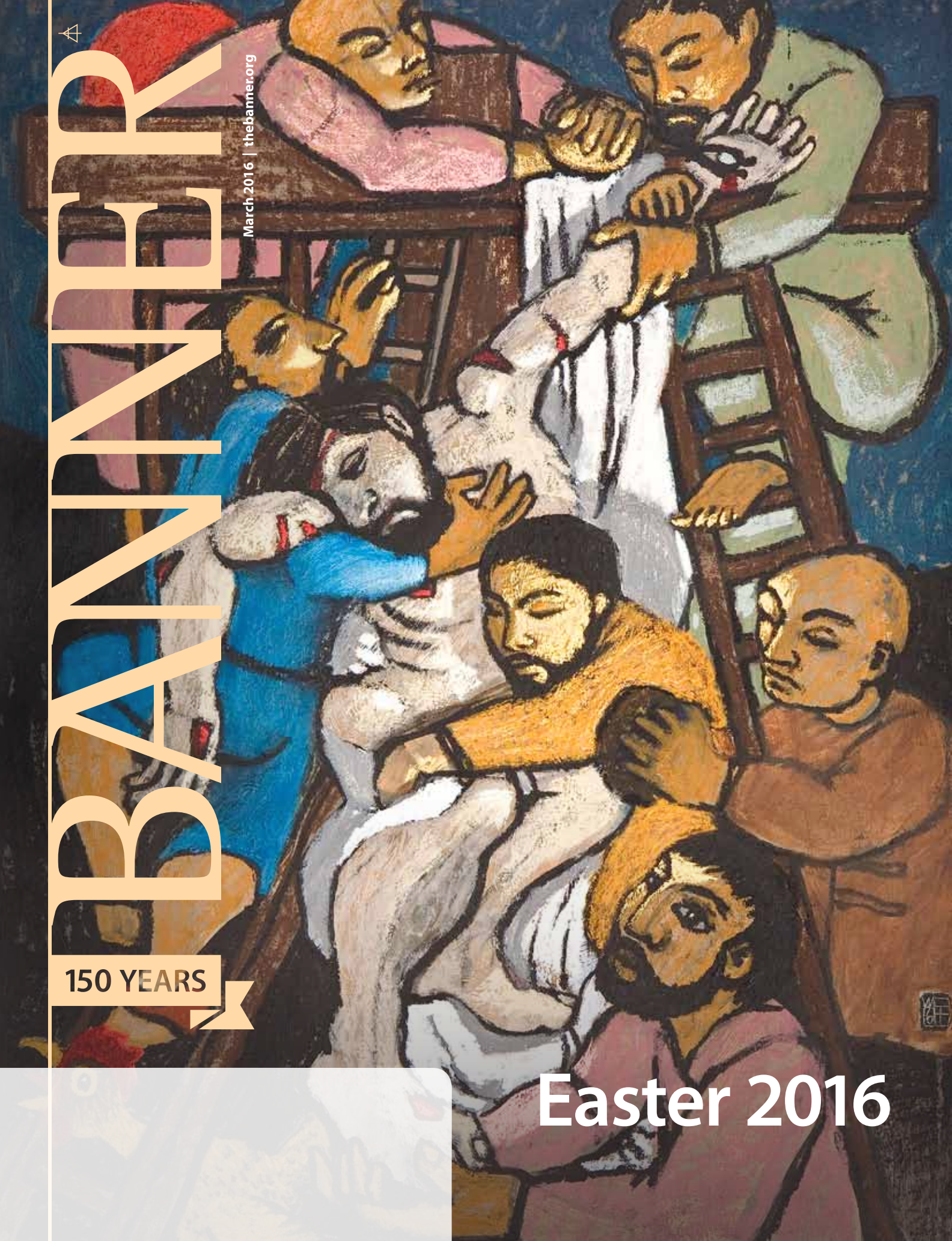


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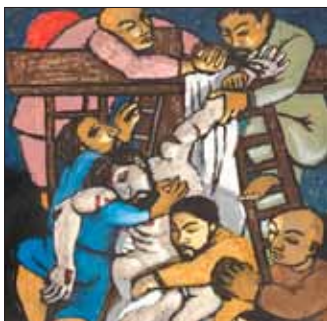
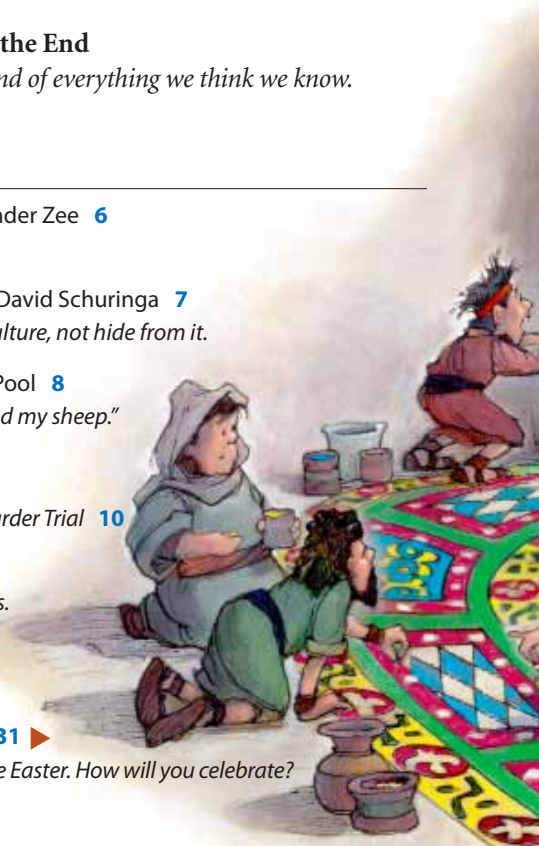
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Cover: *Deposition with Rooster* 3_974, by Wayne Forte.

"To be a religious painter in a secular age may seem, at least to some, anachronistic and narrow. Paradoxically, I have found that it satisfies my desire to passionately portray the spiritual while transcending Modernism's self-centeredness" (excerpted from Artist's Statement, wayneforte.com/about-the-artist).

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The Wounds of the Risen Christ

WE ALL HAVE SCARS, from the unstitched nicks of childhood to long gouges left on our chests from bypass surgery to the empty rippled space left after a mastectomy. Some scars are readily visible; others remain hidden, whether from embarrassment or reticence.

Then there are the countless inner wounds: the grief that never quite heals, wrongs done to us or by us that can never be righted, memories that cannot be erased, hurtful words or betrayals that seem to have a direct line to our tear ducts or the recurrent knot in our stomach. You can't get through life without scars, inside or outside.

It's fascinating, then, that when John tells the story of Jesus' appearance to his disciples after the resurrection, he tells how Jesus showed them his scars, his wounds. Not once, but twice.

First the risen Christ slipped through the closed doors and appeared before his frightened, despondent disciples. But they still seemed almost numb. So, John says, he showed them his wounded hands and side. Then "they rejoiced to see the Lord."

Thomas shows up a little late. He wasn't among the disciples for the first Easter appearance. The other disciples tell him about it, but he's skeptical. *"Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe"* (John 20:25).

A week later, the risen Christ again surprises the disciples. This time Thomas is there, and Jesus obliges his doubts. "Put your finger here," says Jesus. I see a smile on Jesus' face as he holds out his hands to Thomas. There's no indication Thomas lifted a finger; rather, the sight of Jesus' wounds brought Thomas to his knees in an act of recognition and adoration.

Why are the wounds so important? Why didn't Jesus appear unblemished and whole? Jesus showed them his wounds as a badge of his identity. He is the risen Lord, conquering death, *and* he is their risen Savior, who entered the depths of human pain and sin. The marks he displayed proved his finished work.

Jesus is truly the wounded healer. He comes as the mangled one who conquered sin and death. His wounds remind us of the suffering, the fear, the pain of the one who did it all for us. When we see the wounded one risen and victorious, we know our own wounds will be healed.

This isn't the last time in the Bible we see Jesus with his wounds. John sees it all in his vision on the island of Patmos called "Revelation":

"Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne. . . . Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands. . . . In a loud voice they were saying: 'Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain. . . .'" (Rev. 5:6, 11-12).

I find it infinitely comforting that the wounded one is the object of heaven's praise. There, before the great throne in glory stands the slaughtered Lamb. Even in the glory of God's presence the wounds are visible. In fact, the wounds elicit the thunderous praise of the heavenly hosts. In Jesus' wounds, the wounds of human life are never far from the heart of God. ■

FOR MORE, SEE
AS I WAS SAYING
at thebanner.org



Leonard J. Vander Zee is interim editor of *The Banner*. He attends Church of the Servant CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.

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comforting that
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is the object of
heaven's praise.

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Why Dad Sent Me to the Movies

THERE WAS A DAY when Christian Reformed folks would not have gone to see *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

People from my generation remember the days when our church banned the big three “worldly amusements”: card playing, dancing, and watching movies. We respected as law any recommendation from synod, the annual meeting of church leaders. The culture was a field of landmines, and we counted on the church to guide us through them.

So I was flabbergasted by my dad’s audacious suggestion.

In 1964—the year the Beatles invaded America—our family had moved from Chicagoland, where Dad was a grocer, to the tiny town of De Motte, Indiana. There we started an egg farm from scratch. I was 12 when we moved there, and life on the farm was a bit of a stretch for us city slickers. But we loved it.

Early one morning—by then age 16—I was in chicken building #3, about to fire up the Briggs and Stratton engine on the feed cart, when dad showed up unexpectedly for a chat.

“Son,” he announced, “It’s time for you to go see a movie. Why don’t you give

that Mary Post girl a call and take her out for a bite to eat and a show?”

That floored me. Even the chickens perked up. A movie? Really? We were dumbfounded. Especially coming from my dad: Mister Conservative. On Father’s Day 2014, he went to heaven, ready to die but hanging on for dear life to the ideas of a young earth, a worldwide flood, and strict male headship.

Sending me to the movies seemed out of character. It certainly rocked my world.

But I didn’t argue with him.

I dialed Mary—my future wife, as it turned out—for a date, and the next Friday night we went to see the musical *Oliver*.

I remember feeling nervous as we entered and took our seats, because our minister had frequently warned us that the last place you would want to be caught when Jesus suddenly returns is in a theater.

It was a good show, nonetheless.

The next day, as I was getting ready for the morning feed in building #1, in walked my dad.

“So,” he inquired. “How was the movie?”

“It was enjoyable,” I assured him.

“I’m glad,” he said. “Because I think Christians should know how to pick good movies rather than avoid all of them.”

Then, after a pause, Dad posed the strangest question: “Now, tell me, son—no punishment for the truth—had you ever been to a movie before last night?”

I was stunned he would ask. Of course I had never been to a show!

“No, Dad. That was my first movie.”

“Really? Hard to believe,” he mused. “When I was your age, I used to sneak off to one every now and then.”

Somehow my ultra-conservative high-school educated father understood that Christians need to critically engage the culture, not hide from it.

Synod eventually relaxed its grip, but my father bequeathed to me a gem that would enrich my worldview for life. And let me take my grandkids to see *Star Wars*. ■



H. David Schuringa is a Christian Reformed minister who served for 16 years as president of Crossroad Bible Institute. He lives in Allegan, Mich.



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We turn to stories and pictures and music because they show us who and what and why we are.

— MADELEINE L’ENGLE

Where Have All the Shepherds Gone?

Pay attention to the estranged, the sick, the stumbling, and the wayward sheep of your flock.



IT IS NO SECRET that there is a disturbing trend of people withdrawing from CRC churches to attend other denominations. What might account for their exodus?

Some time ago, our denomination's hierarchy shifted the church's emphasis to "reaching the lost for Christ."

As this new line of thinking took hold, the task of ordained ministers was gradually redefined. Ministers were no longer required to preach twice a Sunday. Nor were they expected to be personally involved in the shepherding care of the congregation's members. In many cases, the responsibility for pastoral care for church members was shifted to small groups or care teams; pastors themselves were expected to adopt the primary role of evangelists instead of shepherds.

Some pastors stuck to the old ways, while others adapted readily to their new role.

But I wonder just what happened to the pastoral "soul care" task of these ordained shepherds. Many faithful church members are hurting because of a lack of genuine shepherding. Among their stories is that of a woman who was critically ill but who never heard from her pastor—not even a phone call—although he was well aware of her situation.

Or the couple who were dealing with a serious problem. The wife received one visit from her pastor. Six months later, when asked if he had been in contact with either the husband or the wife, the pastor explained that he had seen the woman twice: once for a home visit and the other time when he accidentally ran into her at a wedding.

This kind of "pastoral care" suggests at least one reason why so many are leaving the church in search of comfort and courage elsewhere. Just what is happening to Jesus' command, "Feed my sheep"?

Here is a humble plea to all Christian Reformed shepherds of the flock. Pay attention to the estranged, the sick, the stumbling, and the wayward sheep of your flock. Shepherds who preach the Word faithfully, serve the sacraments, and diligently care for their sheep create vibrant and thriving church communities.

Pastors would be wise to accept a few pointers from Martin Bucer (1491-1551), who worked alongside Martin Luther. According to Bucer, the shepherd's task is to lead to Christ those who are estranged from him; to restrain those fallen away through the affairs of the flesh; to restrain and reform those grievously fallen in sin; to re-establish ties to those who have become feeble in Christian living; and to protect the faithful from falling away.

It is through God's Word and the sacraments administered by ordained pastors that Christ personally leads and feeds his sheep in today's complex society. ■



Gertrude Pool is a freelance writer. She enjoys life with husband John, three married children, 15 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren.



The Business of Worship Music

Your January 2016 editorial states: "Christians absorb more theology from what they sing. . . ."

What kind of theology have we absorbed by singing Psalm 18, stanza 6 (*Psalter Hymnal* #18)?

"God prepares me well for war. . . . I pursued my enemies . . . beat them fine like blowing dust. . . ."

Did I hear something similar from politicians?

—*Jake Prins*
Grand Rapids, Mich.

In response to "The Business of Worship Music": in my experience, CCLI provides a valuable and appreciated service to worship teams. . . .

Mr. Vander Zee critiques CCLI on the basis of the money it generates for musicians. Not all writers of contemporary worship songs are getting rich. In fact, most are not. If writers such as Matt Maher or Chris Tomlin are able to make mortgage payments, it would be wrong-headed to conclude that their music is subpar. Would we similarly castigate the preachers, teachers, and writers who earn a living for their work in the church?

The fact that it is possible to hear similar music around the world has as much to do with globalization and infor-

LETTERS

mation technology as it does with the commercialization of spiritual songs.

—Martin Lensink
St. Catharines, Ont.

The Art of Following

The central metaphor of “The Art of Following” (Jan. 2016) is inappropriate. The training of Marines and the discipline of living a Christian life are diametrically opposed. The training of Marines has as its goals the desensitizing of young persons to killing and the destruction of empathy for others. Christians respect life and practice empathy for all.

The New Testament teaches us to do away with tribal loyalties.

—Melle Huizinga
Edmonton, Alta.

Kudos

What an encouraging issue (Dec. 2015). The feature article “More Dreaming,” reinforced by the editorial, was especially stimulating. Often after church meetings—local, regional, denominational—I’ve noted how easily a core identity challenge was evaded by raising a “restructure”-type topic. Hopefully the seeds sown in these articles will sprout, and multiple conversations will be cultivated—conversations that will not overlook the article’s frequent use of the adjective *missional*. Rather, they will prompt trinitarian worship that encounters the risen Son of God breathing the Spirit on his followers and sending them as the Father had sent him (John 20:21-22), the kind of worship that first launched the church on God’s wider-world mission (Acts 13:2).

—Bill Heersink
Ogden, Utah

Calling System for Pastors

A minister called to a three- or four-year term, with the option of extending the term subject to the agreement of both parties, would give him or her and the congregation a good working relationship if everything went well and an “out” if the situation became unworkable (“Is it time to change our system of calling?” FAQ, Dec. 2016).

Our society is changing, and congregations are facing pressures that didn’t exist in the past. Sometimes we expect our ministers to be “all things to all people in all situations.” And when things go sour in a congregation, it can be extremely painful for minister and congregation to go their separate ways. With a fixed-term situation, the potential for unhealthy separation would be minimized.

—Louis Kwantes
Smithers, B.C.

Refugees

I found the use of a 2009 photo of refugees trying to reach Tanzania on your December cover interesting, especially in light of the fact that the world is dealing with an even greater humanitarian crisis because of the Syrian civil war.

