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BANNER

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Flying the CRC Kite

CALL ME CHONG. Everyone does. I am honored to be the editor of *The Banner*, and I will serve as best I can. Not having been born or raised in the Christian Reformed Church, I encountered the denomination through its campus ministry when I was a student in Edmonton, Alberta. I ended up joining the CRC in 1996 partly because of its spiritual ethos. During my synod interview, I tried to capture this spiritual ethos by using the metaphor of flying a kite.

I suggested that for the CRC kite to fly properly, it needs to lean into the cultural winds. The name for this disposition to embody God's truth and love in engaging our cultural contexts is contextualism. It means learning from our neighbors, and it emphasizes justice and mercy. But without a confessional string holding on to our kite, we can be blown afar, losing our way. This confessional disposition emphasizes proclaiming and obeying God's spiritual and moral truths. Pulling too hard on the confessional string, however, could bring the kite crashing to the ground.

The art of CRC kite-flying requires the right amount of tension between string-pulling confessionalism and into-the-wind leaning contextualism. The CRC's genius in holding the tension between these two dispositions is one of the reasons I love this denomination.

These two dispositions are not new. Both have a long history in the CRC, and each has contributed something unique and important to our denomination's theology and culture. But proponents of contextualism and confessionalism do not always see eye to eye. They often respond differently to issues facing the church.

Conflict arising out of differences is natural, but what's tragic is when either group demonizes the other as an enemy of the faith. Lately, derogatory terms like "backward," "permissive," "old-fashioned," "relativist," "legalist," and "apostate" have been fired like bullets across the divide, especially over social media. Instead of thinking the worst of each other, can we recognize and learn from each other's best traits? Can we recognize that we need each other in order to fly?

After all, both dispositions are united in Christ: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). Contextualists are right in that God's mission requires us to incarnate God's truth into our cultural contexts. But confessionalists are also right in that "the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). God's life-giving truth is antithetical to sin's darkness. Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is also the Light of the world. He is "full of [both] grace and truth" (John 1:14). These are ultimately complementary, not conflicting, dispositions. Ideally, every Christian should embody both. But it is typical of our sinfulness to break asunder what God has joined together.

The CRC needs both contextual and confessional dispositions in doing God's mission.

The devil would love nothing more than to see us tear each other apart rather than work together to save lives. I believe we can think the best, rather than the worst, of each other. We can place God's mission, instead of our own agendas, as our collective priority. We can focus on saving lives rather than on winning arguments. And we can do all this with God's help. ■

Can we recognize
that we need each
other in order to fly?



Shiao Chong is editor-in-chief of *The Banner*. He attends Rehoboth Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Toronto, Ont.