I wonder why our church paper and our diaconal organizations are largely silent on this matter? Why aren’t we proposing sponsorship of Syrian refugees? Or have we allowed the fear-mongering rhetoric of political aspirants in our countries to divert our attention from doing the Lord’s work? The Syrian refugee crisis demands the active involvement of Christ’s church.

—Ralph Fluit
Emo, Ont.

Editor’s note: Look for more stories about how churches in Canada and the U.S. are responding to the Syrian refugee crisis in this and upcoming issues of The Banner.

Entering the Mystery

What a wonderful article that taps us on the shoulder and re-commissions us to love one another (“Entering the Mystery,” Dec. 2015). The unconditional love between a mother and her baby illustrates the perfect love of God that reaches out and touches us, again and again, at different times, in different ways. God’s “outrageous, unconditional love for us—love beyond understanding” reaches us even in these deeply troubled times. We are truly blessed to be God’s children, part of his family. Thank you for the reminder that Christmas is our celebration of love for all people, not a list of to-do’s. God only asks that we return this love and share it with others throughout the year.

—Jill Frazee-Eitman
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Real Love Lost

Rev. Cumings’s article (“In My Humble Opinion,” Dec. 2015) somewhat confusingly infers that people in the LGBTQ community are not capable of virtuous, selfless, sacrificial love. For him to imply that people in the LGBTQ community are somehow less capable of anything but physical love is unwarranted. The whole idea behind same-sex marriage is that couples want the right to be in a long-term, committed, loving, legal relationship.

It was all the more disquieting to read the article immediately after reading Joyce Kane’s “Entering the Mystery” about God’s unconditional love for us—a love so outrageous that it makes us want to love and accept others unconditionally too.

That’s the great news—we don’t have to judge others. We simply get to love each other and let Jesus sort it out later.

—Cindy Lanning Burch
Grand Rapids, Mich.

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NEWS

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Ancaster Church Supports Family of Tim Bosma During Murder Trial

Members of Ancaster (Ont.) Christian Reformed Church are surrounding Sharlene Bosma with support as the trial begins for the men accused of murdering her husband, Tim Bosma.

Tim Bosma, 32, was abducted on May 6, 2013, after leaving home with two men who came to test drive a truck he was trying to sell. The search for Bosma made headlines across Canada and galvanized church communities across Canada and around the world to pray for his safe return. A little more than a week later, police announced they had found his body.

Sharlene and her young daughter attend Ancaster CRC.

Her church family will be taking turns sitting with Bosma throughout the trial, which begins on February 1. The trial is expected to last about four months. Tim's parents Hank and Mary also attend the church.

Krista Dam-VandeKuyt is one of the church members directly involved in that effort, along with several young couples. "We are a group of friends that grew out of the Ancaster CRC youth group 18 years ago," she said. They plan to attend the opening day of the trial as a group and then take turns going on assigned days to provide support. They will gather each Sunday for lunch to talk and be together. Friends of Hank and Mary have also attended the court proceedings and will continue to do so.

VandeKuyt said that there was a prayer service on the Thursday before jury selection began to commit the trial to God. Hank prayed for the judge, jury, and lawyers, and Sharlene thanked the congregation for their support.

"There will be a Scripture verse posted on the church's website each day of the trial, and people are stopping wherever they are to pray at 10 a.m.," VandeKuyt said.

Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink arrived to start her ministry in Ancaster CRC at the same time Bosma was killed. Her first family visit in Ancaster was with the Bosmas as they learned of Tim's death. "The Bosma tragedy has, in many ways, defined my ministry at Ancaster CRC," she said. In her first year there were three more tragic deaths in the church family. "The past two years have given this church time to heal, but as the trial approaches, we discover anew that the power of sin and evil is very real."

As she meets with members and as she preaches, she said, the church is reminded that forgiveness and justice are more than theological concepts. "These are truths that we can never fully grasp without the miracle of God's intervention," she said. "Until then, our prayers are for peace and courage, and for strength for each day. The rest will come in God's time."

—Gayla R. Postma

Redeemer Athlete Breaks Ontario Scoring Record

Curtiss Straatsma's name is inscribed in the Ontario College Athletic Association's record book as the most prolific scorer in OCAA women's volleyball history. On January 9, 2016, the Redeemer University College student scored her 1,240th career point during the Redeemer Royals' game with St. Clair College.

Straatsma, a member of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in Caledon, Ont., is in her fifth year of Redeemer's education program.



Curtiss Straatsma

—Krista Dam-VandeKuyt



The preschool group learns about the Last Supper.

Colorado Kids Remember Jesus' Journey to the Cross

For the second year, Eastern Hills Community Christian Reformed Church in Aurora, Colo., is helping children understand Good Friday through "Remember Jesus: A Journey to the Cross."

Last year the inaugural event took nearly 200 children ages 3 to 10 through stations that reflected the journey that Jesus took to the cross, including the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, and his last moments at the cross. The communion elements, crucifixion nails, and a crown of thorns all served as visual reminders of Jesus' suffering. Age-appropriate activities allowed the children to experience the journey in different ways.

"Following the journey, the kids gathered in a large group to summarize why we remember Jesus, with an opportunity to



Carsyn Vialpando hammers nails into a piece of wood like the cross.

thank him for dying on the cross and accept his forgiveness," explained Robin Kluever, the church's children's pastor.

Kluever said the idea for the event came from another church

in Florida. "We are implementing it in our own way with a few tweaks and a bit different look," she said.

Carsyn Vialpando got to hammer nails into a piece of wood like the cross. "I feel happy because I know Jesus would rise three days later, which meant that Jesus has forgiven all of our sins," he said.

Maddie Pheteplace said, "I felt good learning about the Last Supper. It means that Jesus gave his life for me and my sin."

—Tracey Yan

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. James (Jim) Cooper
1947-2015

James (Jim) Cooper is described as having "a heart as wide as the sea" for people who were suffering. He had a special place in his heart for those who served in the military and for victims of childhood sexual abuse. Cooper's ministry was cut short by Parkinson's disease, which he struggled with for 15 years. Cooper died on December 14 in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Cooper served his Lord wholeheartedly as pastor of Christian Reformed churches in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Michigan. He retired in 2005.

Highlights of Cooper's ministry include baptizing and marrying his children and grandchildren, working as a chaplain for a volunteer Fire and Rescue Department in Zeeland, Mich., and receiving the Gold Award for 25 years of service to the Calvinist Cadet Corps.

Cooper's hobbies included fishing, travel, reading, and woodworking.

Cooper is survived by Carolyn, his devoted caretaker and beloved wife of 45 years, by four children and their spouses, and by eight grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

Further information on recently deceased ministers is available on The Banner's website.

NEWS

As refugees continue to arrive in Canada, many Christian Reformed congregations are helping them. Here are some of their stories.

Just Working Construction Brings Job Training and Hope to Newcomers

For many refugees and newcomers to Canada, finding work is a challenge. To help meet that need, Jeff Van Gyssel, a carpenter from New Hamburg, Ont., walked away from a good job at a successful construction company to begin Just Working Construction in April 2015.



Mwana Hardy of Just Working Construction works on a job site.

Van Gyssel's friend, a refugee from Eritrea, had been looking unsuccessfully for work in the trades for some time. "My friend was not the only newcomer to Canada who was very frustrated [about] employment," said Van Gyssel. "Since I felt like owning my own business was a possibility, at the same time giving hope and a fair chance to some guys who wanted work in the trades, I thought I would try it out."

Van Gyssel, a member of The Journey, a Christian Reformed church plant in Kitchener, Ont., continued, "I knew there were going to be added challenges trying to start a business and train newcomers at the same time but felt God was behind it."

Challenges have arisen. Employees have come and gone after deciding the work is too hard or for other reasons, language barriers can get in the way, and safety is sometimes an issue as things get lost in translation. In spite of the challenges, Van Gyssel is excited about the work. His hope is that "from people hearing about this we might find some help in training . . . to get as many newcomers trained properly and safely [as possible] and let them have a successful career in the trades here in Canada."

He currently has four employees, including his brother-in-law Kenny Hoekstra, Dawit and Bisrat Asgadam from Eritrea, and Mwana Hardy from the Congo. "Every one of these guys feels like a partner in the mission and for work."

—Anita Brinkman



Eleanor McComb of Willoughby CRC with the Lin family from Myanmar.

British Columbia Churches Prepare for Refugees

With 25,000 Syrian refugees expected in Canada in the coming months, British Columbia Christian Reformed churches are stepping up to sponsor and support some of the arriving families, drawing on their extensive refugee experience.

"One of the primary teachings in the Bible is to care for others," explained Eleanor McComb of Willoughby CRC in Langley. "Feed the hungry, welcome the stranger. Besides that, it is so much fun interacting with people from other cultures, and a great learning experience."

Willoughby CRC connected to a Syrian family of five through World Renew. Church members provide both the financial support required by the government and the personal and emotional support refugees need to acclimatize to their new surroundings. Previously the church sponsored refugees from Myanmar and Thailand—and before that from Iran, Iraq, and Vietnam.

Ladner CRC in Delta is sharing its sponsorship expertise with Delta Safe Haven, a community group led by the local United Church of Canada congregation that will support two Syrian families. Since 2011, Ladner CRC has sponsored three refugee families, the latest from Thailand. Gerry Bouman is the coordinator of the Refugee Support Program at Ladner CRC.

Bouman said it takes a lot of work from many members of the congregation to provide the support refugees need. Volunteers help refugees deal with such issues as housing, medical problems, and employment. "You never know what might happen, but we have found God is always there to help us and our refugees," he said.

Meanwhile, New Westminster CRC is also connecting with a Syrian family through World Renew. The church raised almost all the necessary funds in one evening. Church members have a strong connection to the plight of refugees, having sponsored over 1,000 refugees from Vietnam in the 1970s and 1980s. "Things have come together fast, and we are really blessed by the willingness of the people of the church," said organizer Marianne Van Delft.

—Tracey Yan

Ontario Town Welcomes Syrian Family to Canada

After months of planning and preparation—lots of paperwork and just as much legwork to find housing and take care of all the details that come with living in Canada—the refugee committee of Ontario's Sarnia-area Christian Reformed churches welcomed the Al-Khalil family to Canada on December 31.

Mohammad and Diana Al-Khalil arrived in Toronto with their three young daughters on New Year's Eve. Once they settled into the apartment prepared for them and rested from the long journey, they were ready to begin settling into the culture. The girls will start school shortly.



The Al-Khalil family with members of the Sarnia refugee committee. Back row (l-r): Diana Al-Khalil, Rob Drope, Henny Drope, Len Smit, Mohammad Al-Khalil. In front: Rahaf, Roaa, and Raghad.

"The first few days were very busy," said committee chair Henny Drope. Tasks included setting up a bank account, applying for Ontario health care,

and filling out applications and forms.

As the family does not speak English, the committee has gratefully accepted the help of William

and Marlin Moshe as translators. Originally from Iraq, the Moshes were sponsored by the refugee committee 19 years ago.

The committee has been sponsoring refugees since the 1970s. "The catalyst was the large number of 'boat people' coming from Vietnam during that war," said Drope. Since then, the committee has sponsored families and individuals from many countries.

"We feel very blessed that we have been able to help one family escape from living in a camp and start a new life in Canada."

—Anita Brinkman

Refugee Advocates Encourage Churches to Take Worldwide Focus

While Christian Reformed congregations have been stepping up to sponsor Syrian refugees, Rebecca Walker, refugee coordinator for World Renew in Canada, says it is important to remember the millions of other refugees who have been waiting to be resettled.

"There definitely is a huge upsurge in churches wanting to take some kind of action," Walker said. Her office has received more than 120 new inquiries from churches interested in beginning a private sponsorship process. However, Walker said the requests from all the sponsorship agreement holders across the country looking to sponsor Syrian refugees outnumber the government-referred cases that have only become available on a weekly basis since the beginning of January 2016.

At the time of writing, Walker's office had 69 applications in process, 18 of them representing Syrian refugees and the rest from other countries in crisis, including Sudan, Eritrea, Myanmar, Pakistan, and many others.

"A lot of churches call and say they really want to sponsor a Syrian, and when I would explain about the global refugee crisis with many people in the world waiting for resettlement, most churches would say 'Okay, then we want to sponsor anybody who's really in need.'"

Two of those churches include Living Hope Christian Reformed Church in Abbotsford, B.C., which welcomed a Sudanese family in December, and Jubilee Fellowship CRC in St. Catharines, Ont., which welcomed a family displaced from Eritrea.

This is the ninth sponsorship for the St. Catharines church, whose refugee committee took action again last March when a compassionate church member approached them about the growing Syrian crisis. "We were looking for a Syrian family," said Anna Bailey, a member of the committee. "We saw many profiles from other countries though, with narratives that told heartbreaking stories and displayed desperate

need to begin a new life in Canada, so we [chose] a family from Eritrea."

Bailey said Jubilee Fellowship CRC has sponsored a family once every five years or so. "We generally commit to helping a family until they're very well acclimated to life in Canada and in our community, and then we rest and rally to begin another process."

Welcoming the Jael family to Abbotsford was also the most recent of several past sponsorships for Living Hope CRC. "As deacons we felt a strong desire to sponsor another family, and so I started looking at that," said Kevin Veenstra, the church's refugee support coordinator. "We as a group decided that sponsoring a young family would be good, as we are a church that could support a family. We also decided that it would be good to have a family from South Sudan as there is a strong Sudanese community

in Abbotsford and another family in our church from South Sudan."

Walker is one of many voices advocating for a wide approach to refugee resettlement. In its list of suggested actions for Canadians wishing to sponsor or assist



Nancy Baker (far right) of Jubilee Fellowship CRC's refugee committee pictured with a settlement worker (center) and just-arrived (left to right) Haben, Danait, and Johannes Yigzaw.

Syrian refugees, the national refugee advocacy organization Canadian Council for Refugees' number-one piece of advice is, "Consider refugees from other regions."

"We do not want the rest of the world forgotten," Walker said.

—Alissa Vernon

NEWS

Synodical Committee Rejects Doctrine of Discovery, Criticizes CRC Ministry to Navajo

The Doctrine of Discovery Task Force appointed by Synod 2012 asks the Christian Reformed Church to roundly condemn the Doctrine of Christian Discovery (DOCD) and the negative effects it has had on generations of Native peoples in the U.S. and Canada. The committee chose to use the term Doctrine of Christian Discovery to highlight the doctrine's theological roots.

The committee also did not mince words in criticizing the CRC's ministry to Zuni and Navajo peoples, established more than a century ago. Synod is the annual leadership meeting of the CRC.

The Doctrine of Christian Discovery was the belief that North American lands were uninhabited until Europeans arrived and placed white Christians in a position of power over non-Christian peoples and lands. The committee asserts that those beliefs, though now disavowed, continue to influence legal and policy decisions today.

The committee's report provides extensive material on the history of DOCD. It mined CRC archival documents and captured stories of Native people who were placed in Christian residential schools.

The report states that "belief in the inferiority of Indigenous cultures led to attempts . . . to wipe out Indigenous culture." In both the U.S. and Canada, these attempts were facilitated most notoriously through the establishment of Indian boarding schools and legislation designed to force Indigenous cultures to adopt Western practices of land ownership and governance.

In the U.S., the CRC was involved through its "Board of Heathen Missions." It established Rehoboth, an Indian boarding school, in 1903.

The committee wrote that the CRC's policies and actions concerning Indigenous peoples of the Southwest were directly shaped by the values and assumptions common to the DOCD. "The church made policies based on an understanding that they had an inalienable right to expand their church to Navajo and Zuni terri-



tory, and that until they came there to save the local Indigenous population, the Navajo and Zuni were firmly in the grip of the devil."

School officials cut students' hair, replaced their Native clothes with Western dress, and replaced their Navajo names with "English" names, the trauma of which is recorded in the story of committee member Susie Silversmith. The authors cite the warfare imagery used by missionaries in which assimilation into Western culture was seen as the final victory of Christ over Satan.

Many churches and governments have apologized for their actions. The Canadian government apologized to Native peoples in Canada in 2008 for the abuses that happened in residential schools. A number of churches have affirmed their own culpability in the legacy the DOCD has left in North America, including the Anglican Church, the Episcopal Church, and the United Church of Christ.

When the 100th anniversary of Rehoboth was celebrated, former students, representatives of the denomination, and teachers and staff both past and present participated in a process of healing and reconciliation. "But as truth and reconciliation projects have taught us," the authors wrote, "confessions, apologies, and reconciliation must flow out of a sincere and rigorous search for truth. Hearings have not been conducted, and the search for truth has not been completed because not all people have felt safe to share their stories."

The report concludes, "The CRC was wrong to establish and run a boarding school named Rehoboth; the land the missionaries sought to

conquer was not theirs to flourish in; it was wrong to punish students for speaking their language; our denomination was wrong to take children from their homes. The CRC Board of Heathen Missions initiated a lot of pain through its dehumanizing view of Native Americans."

The authors wrote that the distance of years or lack of immediate responsibility for the actions taken a century ago does not excuse churches or its members today. They noted that the CRC and the entire body of Christ in North America "drinks downstream" from that historical reality; the effects of that corporate sin linger today.

The committee made several recommendations to continue the CRC's journey of reconciliation, starting with a repudiation of the DOCD as fundamentally opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Additionally, the recommendations include

- commitment to a long-term process of education, confession, lamentation, and repentance.
- acknowledgment of the CRC's historical appropriation of a Euro-superior worldview and resulting trespasses against Indigenous peoples generally and, specifically, against the Navajo and Zuni peoples of the U.S. Southwest.
- holding, in due time, a CRCNA Prayer and Worship Gathering of Lament for "our corporate sins and moral wounds related to the DOCD" under the leadership of Indigenous Christians, because "corporate sins call for corporate lament."
- establishing a commission, chaired and led by a simple majority of Indigenous persons, to design and implement a five-year process creating safe space for telling and listening to life stories of Indigenous brothers and sisters.

The full report is available at crcna.org and will be published in the *Agenda for Synod 2016*. Synod 2016 will discuss the report when delegates gather in June in Grand Rapids, Mich.

—Gayla R. Postma

A Car Lot with a Difference

In Grand Rapids, Mich., 28th Street is lined with car lots. But one of the newest has a much different focus than the others. This car lot raises funds to help parents at Calvin Christian Schools in Grandville afford the cost of tuition for their children.

Calvin's Car Lot is the vision of seven men known as the Group of Grandpas—all men with ties to the school. Six of the seven have grandchildren who attend Calvin Christian. The seventh, Glen Walstra, served as interim operations director two years ago after a merger of Grandville Christian and Calvin Christian schools.

"We got together and set a goal—how can we help more people who need tuition assistance?" said Walstra. "All of the grandpas knew a little something about things that moved." The idea of the used car lot took shape.

Chris Weller found an abandoned tool shop in nearby Wyoming and convinced the owner to allow the group to lease the property for three years at a price of \$1 per year. The group restored the building, putting a sales office in the front and a garage in the rear with a lift.

Calvin's Car Lot accepts donations of used cars, which are then detailed and prepared for sale, generally at a cost of less than \$5,000. Members of the group take turns daily handling the sales operations. All proceeds from vehicle sales go toward Calvin Christian's tuition assistance fund, said Walstra, a member of First Cutlerville Christian Reformed Church in Byron Center, Mich.

—Greg Chandler



GREG CHANDLER

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven 1927-2015

Andrew Kuyvenhoven, a kind and compassionate man with a keen mind and a joyful dedication to his Lord, died peacefully on December 1, 2015. He was 88 years old.

Kuyvenhoven immigrated to Canada from the Netherlands in 1952 and graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1958. He served five Christian Reformed congregations in Alberta and Ontario before becoming theological editor for CRC Publications and later on editor of *The Banner*. He retired in 1992.

Kuyvenhoven wrote numerous books, study guides, and devotionals. His devotional *Daylight* went through 10 printings and was translated into a number of languages. Kuyvenhoven loved the CRC and its culture. He could also see its shortcomings and recognize its broader missions. He boldly called the CRC to move beyond its ethnic heritage and traditions.

Of all his roles, Kuyvenhoven's children prized most his role as dad. "He loved us wholeheartedly, unconditionally, sacrificially, and unreservedly," they said. "He leaves us a rich legacy of love and faith that we receive gladly and thankfully."

Kuyvenhoven was predeceased in 2009 by his wife, Ena. He is survived by six children and their spouses and by 15 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

World Missions Partner Helps Syrian Refugees



As many Western countries prepare to welcome Syrian refugees, at least one organization* that partners with Christian Reformed World Missions stands in the gap to prepare them for a successful transition before they leave and help the ones who stay behind. The organization, which has been sending Christians to teach English in hard-to-access areas in Asia for 33 years, is placing teachers in Syrian refugee camps and also

partnering with schools in North Africa.

Gordon and Bettie Van't Bosch, members of First Christian Reformed Church in Rocky Mountain House, Alta., talked about their work with this organization recently in Alberta. "Teaching English," Gordon said, "is all about building relationships while using the gift of teaching and living among [the people you are teaching]. Your example often leads to a deeper understanding of why you have hope."

A young woman* who grew up in Sully (Iowa) CRC spent a month last summer teaching English in a refugee camp in Jordan.

One of the highlights, she recalled, was watching two sisters about 4 years old blossom. "The first week they attended school, they were crying and had to be coaxed into the classroom each day. During the last week, they were giggling, shouting out answers," she said.

"Giving students a stable place to grow and learn is essential to their ability to learn and concentrate," she continued. "The older children have seen and remembered more, as shown by the difference in their artwork that displayed bombings they have experienced in more detail," she explained.

Many students are three years behind in their studies because of the disruption of war, she said. "If they don't have educational opportunities," she surmised, "they won't have the critical thinking skills needed to evaluate whether something is true or not."

"Working in a refugee camp has changed my perspective," she said. "Things aren't as black and white as they appear. It is not 'us' versus 'them,' nor is it Islam versus Christianity."

*Names are omitted for the safety of those involved.

—Pat Vanderploeg

NEWS

Michigan Classis Accepts Study Report on Same-Sex Marriage, Offers It to Synod 2016

Classis Grand Rapids East (GRE) is sending a communication to Synod 2016 that summarizes a 142-page report on same-sex marriage created by a committee appointed by the classis. Twice in recent years, that classis asked synod to reexamine the Christian Reformed Church's 1973 position statement on homosexuality, which states that same-sex orientation is not sinful but homosexual activity is. (A classis is a regional group of churches, and synod is the annual general assembly of the Christian Reformed Church. Classis GRE has approximately 8,500 church members.)

After its requests were rejected, the classis appointed its own committee to examine the biblical/theological support offered by Christian proponents of gay marriage and to examine how that differs from the biblical/theological perspective that serves as the basis of the CRC's position.

Classis GRE received and accepted that committee's report. It is offering the report to Synod 2016 as "an additional resource for ongoing study and discussion regarding pastoral guidance for dealing with same-sex marriage and related matters."

In the summary of the report, the authors stated that "there has been significant theological consideration of these issues since 1973, both in the Reformed tradition and in the wider Christian church."

At various times in history, they said, the Holy Spirit prompted and



guided the church to reinterpret some parts of Scripture, including on such issues as slavery and racism. "Through these various means, the church was led to better interpretations of parts of Scripture. Comparing the issue of same-sex marriage to these other historical cases suggests that this might be another occasion in church history when the Holy Spirit is prompting a reexamination of Scripture."

The extensive report includes sections on

- advances in scientific understandings of sex and gender, intersex and transgender;
- guidelines for interpreting Scripture according to a Reformed hermeneutic;
- interpretation of biblical passages referring to gender differentiation and same-sex intercourse;
- historical, biblical, and theological foundations for marriage;
- psychological issues involved in considering full inclusion versus non-inclusion;
- personal stories of LGBT Christians.

Classis clerk Rev. Al Mulder characterized the discussion of the report at classis as cautious and respectful of those who agree

with the content of the report and of those in basic disagreement with Christian proponents of same-sex marriage. Mulder said most of the discussion centered on the most effective way to encourage meaningful denominational dialogue on the subject.

Rev. William DeVries, who chaired the committee, expressed his hope that "a gracious dialogue ... move forward in the churches of Classis Grand Rapids East, and in all the churches of the CRC on this vital issue; and that [people] listen to others without attacks on their faith or their commitment to Christ or Scripture."

The communication from Grand Rapids East, which will include a link to its full report, will be published in the *Agenda for Synod 2016*.

Synod 2016 delegates will gather in June in Grand Rapids, Mich.

—Gayla R. Postma

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Gerald Nyenhuis
1928-2015

Gerald Nyenhuis had many vocations and completed degrees in the U.S., Spain, and Mexico. A missionary and professor in Mexico for 53 years, he wrote 11 books and numerous articles in Spanish-language journals. Nyenhuis died on November 1 in Mexico City. He was 87.

After training as a flight engineer in the U.S. Navy, Nyenhuis graduated from seminary and moved to Mexico to work for Christian Reformed World Missions.

Nyenhuis's family said he desired to live by the five principles that emerged from the Protestant Reformation. He defended the authority of Scripture. By faith alone he followed God's call to Mexico. His comfort was that he rested in the grace of God alone. His teaching and preaching centered on Christ alone, and he dedicated himself to living for the glory of God.

Nyenhuis retired in 1994 but continued teaching at Iberoamericana University and leading Berith Presbyterian Church until his death.

Nyenhuis was predeceased in 1971 by his first wife, Arlene. He is survived by his wife, Francisca, by eight children and their spouses, and by 14 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

FAQs

Outreach

Q What if I have doubts about God?

A When you have doubts about God, just remember that God does not have doubts about you.

The good news about your doubts is that you already have faith. At Calvin Seminary, professor Neal Plantinga used to say to us, “Doubt is not the absence of faith; rather it is the presence of it. For if you did not doubt at all, then you would not have believed at all.”

Furthermore, doubt can bring about a stronger and more robust faith. When the apostle we call “Doubting Thomas” demanded evidence from the risen Christ, Jesus said, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side.” You see, Jesus did not rebuke Thomas but encouraged him to wrestle with his doubts and to expose them in the light of the evidence.

One of the most detrimental things we can do in church is fail to cultivate a safe environment where people can freely express their doubts. A leading cause of young adults leaving church and their faith altogether is that they did not know what to do with their unexpressed doubts. I’d encourage you to do what gospel writer Luke, the scientist/journalist, did: “Since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you.”

In *The Reason for God*, Tim Keller writes: During a dark time in her life, a woman in my congregation complained that she had prayed over and over, “God, help me find you,” but had gotten nowhere. A Christian friend suggested to her that she might change her prayer to, “God, come and find me. After all, you are the Good Shepherd who goes looking for the lost sheep.” She concluded when she was recounting this to me, “The only reason I can tell you this story is—he did.”

The risen Christ can deal with your doubt. Can you?

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

The good news about your doubts is that you already have faith.

Justice

Q Do I have the right to say whatever I think in public?

A Freedom of speech is basic for human dignity and justice, but there are limits. We all agree that yelling “FIRE!” in a crowded theater is wrong. And most people would agree that no one can expect to be free from hearing or reading anything that they find offensive. Between those extremes, limits are usually based on the concept of harm.

When does an act of “free speech” by one person harm others? That debate continues to rage on university campuses, in U.S. politics, among anti-bullying groups, and within the church.

Inciting physical harm is an obvious limit.

But what someone says can hurt as much as a beating; often the pain is deeper and lasts longer. And in our texts and tweets, as well as our conversations, when we direct sharp retorts or run others down, we cause more damage than we may think.

Measuring that kind of harm is imprecise. Assessing responsibility for our actions and sorting truth from distortion of the truth with intent to harm others can be complex tasks.

The guideline for Christians is profoundly different than “do no harm.” The Bible asks us to “speak the truth in love.” In church discussions, truth is often given higher priority than love. Sometimes people claim that we can love others and still say harmful things, as long as we think they are true, without accepting responsibility for the impact of what we say. But that is not love.

Love for others—all others—requires speaking out *and* holding our tongues. It should guide how we say what we think is true. I wonder what limits based on the concept of love instead of harm might inform the current debates about freedom of speech.

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

Faith Formation

Q I don’t have a question, but rather an insight that startled and humbled me. For years, the worship leaders in our congregation have practiced this routine once every other month: they have five or six children each play one piano piece as a prelude to worship. The worship purist in me was upset and concluded we were giving up preludes that truly prepared us for worship for a “cutesy kid show.”

But now I know I was wrong. It took me a long time to see this, because the “cute kids” of seven years ago are now confident teen members of our worship teams. Now I see that our worship leaders were preparing these children to serve as leaders. One of these teens has told me that she plans to study worship in college with the hope of finding a full-time worship ministry position.

I’m joyfully grateful to admit that I was wrong.

A Thirty years ago I served as an elder for the first time, and when I look back on those early visits that I made, I realize that I felt like a 6-year-old playing the piano with two fingers. But I also realize that the opportunities that I’ve had to serve as an elder have stretched my faith and my own sense of calling and strengthened me for leadership. That same principle has served these young children that you refer to very well.

Every Christian is a leader in some way. And the more we can call forth such leadership dynamics from every generation in the church, the stronger the church will be.

—Syd Hielema is a team leader for Faith Formation Ministries. He is a member of Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Ancaster, Ont. ■



IN THE BEGINNING WAS . . . TECHNOLOGY

● ● ● ● ● **THE VERY WORD “TECHNOLOGY”** has a certain aura about it, like the glowing light of a smartphone in the dark. We associate technology with pixels and PowerPoint, with things that beep and buzz and run on batteries. After the 21st century’s revolutions in computing capacity, we tend to identify technology with information processing machines we can wear on our wrist. We’ve been trained to assume that the land of technology is a city of light.

So when churches wrestle with the question of “technology” in worship, they tend to talk about whether to use projectors and PowerPoint slides, or whether it really makes sense to invest

thousands of dollars in AV equipment. Educators similarly are asking fundamental questions about how digital, computer, and web technologies could help (or hurt) the task of teaching and learning for “digital natives.”

Parents also wrestle with technology: When should we let the kids have a cell phone? Should we let them have smartphones that give them access to the Internet?

Although these are good and important conversations to have, they tend to assume a narrow definition of “technology” that is tethered to computing. But that obscures the fact that we’re never *not* immersed in some technology.

When a church considers whether to add a screen and projector as part of their worship “architecture,” they are *not* contemplating whether to “add” technology to worship. Instead they are considering whether to swap one sort of technology for another. The hymnbook, for instance, is itself the result of a remarkable technological revolution in the medieval world—the invention of the printing press. So whether you’re scrolling through this article on your iPad or reading it in print, you are using a technology.

Similarly, while I might not be excited about using digital technologies in my classroom, that doesn’t mean I’m opposed to technology. It just means I favor the technology of chalk and blackboards.

Not all that glitters is gold. Conversely, not all technology glows. If we narrowly identify technology with shiny, blinky things, we’ll miss all of the technologies right under our nose and mistakenly take them to be “natural.” The question isn’t *whether* to use technology, but *how*. While we rightly worry about the effects of being constantly hunched over our smartphones or about the potential misuse of power that comes with ever-present surveillance, that’s not synonymous with being “against” technology.

Technology is as old as humanity. Or you might say that it is as old as culture. Technology is most basically defined as the application of knowledge in order to get something done (which is why technology is often described as *applied* science). It is as old as the human propensity—and calling—to “make” the world. There is no human culture that is not always already technological.

Asking Better Questions

If technology is an expression of our creaturely vocation to create, then the question isn’t *whether* to employ technology, but *how* and *which*. We would do well to ask the sorts of questions along the lines of those Andy Crouch presses us to consider in *Culture Making*. Crouch emphasizes that yes/no, good/bad questions are too clunky and ham-fisted. Instead, we need to ask questions like the following:

- What does this technology assume about the way the world is?
- What does this technology assume about the way the world should be?
- What does this technology make possible?
- What does this technology make *impossible* (or at least very difficult)?
- What new forms of culture are created in response to this technology?

These questions enable us to evaluate technology—and our relation to it—in ways that are informed by a biblical vision for flourishing.

- What does Scripture say about the way the world is?

WE SHOULD ALSO BE ASKING, “WHAT DOES THIS TECHNOLOGY WANT ME TO LOVE?”

- What does God tell us about what he wants the world to be? How is this pictured and practiced in the rhythms of Christian worship? What are the outlines of *shalom* God desires for the world?
- How does that inform our evaluation of various technologies? What do they make possible? Are these possibilities that resonate with what God desires for creation? Or might some technologies functionally encourage disordered, sinful ways of being?
- What do such technologies make more difficult? How might some technologies shut down capacities for relating to God, our neighbor, and God’s creation? Do some technologies actually make it harder to be open to God’s call to love God and neighbor? Might other technologies actually make us more responsive to the gospel?

The answer to such questions isn’t a simple yes or no, good or bad. As one of my first teachers in the Reformed tradition used to put it, the answer to almost any question is either going to be “Yes, but . . .” or “No, but . . .” If the answers are going to be biblically responsible and theologically nuanced, they are always going to express that “It’s complicated.”

Shaped by Our Own Creations

But our enthusiasm sometimes runs ahead of us. Sometimes our haste in latching onto technologies—we sense what we can do *with* them—prevents us from seeing what they might do *to* us. Just think for a moment of Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Dr. Frankenstein’s “new creation,” you might recall, was created with the best of intentions: to help the human race overcome illness and disease. But as the novel shows, sometimes our own creations can outstrip our best intentions, and the very technologies we meant for good become monsters that mean us harm.

While we need to ask difficult questions about *how* to use technology, we also need to consider how we can end up being used *by* technology. In other words, it’s not just a question of what we can and should do with technology; it’s also a question of what various technologies do *to* us.

We simplistically imagine that these technologies are neutral tools we can use for good or ill. But then we fail to recognize that technologies come pre-loaded with ways of seeing and construing and “making” the world. For example, instead of just worrying about the messages or content delivered to our »

Digging Deeper

- Matthew Crawford, *The World Beyond Your Head: On Becoming an Individual in an Age of Distraction* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015).
- Brad J. Kallenberg, *God and Gadgets: Following Jesus in a Technological Age* (Cascade Books, 2011).
- Derek Schuurman, *Shaping a Digital World: Faith, Culture, and Computer Technology* (InterVarsity Press, 2013).

smartphones, we should be aware that the way we use them unconsciously trains us to inhabit the world with a certain posture. The smartphone invites me to inhabit the world differently—not just because it gives me access to global Internet resources in a pocket-sized device, but precisely in how I interact with the device itself. The habit of using a smartphone implicitly teaches me to treat the world as “available” to me and at my disposal—to constitute the world as “at-hand” for me, to be selected, scaled, scanned, tapped, and enjoyed.

I once saw this way of life pictured, of all places, in a Michelob Ultra beer commercial. The ad portrayed a world that responds to my whims and wants the same way a smartphone does. Don’t like that car? *Swipe* for a different one. Wish the scenery was different? *Swipe* for an alternative. Wish you could be somewhere else? Just *touch* the place. Wish you could see *her* [sic] just a little better? *Zoooooom* with the slide of a couple of fingers.

A way of relating to a phone becomes a way of relating to the world. The practices for manipulating a small device are expanded to show how we’d really like to manipulate our environment to serve our needs and be subject to our whims. And while we don’t go around swiping our hands in front of us to change the scenery, perhaps we unconsciously begin to expect the world to conform to our wishes, just as our smartphone does. In short, my relation to my smartphone—which may seem insignificant—actually shapes my relation to *the world*.

It’s important to realize that technologies are not just tools that we can put in our hands and thus are subject to us. Technologies generate forms of life and cultural practices to which we become subject. They are not just instruments we work with; they become systems that work *on* us, surreptitiously forming our loves and longing and desires—indeed, shaping our *character*. So not only should we ask, “What sort of world does this technology *want*?”; we should also be asking, “What does this technology want me to *love*?”

The New Magic

In a secular age, it’s tempting to let the allure and power of technology become our source of hope. A society that has given up belief in God is prone to believe in other gods, especially when they are shiny and new and (seem to) demand so little of us.

I regularly spend time in the Bay Area around San Francisco, serving as a mentor to a fascinating group of young entrepreneurs and innovators. Many are steeped in the utopian visions of Silicon Valley, where the gospel of “startup-ism” heralds the unlimited human capacity to solve all of our problems.

On my most recent trip there, I discovered an intriguing book by Massachusetts Institute of Technology innovation guru David Rose: *Enchanted Objects: Design, Human Desire, and the Internet of Things*. These are a few of my favorite things. How could I resist?

What Rose wants is magic. More specifically, Rose argues that we all want magic, enchantment—that this is a fundamental human desire. He sees this attested in ancient myths and our most enduring fairy tales, in the worlds of Tolkien and Harry Potter. “It seems as if we have always longed for a world of enchantment,” he observes. The “enchanted objects” he’s talking about “will be ones that carry on the traditions and promises of the objects of our age-old fantasies, the ones that connect with and satisfy our fundamental human desires.” The experiences that enchant us, he continues, “reach into our hearts and souls.”

But what Rose ultimately offers is just a false, fabricated enchantment that is a technological achievement. Indeed, what Rose offers as enchanted objects are, well, quite a let-down. He starts describing Dorothy’s magical teleporting shoes and then tells you that Nike has created “enchanted” shoes that can count how many steps you’ve taken. He describes Frodo’s sword and then compares it to a pill bottle that reminds you to take your blood pressure medication. You’ll forgive me, but all of this makes me feel like we’re still in Kansas, if you know what I mean. The technology Rose celebrates can’t deliver transcendence.

But Rose is exactly right to recognize what we *desire*. And that in itself might be a backhanded testimony to an enduring longing that persists even in a disenchanting world—a signal that we still desire something beyond the ordinary, flat world we live in—something transcendent.

The perennial wisdom of the psalms—whether I’m reading in my leather-bound Bible or the app on my phone—is more relevant than ever. While the power of technology might tempt us to look toward the (Silicon) Valley—our help comes from the Maker of heaven and earth who has made us to be makers. Our calling is to make technologies that channel us toward the flourishing of shalom while we wait for salvation from the One in whom all things hold together. ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE



James K.A. Smith holds the Byker Chair in Applied Reformed Theology & Worldview at Calvin College and is editor of *Comment* magazine. His new book, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Brazos) will be published in April. He attends Sherman Street CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The Promise of Mission Trips

STANDING OUTSIDE a dilapidated house being renovated with the help of 20 young people from Ontario, Canada, someone asked a question. “Wouldn’t it be better if we sent the money it took to get us here and—given the 30 percent unemployment rate—used it to hire locals to do this work?”

It’s a great question, one that draws our attention to the complexity of what it means to live as the Christian community in the face of social and economic problems. Recently, books like *When Helping Hurts* have called into question the impact of mission trips that are often fueled by a mixture of good intentions and bad theology.

As a professor, I believe students need to wrestle with questions like this, but it can be difficult. Imagine my surprise when I learned that I’ve been stereotyped as someone who’d rather point out all the problems with mission trips than take action and do something about it. And yet, there I was in Winnebago, Nebraska, with a group of kids from Canada, helping clean and restore houses.

The following week I was driving the streets of Sioux City, Iowa, picking up Laotian kids for vacation Bible school. The morning before that I was making sure that a group from Wisconsin had the tools they needed to paint a house for a young couple. I hope my actions show that I firmly believe in the promise of mission trips. When done well they not only help meet people’s needs, they also provide an important exercise in learning to get over ourselves.

There are important theological reasons for embracing service projects. Jesus tells us that loving God and loving our neighbor are so deeply intertwined that



Loving our neighbors means opening ourselves up to their way of life.

it’s impossible to separate them. As Jesus shows us, this type of love is only possible when we are able to get outside ourselves and truly receive the “other.” Making God fit the expectations of a particular culture is not love; it is, according to John Calvin, idolatry. The same goes for our neighbor—loving our neighbors should not be an exercise in making them like us. Instead, it means opening ourselves up to their way of life. This is basic gospel stuff—dying to self so we might be raised to a new way of life in relationship with God and neighbor.

This is why I’ve taken the time to lead a service project for the past two summers—to provide an opportunity for young people to experience God’s love as they meet people who are different than them. Yes, we want to develop a passion for social justice and transformation, but that’s not the main reason we invite people to come to the prairie. They

come to have their cultural expectations blown wide open. They come to experience the inefficiency and angst that comes with cleaning houses that will more than likely be dirty again by next summer.

The purpose of these projects is not to “save” anyone by painting houses or mowing a lawn; I’m not convinced the work we do matters as much as we think it does. We should not be so presumptuous to believe that somehow we are the ones bringing God or God’s kingdom to the people we encounter. Instead, the promise of service projects is that God meets us in our neighbor, reconfiguring our imagination so we can see that God is already present in ways we never thought possible. ■



Jason Lief teaches theology at Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa.



is focused on reclaiming Traynor Park, a low-income neighborhood in Kitchener-Waterloo.



Andrew Zantingh (left) mentors

Partnerships Multiply Ministry

by Scott Meekhof

S was in his early 20s and searching for God’s call in his life when he found a place as an apprentice at The Journey Church in Kitchener, Ont.

Through his mentoring relationship with The Journey’s lead pastor, Rev. Andrew Zantingh, developed skills in preaching, coaching, and prayer that he uses in a new ministry and in his seminary studies.

Now working for an organization called MoveIn while he attends classes at Tyndale University College and Seminary, has moved into a neighborhood called Traynor Park.

“Our buildings are in disrepair, I guess you could say,” said, referring to the 88-unit low-rise buildings he and his neighbors occupy.

MoveIn encourages young Christians to live in neighborhoods that have high crime rates, high poverty rates, and low standards of living.

“There’s a range of different people . . . mostly families trying to make a go of it here,” says. His ministry to his neighbors is not just about telling them about Jesus but is also focused on reclaiming the neighborhood.

The Kitchener-Waterloo area, sometimes called K-W for short, has a culture that welcomes immigrants and refugees. It includes many technology companies and startups. Home to nearly half a million people, K-W is one of the larger metropolitan areas in Ontario.

Kitchener-Waterloo also is home to The Journey Church. The Journey is comparatively large for a church plant, with between 150 and 200 people typically attending Sunday services. The church doesn’t have a building. Instead, they meet in the local community center, in the gymnasium attached to a firehouse.

The Journey isn’t in a hurry to find a building, though. As Zantingh explains, “The best stuff that happens at The Journey doesn’t happen on Sunday.” The real

passion is to make disciples and join God on mission in the community—something that drew there in 2015.

Christian Reformed Home Missions, Classis Huron, parent church Community CRC, lead planter Adrian Van Giessen, and others partnered to plant The Journey in 2003. Van Giessen is now the regional leader for Home Missions’ Eastern Canada region and has continued to make partnership a key emphasis.

“Partnerships plant churches,” said Van Giessen. “In the Bible, missionaries went places, discovered where God was already at work, and joined in. In Kitchener-Waterloo we find the same synergy.”

Churches such as Community CRC are partnering with Classis Huron to plant new churches like The Journey and, more recently, a new church plant in Fergus, Ont.

Van Giessen said he sees a bright future in the region and is grateful for the passion for church planting he sees there.

Van Giessen (arms raised) and friends on a winter hike.



He sees young people like [redacted] as the future of the church.

“In part, I believe we’ve got the ‘youth leaving the church’ narrative backwards,” he said. “While some millennials are leaving, others like [redacted] are taking the church back out into the world where it is meant to be—and we have an opportunity to follow them.

“We need to offer pathways into ministry for young adults like [redacted] beyond our neat, traditional categories like ‘pastor’ or even ‘church planter.’ We need to listen to and partner with our young adults as they lead us into a new future.”

[redacted] ran from pastoral ministry—his words—for a long time.

“I tried out social work, coffee shop ministry, neighborhood ministry, restaurant ministry . . . community development work in Romania and Moldova. . . . I worked for four different denominations.” Then he heard God calling him back to the Christian Reformed Church. “I knew I needed someone to disciple me; I needed training.”

As Van Giessen put it, “[redacted] called me, not really sure what he wanted. I introduced him to church planters in the area. He and Andrew really hit it off.”

Zantingh, lead pastor at The Journey since 2010, has a passion for discipleship.

How you can pray

We asked Zantingh and [redacted] how you can pray for them and the communities they serve. Here’s what they said:

- Please pray that we learn to trust God more and more in our work.
- Please pray that we will not shrink back from challenges or changes.
- Please pray for the neighborhoods around Kitchener-Waterloo where the people of The Journey are joining God’s mission.
- Please pray for the MoveIn movement and praise God for the lives he has already transformed through it.

“Mission and pastoring is everyone’s vocation,” he said. His vision for The Journey is for groups within the church to start neighborhood-based worship gatherings of their own, “led by emerging church planters like [redacted].”

For eight months beginning in January 2015, [redacted] embedded himself in the leadership team at The Journey. He shadowed the team—pastors Andrew Zantingh, Emily Vandonk, and Toyosi Awesu—and learned about preaching, discipleship, small groups, leadership development, prayer ministry, and much more.

Home Missions and The Journey both contributed small grants to help [redacted] find a place to live, though he is mostly self-supporting through jobs in construction, painting, and, more recently, as a leader for MoveIn.

“I try to equip him to be able to make his own money and not rely solely on external church funds,” Zantingh says. “[Bivocational ministry] is significant to moving forward in church planting.”

[redacted] is using this bivocational model now, working 20 hours a week for MoveIn, completing his master of divinity at Tyndale, and still doing a painting job here and there. His work for MoveIn involves ministering to his community but also leading six other teams.

“We have seven teams of ‘tentmakers’ praying and doing incarnational ministry in urban poor neighborhoods [in Kitchener-Waterloo],” he explained.

In Traynor Park, [redacted] ministry is taking root. He’s helped to form a tenant association and made connections.

His neighbors are getting organized to make a difference in the neighborhood. They are committed to standing up for each other when faced with bedbug infestations, absentee management, unjust court cases, or anything else.

The community is also forming partnerships outside their buildings. Kamminga worked with a local hockey association to let the kids in his building try hockey and join the local league for free.

“The ambition and determination of some of the youth here—people who have grown up with the odds against them—is really encouraging,” he said. “We are going to put a rink in the neighborhood!”

“A big part of my journey has been [the Christian Reformed Church’s] network of support and accountability,” [redacted] says. “That started with Adrian but then became this network of people at The Journey.”

Zantingh still mentors [redacted] and they meet regularly. Van Giessen partners with [redacted] to network with young adults doing ministry in Kitchener-Waterloo and the Greater Toronto Area. All three are active members at The Journey.

The Journey is partnering with four other churches in Classis Huron, along with Home Missions, to continue planting new churches in the classis. “This is a movement,” Van Giessen says. “It’s more than just one church plant.” ■



Scott Meekhof is the communications coordinator with Christian Reformed Home Missions.



Dwell Church is reaching people in the Bowery.

Connecting the Gospel and the City

Since 2010, Dwell Church’s pastor, Peter Armstrong, has been working to share the gospel in a neighborhood called the Bowery in Manhattan, a place he describes as “an unreached people group unlike any other place in the world.”

“Jesus is using churches like Dwell to reach out to these folks,” Armstrong added.

Described as America’s original skid row, the Bowery comprises a “mash-up” of cultures and is a place that people from every part of society call home. The goal of Dwell is to bring these cultures and people together to be a place of hospitality, regardless of their background or social status.

Home Missions partners with ministries like Dwell in communities across the United States and Canada through coaching, training, funding, and more. For the

past five years, Dwell received grant funding from Home Missions in addition to partnership and support from regional staff and other partners in the region.

“This city just needs to be lifted with some sort of faith,” says Dwell member Jeffrey Oliver. “It’s hard out here. I’ll brush shoulders with millionaires and then a homeless person at the same time.”

Armstrong tells the story of a woman he met who had grown up in the city without any faith background. In her 20s, she found her interest piqued by Buddhism.

After visiting Dwell one day, she also became interested in Christianity and sought to compare the two religions. She joined a small group at Dwell, began learning about the gospel, and became a Christian. She professed her faith and has been a member of the community for two years now.

“What God does when he makes disciples is that he changes an apartment building. He changes a block. He changes a neighborhood. He changes a city,” reflected Armstrong. “We want to be part of that. We want to be on the front lines of doing that.”

Armstrong’s sermons focus on connecting the gospel to what’s happening in the city and the neighborhood. More than half of the congregation walks to church; nearly all are within a couple of stops on the train. This physical proximity allows the congregation to focus on loving and opening up to neighbors.

As Oliver puts it, “Dwell is there for the people. Period.”

—by Annemarie Byl,
Christian Reformed Home Missions

Bringing Hope to Flood Survivors



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREA BOOHER/FEMA

Seventy-year-old Houston, Texas, residents Jose and Sandra (not their real names) were hit with flooding not once but twice last year.

Several months later, they were still sleeping on damp mattresses in their severely damaged home. Their furniture and appliances had been destroyed, and mold was growing on their walls.

They were not alone. The Memorial Day flood (May 2015) and All Saints flood (October 2015) brought immense destruction throughout Texas, leaving thousands in need.

Then Jose and Sandra met volunteers from World Renew's Disaster Response Services (DRS) who were carrying out an assessment of unmet needs in Houston. The volunteers called on residents door to door and hosted several walk-in centers to interview as many people as possible and determine their ongoing flood-related needs.

"May 2015 was the wettest month on record for Texas," said Judy Stoel, who led the assessment team with her husband, Denny. "Enough rain fell to cover the surface of the entire state with eight inches of water.

"Rain washed out roads, swamped neighborhoods, trapped cattle, and forced 531 water rescues, mostly

Residents in several parts of Texas lived in damaged homes following two severe floods in 2015.

stranded drivers. Twenty-two people died, and rivers were at flood stage at 108 locations."

Just when it seemed recovery was underway, another flood struck in October and brought more devastation to some of the same areas.

Following the assessment, World Renew referred many people, including Jose and Sandra, to case workers through the Greater Houston Storm Recovery Network. This group has the resources and ability to work with people who are elderly or disabled, single-parent families, low-income families, and other vulnerable groups in a variety of ways.

They needed help, however, to identify people with unmet needs and get them connected to the appropriate programs. World Renew's DRS volunteers filled the gap.

"When I hear about people living in mold-infested homes, or low-income families not receiving enough insurance money to adequately meet their needs, I can't help but think about what would have happened if we had not been

there," said World Renew DRS director Ron Willett.

"Would people have gotten the help they needed? Would some have gone homeless or had their health deteriorate because of mold?

"Thanks to volunteers who gave of their time, and churches and individuals who made financial gifts, World Renew was able to help this community identify its vulnerable residents and make sure their needs will be met."

Following the success of the Houston needs assessment, community groups in Corpus Christi, San Marcos, and Hidalgo County, Texas, also invited World Renew to help them identify residents with ongoing flood-related needs. In addition, World Renew will be opening a long-term reconstruction site in San Marcos where skilled DRS volunteers will serve for several months to repair and rebuild homes.

"Our volunteers bring their heart and soul to the work they do," said Willett. "It is our prayer that not only will we be able to restore homes, but we can bring hope in Christ's name to those who are suffering."

—by Kellie Scholma, World Renew

World Renew DRS at a Glance

- Last year, 2,860 people from 27 denominations volunteered with World Renew Disaster Response Services.
- Combined, they gave 217,504 hours to help disaster survivors—roughly the equivalent of 104 full-time employees for a year.
- Volunteers served disaster survivors in 20 states and two provinces.
- They contacted 5,529 households to assess disaster needs and repaired or rebuilt 423 homes.
- To learn more, visit worldrenew.net/drs.

Simple, Wise, Responsible

When my wife, Barb, and I were counseled by her pastor, Rev. Douglas Vander Wall, in the months leading up to our wedding, he brought up the issue of finances and budgeting. Then, as now, financial problems are one of the chief areas of stress that can slip in as an uninvited guest to a marriage.

He suggested that we take a number of envelopes, labeling each one with an area of expenditure and indicating a monthly amount on the front. Then we should take our wages and make sure we placed half of the required amount into each envelope on each of our two pay dates every month.

Simple, wise, and responsible. His advice has probably been offered thousands and thousands of times—updated, of course, with today’s technological innovations.

As a denomination, we’ve been using a similar system for decades, with one main envelope and a bunch of sub-envelopes. The labels of the sub-envelopes are familiar: World Missions, Home Missions, Back to God Ministries International, Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin College or a local Reformed college or university, and a variety of denominational services.

Churches are asked by synod to contribute around \$7 per active adult professing member each week to the main envelope called Ministry Shares. The Ministry Shares received are distributed among the various sub-envelopes according to synodical directives.

Simple, yes—but also complex, because each of us has more than just a denominational Ministry Shares envelope. Our local congregations provide us with an additional set of envelopes representing expenses such as the pastor’s salary, mortgage and utilities, and local ministry programs, as well as envelopes for benevolence, Christian education, and the like. Many of us support other-than-CRC ministries and charities as well.

Then there are our household envelopes: mortgages, insurance and utilities, groceries and gasoline, the family’s cell phone plan, and more.



With all these envelopes to fill, there are times when some envelopes don’t receive what’s needed. Why?

In some cases, the dollars just don’t stretch far enough for all the envelopes, and the one farthest away gets forgotten. In other cases, someone might be angry about something—perhaps a *Banner* article!—and purposely skip that envelope. In still other cases, our excitement and passion for local ministry might cause us to judge some of the denominational sub-envelopes to be less worthy.

In reality, the Ministry Shares envelope receives between \$24 and \$25 million each year—praise the Lord! But it’s important to note that this amount is about 60 percent of what would be received if everyone participated fully.

At this point you might expect me to say something like “The ‘marriage’ is going to run into financial trouble if our envelope system falls apart.” But I’m not going to say that. My next step is to stop and listen. I’ve given some examples of why the Ministry Shares system has less than full participation by our congregations. But there are probably more reasons I’ve yet to learn.

A number of months ago, the Board of Trustees commissioned a group of CRC staffers and members to take a close look at our Ministry Shares system. While a

2009 synodical report indicated it was still the best system for funding our shared ministries, the past six years have shown that it’s time to look carefully again at the way we participate financially in our denomination.

I hope that, beginning with Synod 2016 this June, the topic will be before us. And as a result, I hope we’ll grow more closely together as the body of Christ.

Are there changes ahead? Maybe.

By the way, Barb and I are still using a variation of the envelope system, and the Lord has never failed us yet. The Lord hasn’t failed the CRC either, and we must not forget the part that is required of us, as mentioned in this familiar song: “We’ve come this far by faith, *leaning on the Lord.*” ■

“My next step is to stop and listen.”



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

You add.
God multiplies.



Nathan Groenewold experienced many moments of humility and learning from local people.

Volunteer Is Humbled in Honduras

Nathan Groenewold said his first experiences volunteering with CRWM in Honduras were “as shocking as my first cold bucket shower—the kind of shock that leaves you gasping for air.”

Living with a family that spoke a different language and being hours from paved roads were also shocking, yet Nathan began to see why God called him to this year-long service and learning experience.

Groenewold and his local ministry partner, Miguel, worked in a district known for violence and drug dealing. Their ministry involved young people at the church in the town of Mangulile.

While he believes the hours spent leading Bible studies, holding leadership training workshops, and other ministry activities brought positive change, Groenewold also realized some of these techniques have been harmful in the past.

“My friends and coworkers in Mangulile have been conditioned to submit without asking questions,” he said. “In our haste to correct, fix, teach, and donate, we have often sent the message ‘Your ways are lesser.’”

Trying to reverse this, Groenewold left himself open to learning from others.

“My most important moments have been allowing my neighbor to teach me how he gathers up the corn stalks to burn before planting, chopping at weeds with a machete like a child while the workers laugh at my clumsiness.”

Groenewold says his time in Honduras improved his ministry skills and provided an understanding of the culture. Now he is discerning how best to use his experiences.

“It’s possible that God called me, the only English speaker for three hours around, to reinforce a sort of discomfort in my life that just might never leave.” ■

—by Brian Clark, *Christian Reformed World Missions*

Coffee Break Loves Women Right Where They Are

After having been invited by a neighbor, Anna (not her real name) reluctantly agreed to show up at the weekly Coffee Break meeting at First Christian Reformed Church in DeMotte, Ind.

At first Anna, who did not attend church, felt uncomfortable. But she continued to come. She read Bible stories like that of David and Goliath for the first time. It wasn’t long before she felt as though she belonged and felt comfortable sharing with the group. As that Bible study session drew to a close, she didn’t want it to end.

First CRC has been hosting a Coffee Break group for 30 years. Jayne Bowers, group leader for the past 19 years, says the Coffee Break fellowship is the largest she has ever seen. It has 105 women and 14 leaders.

Like the other Coffee Break groups supported by Home Missions, this one includes all types of women. All are welcomed, no matter what age, race, denomination, or walk of life.

“That is what Coffee Break is all about,” Bowers said. “Studying Scripture, changing lives, growing closer to God, encouraging one another . . . and loving women right where they are.”

In addition to studying the Bible, members pray together—some for the first time.

“Coffee Break has changed my life,” wrote one member. “I think it is so awesome the things we are learning about God . . . I feel very close to our whole group—everyone has inspired me to strive to live the way God intended me to live.” ■

—by Annemarie Byl,
Christian Reformed Home Missions

Women find acceptance and kindness at Coffee Break gatherings.



OUT AND ABOUT

Seminary Town Halls Look at Two Topics

What does interfaith dialogue between Mormons and Christian evangelicals look like?

Does the life of Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck stand up to the scrutiny of his own theology?

These questions were the topics of recent Calvin Seminary town hall meetings led by professors for students, faculty, and staff who gather most Thursdays at noon for presentations and pizza.

Cory Willson, professor of missiology and missional ministry, used one town hall to host his friend, Mormon



Cory Willson and Robert Millet.

scholar Robert L. Millet, who has been engaged for the past 14 years in Mormon-Evangelical dialogue. Willson led a lively interview with Millet and invited students to ask questions.

Students learned that friendship was the seedbed for sustained interaction. The goal was not conversion of the

other but to seek understanding beyond curiosity. Millet highlighted two ground rules for effective interfaith dialogue: be wholeheartedly committed to one's own faith, and practice civility and respect.

John Bolt, a Calvin Seminary professor of systematic theology since 1989, used a town hall to discuss his new

book, *Bavinck on the Christian Life: Following Jesus in Faithful Service*.

Bolt said he is inspired by Bavinck, whose personal desire was to be "a worthy follower of Jesus."

Bolt inspired listeners that day with an overview of what can be learned from Bavinck's Reformed vision of discipleship that is fully defined, trinitarian, Christ-centered, and biblical.

According to Bolt, Bavinck practiced what he preached: that we imitate Christ by obeying God's law, and that "world-view follows faith." ■

—by *Jinny DeJong*,
Calvin Seminary

The Importance of Identity

Rhonda Roorda, a 1992 graduate of Calvin College, felt a calling that she did not want to pursue.

After graduating from Calvin and the University of Michigan, she was ready to follow her interest in urban studies.

But she heard God pushing her to research and write about transracial adoption. "I didn't want to go there."

Roorda was born in New York City and did not know her African American birth mother or father. A white couple adopted her at the age of 2.

"My adoption was part of a spike in transracial adoptions in the early 70s," she said.

Soon after, the National Association of Black Social Workers called these adoptions "cultural genocide."

For a time, these placements saw a steep drop. During the next 10 years, researcher Rita Simon conducted the first

study of black children adopted into white homes and did not find the level of devastating effects feared.

After this, Roorda partnered with Simon to produce three books sharing the stories of persons in transracial adoptive homes.

The fourth book—which Roorda wrote after Simon died in 2013—is called *In Their Voices: Black Americans on Transracial Adoption*. It features a wide range of perspectives on the subject.

Roorda says she is glad she followed God's calling to do this work.

"It's painful, it's gritty, but it is all blessing," she said. "I'm OK. I know where I came from. God never allowed me to give up, and now he wants to use me to help others." ■

—by *Mike Van Denend*,
Calvin College



Rhonda Roorda, a fund administrator for Michigan Independent Colleges and Universities, stands in front of the Michigan State Capitol.

You add.
God multiplies.

SHORT TAKES



Students play outside their school in Kenya.

Pupils Plant Trees to Spruce Up School

A school in Machakos, Kenya, that once had little interest in caring for the environment now enjoys trees, flower beds, and clean school grounds.

This is the work of Nicolus, a teacher at Emmanuel Christian School. He participated in Christian Reformed World Missions' Educational Care program for integrating a biblical worldview.

"The trees have beautified the school, creating a conducive learning environment," said Nicolus, reporting on his action plan after the training.

"Pupils now use their time constructively as they care for trees, and the school has become an example to others." ■

—Christian Reformed World Missions



Updated Ministry in Canada Website Available

The Christian Reformed Church Canadian Ministries has updated its website to offer a wider range of resources to help local churches reach out to their communities in a variety of ways.

The site deals with practical aspects of ministry in Canada, from the new Faith Formation Youth Ministry Project, to linking to Aboriginal Ministries, to providing access to social justice issues. It also features a ministry directory. ■

—CRC Communications



It is difficult for former Muslim women in Indonesia to attend church.

Wening's Journey to Christ

Wening (not her real name) works in West Java, Indonesia, as a housemaid for a Muslim employer. In a predominantly Muslim country, she fears her boss will discover her secret longing for the Lord.

A former Muslim herself, Wening recently gave her life to Christ. She tunes in regularly to the Back to God Ministries International Indonesian TV program *Gema Kasih Indonesia* (*Echo of Love for Indonesia*).

She recently found a church to attend and tries to worship there on her day off.

"Sundays are my free day," said Wening. "Sometimes I go to church without my employer's knowledge. Although I was a Muslim, I feel peaceful in church."

Wening's wish is to attend her church every Sunday, but she is too timid to do so. Her neighbors and employer don't know that she is a Christian. She fears what will happen if the truth of her faith is revealed.

"These last few Sundays my employer asked me where I am going. I find it harder to make reasonable excuses so that they don't know that I am going to church," Wening says.

Without a church community where she can fellowship and hear biblical teaching, Wening's growing faith could be stifled. But she is thankful for *Gema Kasih Indonesia*, which is encouraging her in her faith and giving her solid biblical knowledge.

Wening asked, "Please pray for me so that I can learn more about Christ." ■

—by Kristen Fergus Van Stee,
Back to God Ministries International

Longer versions of these and other stories are online at thebanner.org/together.

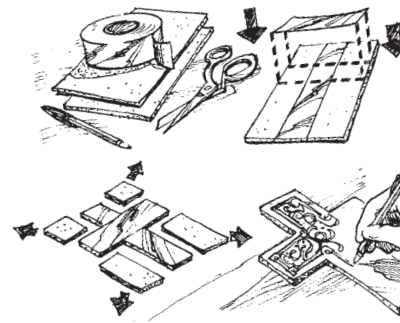
A Very Holy Week

The first Easter Sunday was the best day EVER. Easter reminds us that Jesus is stronger than sin and death. Because Jesus died and then rose again, everyone who believes in him is saved!

Christians remember Jesus' victory over sin and death every Sunday. But every spring

we also celebrate Holy Week—the seven days before Easter Sunday.

Holy Week begins on March 20 this year. How will YOU celebrate?



What Is Holy Week?

There are four special days in Holy Week:

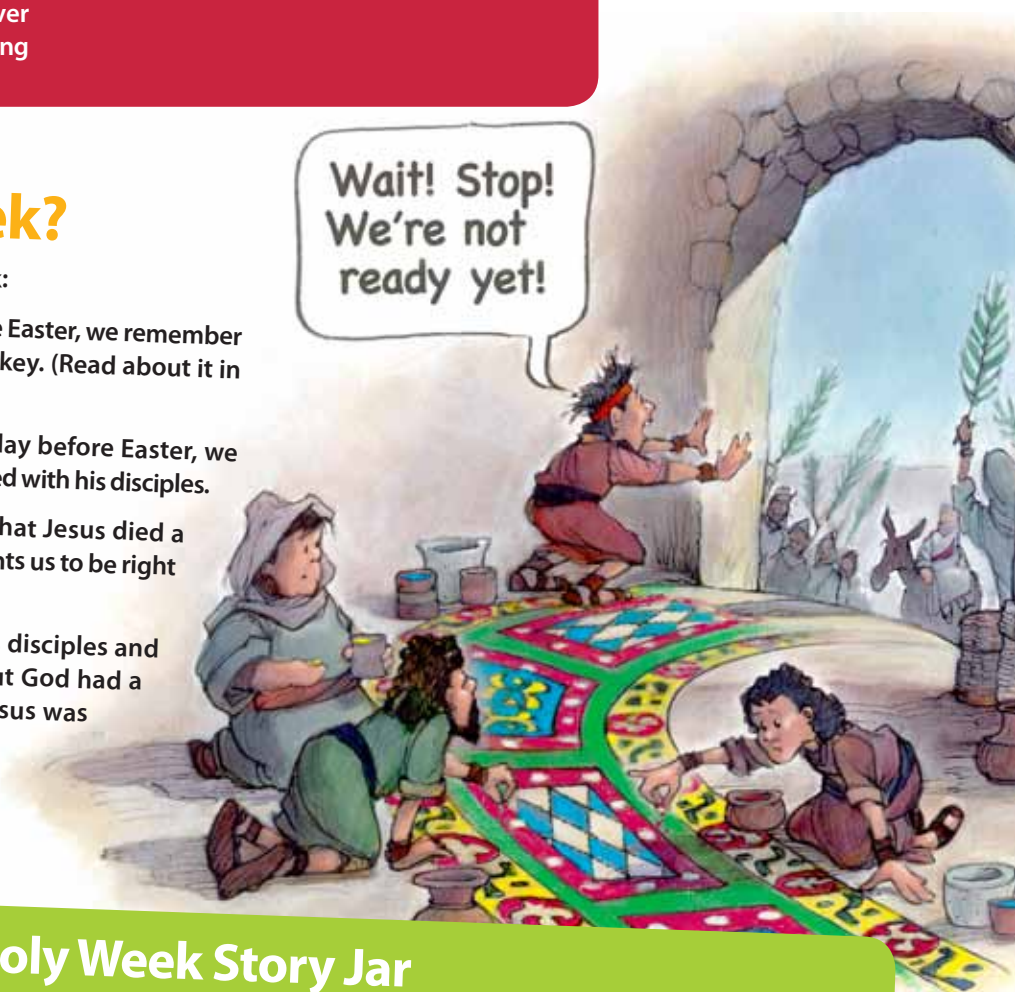
Palm Sunday—On the Sunday before Easter, we remember how Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. (Read about it in Mark 11:1-11.)

Maundy Thursday—On the Thursday before Easter, we remember the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his disciples.

Good Friday—This day reminds us that Jesus died a painful death because he loves us and wants us to be right with God.

Holy Saturday—Jesus was dead. His disciples and friends thought he was gone forever. But God had a surprise for them. On Easter morning Jesus was alive again!

Wait! Stop!
We're not
ready yet!



Holy Week Story Jar

This craft would be fun for your whole family to do together. First, read the Holy Week and Easter story together from the Bible or from a Bible storybook. Then talk together about what parts of the story stand out for each of you. Make a story jar to show the words, ideas, and objects that mean the most to your family.

Here's what you need:

- Glass jar, big enough to put your hand inside
- Green tissue paper
- Craft supplies to decorate the jar: construction paper, craft sticks, and other items
- Glue
- Scissors

Here's what you do:

- Wad up some green tissue paper and put it in the jar.
- Then add words, pictures, and objects. You might add a picture of a loaf of bread or a cross made of craft sticks. You can also add a nail, a stone, or other things that remind you of the story of Holy Week.

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY

Make a Good Friday Cross

Here's what you need:

- One sheet of craft foam cut to 4 x 6 inches (10 x 15 cm)
- Foil tape (made of aluminum), 2 inches (6 cm) wide, available at home improvement stores
- Scissors
- Ballpoint pen

Here's what you do:

- Cut two pieces of foil tape. One piece should be 5 inches (12 cm) long. The other piece should be 7 inches (18 cm) long.
- Stick the two pieces of foil tape onto the craft foam in the shape of a cross. Wrap the extra ends of the tape around to the back of the craft foam.
- Use scissors to cut out the cross.
- Decorate the cross by making designs on it with the ballpoint pen. (The ink won't show, but the pen will make lines on the foil.)



Word Search

C P E S E L P I C S I D X C A
 W R I V M L Z A B J Y C E E N
 C I U L I Z Z P X E X N O N G
 D U N C A L T S C R T D B O E
 R N D E I T A V X U L R Z T L
 S E M I S F E R R S E U Y S S
 Y B T U K D I I K A K N E I N
 H I S S Z R O E D L V B K X U
 E E G D O N Z D D E C R N O Z
 J K J T H O R N S M O T O M B
 S M L A P L R G W I J O D Y C
 E F J F C T P Z V S L J F M E
 J D I T H M B A L V J C N J S
 M J D U F N S S B T I N G R L
 V R U Y T V N K X G C K S M R

Circle these words from the Holy Week and Easter story. Look across, down, diagonally, and backwards.

ALIVE
 ANGELS
 BREAD
 CENTURION
 CRUCIFIED
 DISCIPLES
 DONKEY
 JERUSALEM
 JESUS
 PALMS
 PILATE
 ROOSTER
 SAVIOR
 STONE
 THORNS
 TOMB
 WINE

Holy Week around the World

Christians celebrate Holy Week in many different ways. Here are some of the traditions that remind people what Jesus did for us.



Palm Sunday Street Carpets

In some cities in Guatemala, people use colored sawdust, pine needles, and flower petals to make fancy "carpets" on the streets. This reminds them of the coats that people threw onto the road when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.



Maundy Thursday Foot Washing

Before the Last Supper, Jesus washed his disciples' feet. He did this to show them how much he loved them, and to teach them to love others in the same way. Last year Pope Francis, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, visited a prison in Rome on Maundy Thursday. He washed some of the prisoners' feet as a way to show them love. Would you ever do that?



Good Friday Kite Flying

In Bermuda, people fly beautiful handmade kites on Good Friday. This tradition may have started when a Sunday school teacher flew a kite to teach students about Jesus ascending into heaven.



Holy Saturday Church Services

In Ethiopia, some church services start on the evening of Holy Saturday and last until 3:00 a.m. on Easter Sunday! Most people stay for the whole service, and they wear special white clothes.



Sandy Swartzentruber is a school library aide and a freelance writer. She attends Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.

BERMUDA KITE: PHOTO COURTESY JANE ROBINSON; J-WALK TRAVEL MEDIA

APOCALYPSE NOW: EASTER AS THE BEGINNING OF THE END

“Then the end will come, when [Christ] hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. . . .”

PAUL’S WORDS in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 elevate Easter far above secular society’s celebration of spring. To misquote the classic Oldsmobile commercial, this is not your granddaughter’s Easter—no furry bunnies, fancy bonnets, or festive brunches. This is Easter as *Apocalypse Now*, Easter as the beginning of the end, Easter as the first page of the grand conclusion to the story of everything.

Paul’s words about everything being put under Christ’s feet remind me of the current scientific search for the “Theory of Everything.” You may recognize that term as the title of a 2015 movie about Stephen Hawking. There’s a huge problem at the center of all scientific endeavor: the two major explanations of the universe don’t fit together. The general theory of relativity explains the macro-universe of space and time, while the theory of quantum physics explains the micro-universe of

atomic particles. Both seem to be true because they explain so many things. But scientists can’t explain how the two theories can be reconciled. So they are eagerly searching for the Theory of Everything.

A Theology of Everything

By the inspiration of the Spirit, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 how the physical resurrection of Jesus is the key to the Bible’s theology of everything. After proving in this chapter that Christ’s resurrection is both historically factual and central for our personal salvation, Paul shows the history-changing consequences of that event. He claims that the resurrection of Jesus set in motion a chain of events that will impact the future of the universe and even the future of God. He introduces those consequences with the Old Testament concept of firstfruits. “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” By using that familiar imagery, Paul was saying that the resurrection of Jesus was not just an impressive stand-alone miracle. It was the beginning of a series of miracles that will change everything: the resurrection of everyone who has died in Christ, the defeat of all God’s enemies,

the triumph of the kingdom of God, and even the “reunion” of God.

Most *Banner* readers are familiar with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, having recited the Apostles’ Creed many times. While we can’t imagine what it will be like to see all the graves opened, skeletons rattling up out of the ground, flesh and blood being joined to the bones, until every dead person is once again physically alive, we know that’s what the Bible teaches. That would be miracle enough.

But Paul goes beyond that when he says in verse 23, “But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.” That word *turn* in the Greek conveys the sense of order. Picture a great army moving into battle, with each division marching in its proper order. That’s the idea here: history is marching to its conclusion with two great armies fighting for control of the world.

But notice that, as the battle rages here on earth, the risen Christ is already ruling all things. “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet” (v. 24). Christ is waging war against all his enemies, not for the throne but from the throne. He must rule on earth until the end comes.

given to me.” He commissioned us to promote that kingdom by making disciples who would obey Christ in all of life, thus demonstrating that every square inch of this world really does belong to the risen Christ.

We Reformed folks spend our lives praying, “Thy kingdom come” and working to spread the justice and peace of that kingdom. “With deeds of love and mercy, the heavenly kingdom comes,” we sing. Sometimes we see signs that the kingdom is here already; other times we despair because “the wrong seems oft so strong.” But we live in hope that the resurrection of Christ will bear the fruit Paul promises here.

When it’s all said and done, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. Justice and peace will embrace at last, and Christ will hand his finished work over to his Father.

But Paul isn’t done yet. There’s a third apocalyptic miracle that flows from Jesus’ resurrection. Not content with wrapping up cosmic history, Paul ventures into—dare I say it—God’s history. “When Christ has done all this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.” That takes us deep into the mystery of the Trinity. How can the Son of God be both equal

IN THE END, ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING WILL BE PUT UNDER JESUS’ FEET.

Thy Kingdom Come

Then, says Paul, in language that stretches our comprehension to the breaking point, three long-awaited events will occur.

First, Christ will “destroy all dominion, authority, and power.” We’ve heard those words throughout the New Testament, but what do they mean here? Is Paul talking about demons, fallen angels of all sorts? Probably. Is he talking about organizations that oppose the cause of God, like the Beasts of Revelation 13, which symbolize anti-Christian government and religion? Probably. Is he talking about individual human beings who have blatantly battled God to the death? Probably, though sadly. Is he talking about death, the great enemy of human life? Undoubtedly, since Paul explicitly says it here.

In the end, absolutely everything will be put under Jesus’ feet. The rebellion that has devastated human history and ruined planet Earth will be put down at last. The ancient promise of Genesis 3:15 will finally come to pass. The heel that was bruised by the serpent will be upon the neck of all the serpent’s seed.

When everything is under Christ’s feet, he will hand “over the kingdom to God the Father.” That’s the second great event that will occur as a result of Christ’s resurrection. Jesus’ ministry began with the announcement, “The kingdom of God is at hand.” After he arose from apparent defeat, he left the world, announcing, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been

and subject to God the Father? Theologians struggle to explain by saying that the Father and the Son are equal in essence, but differ in function, like a King and a Crown Prince.

Or perhaps Paul is thinking of the way the triune God “extended” himself for the work of salvation. The Father sent the Son. The Father and the Son sent the Spirit. But at the end, the Father, Son, and Spirit are back together again.

Let’s not claim to understand this divine reunion. Let’s simply rejoice in the promise that one day the grand mission of God will be over. All the divisions and diversions caused by human sin will cease. And God will be all in all.

All of this hinges on one historical fact: “Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits. . . .” Like I said, this is not your granddaughter’s Easter. The resurrection of Christ is *Apocalypse Now*, the beginning of the end of everything we think we know. ■



After retiring from 41 years of parish ministry, Stan Mast is in his fourth year as adjunct professor of preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Sharon, live in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Musical Machinations



EVERYTHING CHANGED WHEN John Seabrook's son got to ride shotgun. Seabrook had always controlled the car radio, but now his son switched the station to Contemporary Hits Radio—formerly known as Top 40. Instead of changing the station again, Seabrook decided, as a bonding exercise, to listen to pop music with his son. This interest led to various articles published in *The New Yorker*, now gathered with new material as a book titled *The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory* (W.W. Norton).

Seabrook describes how most hits are like industrial products, “manufactured” by star producers who engineer rhythmic tracks or beats as the basis for a song. Then “top line” singers are called in to create melodic hooks, even before complete lyrics are drafted. A star singer finally swoops in to contribute the vocal track.

The book traces the current “song machine” to Sweden and to a former DJ known as Denniz PoP, who managed to blend “beat-driven” music played in European dance clubs with radio pop music. As one commentator noted, Denniz gave us “ABBA with a groove,” a style followed most notably by Max Martin, the Swedish producer who has had scores of number-one hits with singers such as Katy Perry and Taylor Swift.

Most hits are like industrial products.

Seabrook's book made me think of how contemporary pop music has invaded my music listening life. The problem is I can't remember exactly when that process began.

Was it the Jason Derulo song my son asked me to buy with my iTunes account? Or when the kids all pleaded to switch from my favorite independent radio station (“folk, blues, jazz, rock, and world beat”) to “all the hits, all the time”? Or the moment I realized half of the presets on the car radio had been changed? Maybe it was the entire season of *American Idol* the family watched together.

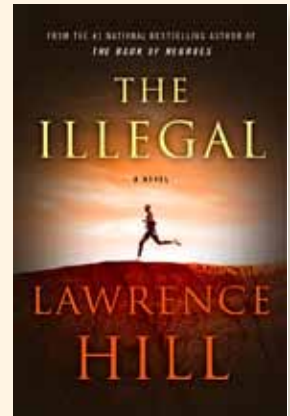
I also wondered why I listen to pop music even when I know it's neither musically deep nor poetically profound—even when I am in the car without my children.

Hit music, explains Seabrook, is like “snack food” that provides a moment of bliss, but “leaves you feeling unsatisfied, always craving for more.” Through repeated listening, you become emotionally attached to a hit, and “it doesn't matter what you think of the song.”

Like Seabrook, I will try to cultivate a more critical approach to hit radio's engineered beats and hooks, a critical approach that can also be applied to contemporary country, rap, and Christian pop. Overall, I am resolved to maintain a more balanced musical diet. ■



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



The Illegal

by **Lawrence Hill**

reviewed by **Sonya**

VanderVeen Feddema

Zantoroland, a poor (and fictional) nation in the Indian Ocean, has produced the world's fastest marathoners. Keita Ali has the potential to become one of them. When his father is imprisoned for opposing the dictatorship's treatment of dissidents and refugees, Keita runs for his life. He struggles to survive in a political climate where lives are considered disposable. This complex novel, which contains vulgar language, takes an unflinching look at the way the world has treated undocumented people and legitimate refugees. (HarperCollins)





Inventing American Religion: Polls, Surveys, and the Tenuous Quest for a Nation's Faith

by Robert Wuthnow
reviewed by Robert N. Hosack

Polling is now a billion-dollar-a-year industry—mostly focused on politics and religion.

Wuthnow's book is a broadside against how polling is done today. Well-known groups like Gallup, Pew, and Barna are complicit, he says, in giving birth to a slippery thing called "American religion." Religion polls today regularly report the demise of faith in North America, yet nearly a century ago 91 percent of poll respondents said they believed in God, compared to the 92 percent who said the same just a few years ago. Wuthnow's academic study documents how the polling industry has influenced—and distorted—how religion is understood in America by its leaders and scholars alike. (Oxford)

Reading Mother Teresa: A Calvinist Looks Lovingly at 'The Little Bride of Christ'

by James C. Schaap
reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema



In the 72 meditations that comprise this delightful book, Schaap reflects on what he learned about Mother Teresa while reading *Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta*. He especially focuses on Mother Teresa's decades-long dark night of the soul, when she had a sense that God had abandoned her despite the calling he had given her to care for the poor of Calcutta. Schaap contrasts Mother Teresa's faith journey with his own. Throughout, he shows her human-

ity. (Dordt College Press)



Room

reviewed by Kristy Quist

Kidnapped at 17, a young woman is held captive in a shed for years. As a result of her captor's abuse, she gives birth to a son, Jack. *Room* begins on Jack's fifth birthday. Jack's mother has done the best she can to make their room a place of learning and excitement. Both of them have to readjust their understanding when life changes dramatically. In spite of a grim premise and some depiction of that grim reality, this movie is suffused with a childlike awe and wonder at being alive, even when life isn't what it should be. (A24 Films)

Floodplain

by Sara Groves
reviewed by Adam Stout

Those familiar with Groves' previous work will find *Floodplain* familiar yet fresh, thanks to fine songwriting, some new instrumental flourishes, and solid production. Groves' lyrics remain front and center as she artfully articulates her inner world. Thematically, *Floodplain* explores dualities like joy and sadness, hope and desperation, à la the psalms. The title track meditates on people who find themselves emotionally flooded. In addition to these weightier topics, *Floodplain* also deals with love, friendship, and parenthood. It's an album worth your time. (Fair Trade)

THE LOWDOWN



The Academy Awards have been handed out, but you can still see full *Banner* reviews of some of the nominees. Here are a few excerpts:



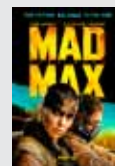
The Big Short: "While it will make you laugh and help you understand the financial crisis, it will also make you cry for all the needless waste and suffering."



Bridge of Spies: "An entertaining movie with beautiful visuals and a lot of heart."



Brooklyn: "A good reminder of how disorienting it is to be a stranger in a new land."



Inside Out: "Creatively explores memory, imagination, personality, and abstract thought."



Mad Max: Fury Road: "The cinematography of this film is fantastic, at times truly a work of art."



The Martian: "Optimism and a surprising amount of disco music make the film remarkably fun."



Shaun the Sheep: "The general silliness that fills the movie is delightful."



Spotlight: "Reveals how attempts to cover up the sins of the church and its leaders hurt the body of Christ."



When Marnie Was There: "Combines the modern-day themes of isolation and being an outsider with classic animation."

MORE REVIEWS ONLINE

Loss and Simplification

I RECENTLY RAN IN A 5-KILOMETER RACE. I did pretty well, all things considered, completing the course about a minute quicker than my goal, which was, admittedly, rather modest. I was beaten soundly by several 9-year-olds and even a couple of 8-year-olds. At least I'm still ahead of the 7-year-olds! I used to run much faster, but when I reached my 60s I slowed considerably. My ankles, hips, and knees all protest when I run, so I can't train very often. Age changes things.

Of course, running speed is only a fraction of what I've lost. My children left 15 years ago to make their way in the world; I still see them from time to time, but it's not the same as having them at home. My energy started flagging in my 50s and I couldn't work as hard as I had before. At age 64 I retired from my full-time job and left the city where I had lived for 30 years to help my elderly parents. This was a voluntary action but still it produced a cascade of losses—colleagues, income, status, the opportunity to mentor young people—to which I'm still trying to adjust.

My losses are minor compared with those of others. Quite a few people my age have lost houses to foreclosure, health to illness, or spouses to death. I can still run; some of my age-mates can't walk anymore. The catalogue of losses will only grow in the years to come. Sportswriter Roger Angell wryly noted, "In my tenth decade, I can testify that the downside of great age is the room it provides for rotten news. Living long means enough already."

Loss pervades the final third of life. To deal with loss we must grieve—to mourn what won't return, no matter how much we want it to. Mourning takes a toll on us, but so does not mourning. Some pretend that nothing has changed; in doing so they are denying reality. Others recognize loss but refuse to grieve; they are at risk for developing a constant pucker from frequently tasting the bile of past downturns and disappointments.

If our well-being depends on grieving our losses, how do we grieve? Certainly by admitting what is gone and how we feel about its absence—facing our emptiness, yearning, anger, fear, despair, and myriad other feelings. Reactions range from my mild disappointment that I now run slowly to cries of the heart like that of David when he lost the support of friends and the respect of neighbors: "My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak" (Ps. 31:10).

I've usually thought of grieving as a rearguard action, a strategy that limits long-term damage but does no more than cover a retreat. Catholic priest Ronald Rolheiser suggests otherwise—

that mourning our losses offers us gains. He believes that good grieving "consists not just in letting the old go but also in letting it bless us." How, though, can blessing come from grief?

Perhaps we best prepare for grief's blessing by looking first to the past, then to the future. The job or ability or mate that we lost was a godsend during its time with us. Looking back, we remember the joy that good thing or person brought to life, in gratitude thanking God for it. Looking to the future, we recognize that its loss is not the end of God's gracious provision for us. To be without this cherished thing is not to be forsaken, for God has other blessings in store for us. Jesus may have had in mind the future blessings that would come from loss when at the tomb he said to Mary, "Do not hold on to me" (John 20:17). Mary had to let go of Christ's physical presence in order to receive the riches that flowed from his ascension and the Spirit's coming.

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then to the future.

Blessings can come not just when something is lost but when we relinquish something that might interfere with our flourishing. Theologian Lewis Joseph Sherrill claimed that in order to grow during late life we must engage in simplification. That is, we must distinguish what things are less important and relegate them to the sidelines to make space for what is most important in life. It is better to let go of inessentials than it is to clutch everything and have what is most precious slip from our grasp.

Sherrill describes several areas where simplification is needed.

Simplification of Status: Retiring from our jobs often entails giving up recognition or prestige. We may also lose status when we relinquish leadership roles in family, church, and community. These changes may be difficult; it is a blow to the ego to be seen as dispensable! The potential gain is that both we and others can more clearly recognize our core identity as distinct from the roles we played.



Physical Simplification: As we age, strength and stamina decline, and we may experience illness or disability. We can either accept waning vitality—following doctor’s orders, cutting back our schedules, lining up with the joggers rather than the runners—or deny that we’ve changed physically. If we whip our bodies to perform as before, they will eventually break down, and the pleasures they provide will give way to suffering. In accepting physical limitations, we more clearly recognize that we are not just matter, but also spirit.

Material Simplification: Many of us find it difficult to rid ourselves of possessions we’ve accumulated but no longer need. I recently spoke to a woman in her late 60s who asked why she was unable to discard size-6 clothes that she last fit into 30 years ago. She then answered her own question by saying she still reminisces about how good it felt to wear them. For her, as for many of us, material simplification means to give up objects associated with our former selves so we can better become our aging selves.

Simplification of Character: With maturity, less central ways of acting and thinking often atrophy and core personality characteristics become more prominent. Sherrill thought that the best character trait that can emerge at this point is a focus on “mature, outgoing love.” Such love is reminiscent of the

apostle John, who, toward the end of his life, reiterated again and again variations on the simple message, “Dear friends, let us love one another” (1 John 4:7).

Spiritual Simplification: With increasing age, we may find less use for abstract or speculative theology and may discover that some spiritual practices no longer nourish our relationship with God. Late in life, blessing comes from putting aside inessentials and focusing on those beliefs and practices that keep faith alive and vibrant.

Old age is certainly a time of loss, prompting many to react with bitterness or denial. Yet old age can also be a time of gain, of blessings. Such blessings result from gratitude for God’s past provision and joyful anticipation of the riches God will yet provide. When we willingly simplify, even those of us who, like Martha, have been distracted by many things may finally come to recognize what is most important. ■



Robert J. Ritzema, a clinical psychologist, practices part time as a therapist at Psychology Associates of Grand Rapids, Mich.

The Holy Trinity: The Community of Love at the Heart of Reality

Here's the truly amazing thing. We are invited to join in the dance!

IT'S PROBABLY CRAZY to try to say something meaningful about the Trinity in 600 words or less, but that's all you get in this column. I risk it because this is the big one; everything else we believe depends on it. Yet to most people the Trinity seems murky, mysterious, and mostly irrelevant to our everyday lives.

To begin with, get rid of all those sometimes silly examples of the Trinity you may have learned over the years—the diagrams and the analogies. They make us think the Trinity is a problem to be solved rather than a reality in which we are called to live.

Instead, let's start here: At the center of all reality, at the heart of the universe, there exists an eternal divine community of perfect love. The Bible calls this community the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There's a certain logic to trinitarian belief. The Bible says that God is love, but the only way God can be love is for God to be a community of divine persons. Love does not exist in a monad. God is that eternal community of love.

The nature of true love is not binding or limiting, but expansive. Love flows outward, it grows. Therefore, the creation of the universe is an overflow of love from that original divine community as it expands in love and delight to include beloved creatures.

Some of the early church fathers used a Greek word to describe the life and love of the Holy Trinity: *perichoresis*. It includes the ideas

of complete interpenetration, a kind of perfect, loving indwelling. Or it can mean a dance; the divine dance of perfect love for all eternity.

Having recognized this mystery in the Bible, the early church began to sort out some possible misunderstandings—what the Trinity is *not*. The Holy Trinity is not a chain of command; it's not an amorphous energy field of love; it's not three gods who get along really well like the Three Musketeers.

Each person of the Trinity is irreducibly and uniquely itself, distinct in three persons, and yet is perfectly united in being, love, and purpose. It is a true community of perfect love.

But here's the truly amazing thing. We are invited to join in the dance! It's not just that God is trinitarian—our salvation is trinitarian too.

In John's gospel, before his death Jesus prays to his Father, "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them, even as you have loved me" (John 17:22-23).

Jesus makes the astounding claim that the triune God's ultimate purpose is to include us in this eternal trinitarian dance of love. The Father sends the Son to be one of us. By faith and baptism we are included in his relationship with the Father. By the gift of the Holy Spirit, we cry, "Abba, Father!" We are in the Son, and

the Son is in the Father, and we come to share in this eternal community of love through the Holy Spirit.

Once you begin to grasp how central the Holy Trinity is to our faith, it shows up everywhere. It's the beating heart of worship. It's the dynamism of the sacraments. It's the backbone of our creeds, and it's the assurance of our prayers. The triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the original and eternal community of love out of which we were created, and this One Holy Trinity is our true and eternal home. ■

[STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE](#)



Leonard J. Vander Zee is interim editor of *The Banner*. He attends Church of the Servant CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.

ADS

Deadlines: April issue is 3/7/16; May issue is 4/4/16. 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

Announcement of Candidacy

We are pleased to announce that **CHRISTINA BRINKS REA** has now completed her academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word.

Dr. Steven Timmermans, Executive Director

We are pleased to announce that **COREY VAN HUIZEN** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word.

Dr. Steven Timmermans, Executive Director

We are pleased to announce that **DAVID GROEN** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word. Dr. Steven Timmermans, Executive Director

We are pleased to announce that **EDWARD JIANG** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word. Dr. Steven Timmermans, Executive Director

Available for Call

REV. REGINALD SMITH The Acting Council of Roosevelt Park Community Church announces that Rev. Reggie Smith is available for Call.

He can be contacted at pastorreggie62@hotmail.com; 650 Naylor SW, Grand Rapids MI 49503; 616-452-9052

Agenda for Synod 2016

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:

- a. Overtures, communications, and appeals to synod are due no later than March 15 and must first be processed through the local council and the classis.
- b. Names and addresses of delegates to synod on the Credentials for Synod, as well as the completed information sheet on each synodical delegate, are to be submitted by stated clerks of classes as soon as possible but no later than March 15.

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 9, 2016, 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 5, 2016.

Steven R. Timmermans, Executive Director

Congregational

ATWOOD CHRISTIAN REFORMED Church of Ellsworth Michigan will be closing its doors on February 29, 2016. Our final worship service will be Sunday, February 28 at 10:30 AM. Former members and pastors are invited to celebrate with us. We praise God for his faithfulness through our 119 years of service.

Church's 125th Anniversary

PARKERSBURG CRC in Parkersburg, IA is planning to celebrate its 125th Anniversary from April 10-17, 2016. Friends and former members are welcome to celebrate with us. For more information email: druvengad@gmail.com. God is Good!

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Church's 100th Anniversary

HOPE CRC in Grandville, MI is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2016. Join us on April 24, 2016 as we "Rejoice in Hope!" Services at 9:30 am and 5:30 pm. If you have questions or stories to share, contact us at secretary@hopeccrgrandville.com.

Church's 50th Anniversary

NORTH HILLS CRC in Troy, MI will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2016. All friends, former members and others interested are invited to celebrate with us at a banquet on April 16, 2016 and a celebratory worship service on April 17, 2016. Please send us your contact information so that we can give you further information. Contact Rev. Randy Engle at randyengle@aol.com or his administrative assistant, Susan Ballard, at admin@northhillscrc.org. Telephone: (248) 645-1990.

Church Position Announcements

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES Faith CRC, Elmhurst IL, is seeking qualified person to direct its youth ministry. This position is full-time with primary focus on middle and high school and some responsibilities for children's and young adult ministries. To apply, send letter of introduction with resume to dymsearch@faithelmhurst.org or contact Ray Middel at 630-862-1861

WORSHIP DIRECTOR Second CRC of Byron Center, MI is looking for a part time worship director for approximately 20 hours per week. Please send resume to office@secondcrc.org.

FULL TIME PASTOR Stephenville CRC, located in the heart of Texas, is seeking a full time pastor. We are a young, traditional congregation open to and considering new ways to minister to each other and our community. Is God callin' y'all? View our church profile @CRCNA.org or contact rdstoker@hotmail.com

FULL TIME PASTOR John Calvin Christian Reformed Church located in beautiful Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada is seeking a full-time pastor to lead our multi-generational congregation. To receive a copy of our church profile please contact our Search Committee secretary, Kelsey Withrow at kelseywithrow@hotmail.com

PASTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES Calvary CRC, Pella, IA, is seeking a Pastor of Youth Ministries. This is a full-time position with primary focus on high school and young adult ministries. For further information about the Pastor of Youth Ministry position, please send a letter of introduction to youthpastorsearch@calvarypella.org.

PASTOR: Second CRC is seeking an excellent preacher who will inspire, challenge, and guide us in transforming worship and lead us in becoming more missional in our community of Grand Haven, MI. For more information, please access our church profile at crna.org, visit our website at secondcrcgrandhaven.org, or contact Search Committee Chairman, Jeff Binnendyk at 2ndcrcsearch@gmail.com or 616-844-4144.

PASTOR 1st CRC of Fremont, MI (50mi N of GR) is seeking a full time pastor to preach the Word and shepherd the 180 member congregation. Our church profile is at CRCNA.org. Contact Leslie Kolk at lskolk@yahoo.com or 231-924-3596

YOUTH DIRECTOR First CRC Red Deer, Alberta is seeking a highly relational youth director who will help our youth grow spiritually, as well as grow their sense of belonging in the church. This person will be self-motivated and self-directed; yet will be able to work well in a team ministry. Education and/or relevant experience will be considered. Visit our website at www.firstcrrcdreder.org for job description. To apply, please send your resume and 3 current references to firstcrrcrt@gmail.com

YOUTH DIRECTOR: Mountainview CRC in Grimsby, ON is seeking a part-time Youth Director. The Youth Director will provide leadership to the Youth Ministry Team. The Youth Director will be also responsible for overseeing the Youth Ministry - GEMS, Cadets, Youth Group and Young Adults. For more information please refer to the Job Summary posted at www.mountainviewcrc.org/youthdirectorsearch

General

DCRC INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY The new Washington, DC CRC Intentional Community will combine the rhythms of daily life with the call to do justice and love mercy. The community is launching in our parsonage beginning June 2016, with applications due by March 20, 2016. Visit our website (www.dccrc.org) or email intentional community@dccrc.org for more information.

Birthdays

100th Birthday



REV. GYSBERT ROZENBOOM, oldest minister in the CRC, will celebrate his 100th birthday on Feb. 17. An Open House will be held at the Raybrook Friendship Room on Sunday, Feb. 21 from 2 - 4 pm. Cards can be sent to him at 2121 Raybrook S. E. #372 Grand Rapids, MI 49546. He has been blessed with 4 children, 13 grandchildren, 32 great grandchildren, and 11 great, great grandchildren. His family is thankful to God for his amazing, inspiring, and healthy long life. "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

95th Birthday

CORINNE ELDRENKAMP wife of Clarence (deceased 1972) of 9426 S. Tulley, Oak Lawn, IL 60453, will celebrate her 95th birthday on March 16. Her children, Judy Eldrenkamp, Nancy and Paul Zylstra (Roger, Corie) thank God for her love and faith through the years. Psalm 121

MAE VANZWOL KRUIS wife of Richard Kruis (deceased 2008), 1713 Red Rock Dr, Gallup, NM 87301 will celebrate her 95th birthday March 8. Her 8 children, spouses, 34 grands, 26 great grands praise God for His faithfulness. We love you Mae!

90th Birthday

LOIS BROOKHOUSE from Fremont, MI will be celebrating her 90th birthday on March 24. She will be celebrating with a family party



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Dordt College is seeking applications for the following areas beginning August 2016:

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Dordt College
498 4th Ave NE

Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697
provost@dordt.edu

www.dordt.edu/prospective_employees/faculty/

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including her 5 remaining children & spouses, 23 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild. The family thanks the Lord for all the good healthy years and faithfulness.

CORKY DEHORN of 145 Columbia Ave Apt 162, Holland, MI 49423 will celebrate his 90th birthday on March 9. Happy Birthday, Dad! We love you so! Donna and Bruce Essebaggers, Nancy and Terry Boerema, Gail and Jim Punt, and Tom and Gwen DeHorn, Happy birthday, Papa! from your 15 Grandchildren and 10 Great Grandchildren!

JEANETTE POST (Swaving), wife of Garrett Post (d. 2008) of 409 N 9th Ave. #105, Sibley, IA 51249, will celebrate her 90th birthday on March 24. Her children: Phyllis & Art Attema, Doug & Betty Post, Judy & Dave Graanstra, Donna & Lee Van Grouw, Kevin & Robin Post; 17 grandchildren & 26 great-grandchildren join her in celebrating God's faithfulness.

PROFESSOR (COACH) DAVID B. TUUK will celebrate his 90th birthday on March 9, 2016. He wishes to express his gratitude for and appreciation of the many Calvin College students with whom he had contact in classes and athletic teams during his 36 year tenure. God is good. Give HIM all praise.

ELAINE VEENSTRA of Jenison, MI celebrated her 90th birthday on March 1 (husband John deceased.) By grace she has 3 married children, 15 grand, and 11 great-grand.

CAROLYN DELANGE VOSS of 3914 NE 22nd St. Ocala FL 34470, will celebrate her 90th birthday on March 4, 2016. Thanking God for her life are her children: Alan and Shelia Voss, Brian and Marlys Geerlings, Andy and Twyla Bobitz, 6 granddaughters and 2 great-grandsons

JOHN L. WIERSMA 2105 Raybrook SE apt., 3055, Grand Rapids, MI, 49546, will celebrate his 90th birthday, March 26. Thanks be to God for his love and Godly example.

GLENN WYNGARDEN of 500 Parkside, Apt. 137, Zeeland, MI 49464 will be marking his 90th birthday on March 13. Celebrating with him will be his wife, Marge, his children (Rob & Sally Petroelje and Doug & Sandy Holtrop), 14 grandchildren/spouses and 14 great-grandchildren. We praise and thank God for his faith, generosity and Christian example.

Anniversaries

70th Anniversary

COK Jacob & Nelle, Manhattan, MT, celebrate March 17, 2016. We thank God for such amazing grace.

65th Anniversary

JONGSMA Edward A & Eleanor R (Stob) Wheaton, IL, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary February 24, 2016. Their children; Ed &

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Joshua's Place

A Christian home being established for developmentally disabled men in Lansing, Michigan. Join us as a parent, as a friend or as a donor.

joshuasplaceinc.org

Ellen Jongsma, Sandy & Bruce VanDommelen, David Jongsma, Beth Jongsma, Bob & Kim Jongsma, Kimberly Jongsma, Karen & Rod Tos, Anne & Matt Vanderkooi, 21 grandchildren, 9 great grandchildren. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Obituaries

AUKEMAN Julian, age 77, of Hudsonville, MI passed away on December 7, 2015. In 2014 he received a lung transplant and enjoyed 15 months of renewed life. He is survived by his wife, Elaine (Bremer), children: Alan (Laura), Jane (Andy) Wilson, Jonathan (finance Adela Choi), and Rachel (Ben Bowdon) and 5 grandchildren.

BULTHUIS Glenn H. Sr., passed away peacefully on Jan. 12, 2016 after a short bout with pneumonia. He was 91 years old, and is survived by his wife of 68 years, Alida; children Ellen(Piersma), Darcy, Glenn Jr., and Carol(Rammelsberg); grandchildren, Alison, Tom, Erin, James, Glenn III, Annie, Benjamin and Sam; great-grandchildren, Jackson, Jenna, Kathryn, Eleanor, Madeline, Jamie, Peyton, Makenna, and another on the way. We thank the Lord for all His blessings to our family.

DYKEMA Betty, 88, was healed and joined her Savior and Lord on Jan 31, 2016. Betty will be lovingly remembered by her husband Earl, children Richard(Faye) Dykema, Susan Dykema, Philip Dykema (Peter Lundeen), 2 grandchildren, 2 great-granddaughters, and 6 surviving siblings. Betty served with Earl at churches in Wright/Kanawha IA, Crown Point NM, Gary IN, Cedar Rapids IA, and while Earl was Home Missions Regional Director. As one of God's Kids, Betty reminded many that they were God's Kid.

ENGEL William, age 87, of Downers Grove, IL, went home to his Lord on January 24, 2016. Before his illness, he was a member of, and served faithfully Ebenezer CRC in Berwyn, IL. He is now reunited with his late wife, Corine (nee Van Kampen). He was predeceased by his sister Alice Smerling (the late Roy), and brother Ernest (Jo). He will be missed by his children, Rick (Laurie), Jim (Charis), Laurie Kells (Phil), and Lisa Smith (Rich), grandchildren Scott (Julie), Shawn (Jenny), Christopher,

Calvin (Katherine), Martin, Anne (Steven) Loos, Ian (Marissa) Kells, Emma (Roger) Underwood, Kyle Kells, Shannon, Julia Smith; and great-grandchildren Tyler, Brianna, Nathan, Alyssa, Elliot, Henry Engel and Milo Loos.

GARDNER Joan Mae (Baker), age 82, of Grand Rapids, passed away on January 7, 2016. She will be remembered by her husband of 62 years, Charles Douglass (Doug) Gardner; her brother, Richard Baker; her children, Carlene (Gardner) Berg, Scott Gardner and Brian Gardner; her 10 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

HUIZENGA Joann, nee Laning, 75, went to be with Our Lord on January 8, 2016. 15W030 Lexington, Elmhurst, IL 60126. Wife of Bernard Huizenga; mother of Cynthia (Scott) Meyer, Bernie (Lisa), Mark (Barbara) and Jason (Rebekah); grandmother of 16; great-grandmother of 3; sister of Nelva (Jim) Heinking, Clarence Laning, Ken (Trudy) Laning, David (the late Kim) Laning, and the late Sharon (the late Harvey) Weiss. For info: www.knollcrest.net

POSTHUMA Roger John, age 85, was called home to his heavenly father, January 6, 2016. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Lois (Leisman) Posthuma; his sons, Ronald J. (Kathy) Posthuma, Richard A. (Diana) Posthuma, Randall L. (Darlene) Posthuma, and his daughter, Lynae D. Posthuma; as well as eight grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

SCHRIPSEMA Frances (Faber) 93 of Kentwood, MI went to be with her Lord December 29, 2015; predeceased by Herman, her husband of nearly 70 years in 2014; survived by Herm & Nancy, Linda & Henry Visscher, Faye Walburg; 2 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren, 2 sisters and 1 brother.

SLOT Frederick age 94, calmly entered his heavenly home on Saturday, January 9, 2016. He leaves his wife, Doris; his children, John and Darlene Holtrop, David (deceased) and Michelle Holtrop, Karin Burrell, and Kathleen Lindsay; and his 12 loving grandchildren.

SPOELMA Russell met his Lord and Savior on October 13, 2015. Survived by his loving wife, Esther: two sons, Pastor David (Cheryl)

Kyle (fiance, Leanne Wiggers) and Tyler. Daniel (Kim) Grace and Luke. Sister Judy (Rich) Koetje and brother Ken (Von); several nieces and nephews.

STRIUKSMA Pearl, age 88, of Artesia, Ca. went to heaven on Dec. 20th, 2015. She was preceded in death by her husband, Wilbur (2009) and her grandson, Keith Kline (2014). Pearl is survived by her 4 children, Donna Kline (Ken), Darlene Coffman (Steve), DeDe Van Essen (Gary) and Dan Struiksma (Natalie), 13 grandchildren and 28 great grandchildren. She taught us so much and will be greatly missed!

VAN THOLEN Stella Grace, went to be with her LORD, February 1st, 2000 St. Regis Dr, #5D, Lombard, IL, 60148. Beloved wife of the late John Van Tholen, Jr.; loving mother of Joyce (Milton) Boomsma, Judy (John) Veldsema, John (Brenda) Van Tholen, the late Janet and the late Rev. Jim Van Tholen; devoted grandmother of 7; great-grandmother of 18; fond sister of Geraldine Doorn, and preceded by Jacob Smith, John Smith, and Marge Laning. Memorials to Providence Life Services are appreciated.

Employment

CAREGIVERS NEEDED Are you interested in working for the best living assistance services company in West Michigan? Visiting Angels is looking for people who can be excellent, not average; make a connection with our clients; be perfectly dependable; practice compassion and work with integrity. Contact Heather at 616-243-7080 or heather@vangels.com. www.vangels.com

TRUCK DRIVERS - PAID HOURLY Zeeland greenhouse needs motivated CDL A & B drivers for deliveries, paid by the HOUR, not the mile! Drivers rewarded for dedication & hard work. Full time position for April & May, possibly earlier & also into June. Home weekends, some Saturdays required. All expenses - trucks, fuel, tolls, hotel (if required), are covered by the company, not the driver. Contact Amy: 616-875-7211 for information or at Meadowridge: 8952 Tyler St. in Zeeland

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For the past 16 years, *God Loves Me* storybooks have been a well-loved and much-used resource in church preschool ministry. Newly revised in 2015, these storybooks will provide families and churches with a wonderful way to nurture faith while establishing devotional habits of Bible reading and prayer.

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Orders@FaithAliveResources.org

Hey Worship Leaders!

Did you know there is a place to connect with other CRC worship planners? A place to share resources, ask questions, and find encouragement? Look no further than **The Network** (crcna.org/network).

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- Does Contemporary Christian Music Imply Sin No Longer Matters?
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network

CEO Salem Christian Homes in Chino, California is seeking a highly engaged, experienced, and dynamic leader to fill its CEO position. The organization has a fifty four year history of providing Christian care for individuals who have developmental disabilities. At present 112 adults are being cared for in nineteen community homes in Chino, Ontario, Upland and Lakewood, California. Applicants are invited to send a letter of interest with a brief biography to: Robert DeJong, Salem Christian Homes, 6921 Edison Avenue, Chino, CA 91710. Attention: Search Committee or to rjdjcong@yahoo.com. A complete application packet will be sent to all interested applicants.

Volunteers

VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY NEEDED To work in the Lighthouse Store in Rolling Fork, MS for Miss Chr Family Services. April thru August. Would appreciate 2 weeks min. Good housing with AC. Contact Betty @662-873-9055 or MCFS117@yahoo.com

Real Estate: Sales and Rentals

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ANNA MARIA ISLAND, FL CONDOS pool, beach access, linens, fully equipped. 1 and 2 bedrooms. \$650-750/wk. D. Redeker, 941-778-1915. rederkercondos.com

WEEKLY RENTAL: Douglas/Saugatuck, MI: Newly built Lake Michigan family guest house, 2br, loft w/ 2.5ba - sleeps 8. Lake Mi view & private beach. Call Ken @ 630-268-1531 or email Groenjk@aol.com

COTTAGE 4 RENT 4 bed, 3 bath, updated. Sleeps 12, Hess Lake, MI private waterfront. \$1,400/week. Call Lonnie 616-942-0048

MICHIGAN MULTI-FAMILY VACATION Fremont Lake resort for rent. 165 ft frontage, 2 acres, 4 cottages, sleeps 18. Weeks available 6/11-18, 7/16-23, 8/13-20. \$2900-\$3400. Call 586-255-3593

DUPLEX FOR RENT. Downtown Wayland MI. 2 bedroom, garage, includes water, snow removal, yard care. Deposit required. \$900.00 plus utilities. non smoking, no pets. Call 616-916-6896

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COTTAGE ON UPPER SILVER LAKE! 2 rental choices: 5 bdr sleeps 14 (cottage + addition) or 4 bdr sleeps 10 (main cottage). 200+ft waterfront, large yard. Between Muskegon & Ludington. www.cloud7cottage.com; cloud7cottage@charter.net. 920-458-4744

LAKEFRONT COTTAGE FOR RENT: 2 bedroom, 1.5 bath on Miner Lake near Allegan, Mi. Fishing, swimming, boating. \$950 weekly. aspriens@gmail.com or 616-204-3525

COASTAL, NC 4 cottages: 3 br on water; two 1 br and 1 eff. in historic Beaufort. WiFi, TV, grill, ac & more. www.theshellcottage.com (252) 504-6262 (w) or 252-504-6201 (h).

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ISRAEL, SEPTEMBER 24 – OCTOBER 7, 2016 - Join hosts Jeff & Karen Blamer on a fascinating journey through the land God chose for his people. Visit places where Joshua, David, and Hezekiah served God. Experience the desert of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the desert metaphors of the Psalms. Walk in the footsteps of Jesus in Galilee and Jerusalem. For more information, contact Jeff at (269) 664-4849, jklblamer@yahoo.com, go online at www.regonline.com/092416BLAM. Arrangements by Witte Tours, a leader in spiritual journeys since 1975.

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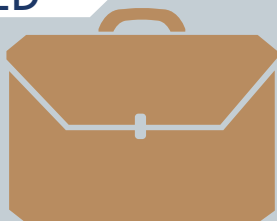


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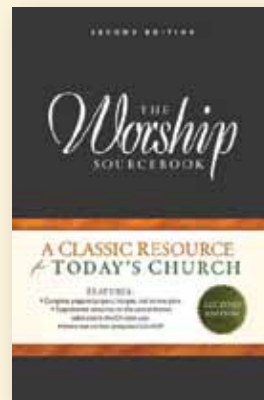
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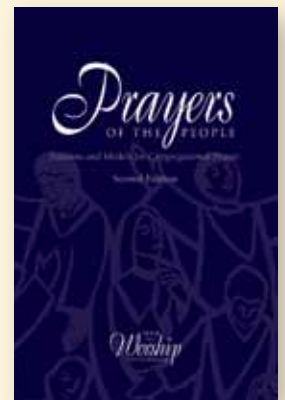
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—Ezekiel 34:28



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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!

The preacher was sitting up front with a group of small children. He asked, "What do we have to do to go to heaven?"

One little girl looked up and said sweetly, "Since I'm saved, all I have to do is die."

—*Ted de Rose*

Did you hear about the new restaurant on the moon? The food is out of this world, but there is no atmosphere.

—*Ralph Smit*

As our daughter-in-law was riding all over Sioux Center doing errands, our 4-year-old grandson Isaac became inquisitive. Among the barrage of questions he threw out to his mother was this: "Is God following us?" (She assumed he meant following their Suburban.)

To which she replied, "Of course! God is always with us."

"Oh, good," he said. Then, without skipping a beat, he added, "Then is Jesus in the other lane?"

—*Bonnie Van Donge*

This conversation took place at a family candlelight dinner between our two sons, L (age 8) and A (age 5):

A: Is God in the flame of my candle?

L: Yes! God is everywhere. He's even swimming around in my milk right now.

A: Actually, he's probably walking on top of it.

—*Johanna Jensen*

Our neighborhood children love to come over and visit. One of them is Jake, age 4. One summer afternoon I asked the children if they knew the song "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder."

I started into the song, and at the end, there were a few smiles as they all looked at little Jacob.

His response?

"But Jacob doesn't have a ladder!"

—*George Prins*

When my son was about 3, we were cleaning the house while listening to music. When the song "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian" came on, he quipped, "Mommy, you know what? I'm *already* a Christian!"

—*Lianne Tibben*

As a former youth pastor, now approaching age 70, I remain in close touch with our current youth pastor. Recently I came to church on a Wednesday evening at about 6 p.m. I found the youth pastor and several junior high kids in the foyer prior to their group meeting and jokingly asked if I was late. To which he responded: "Yes, by about 60 years."

—*Al Negen*

A father skated on an outdoor rink with his two children, 8 and 4 years old. A television reporter spotted them and asked if they had made New Year's resolutions.

"Yes," replied the dad. "I'm going to the gym more often and am going to watch my diet."

The 8-year-old, nodding all the while, said, "I am going to eat only healthy food, no junk food."

When it was his turn, the 4-year-old said, "I am going to eat pizza every day!"

—*Jim and Betsy McClure*

Two elderly women were enjoying the sunshine on a park bench in Miami. They had been meeting at that park every sunny day for over 12 years, chatting and enjoying each others' friendship. One day, the younger of the two turned to the other and said, "Please don't be angry with me, dear, but what is your name? I just can't remember."

Her friend was quiet for a few moments. Finally she said, "How soon do you have to know?"

—*Sue Lauritzen*



**TWO ANTS? YOU HAVE ONLY TWO ANTS?!?
MY WIFE AND I EAT LIKE 100,000 PER
DAY EACH!**

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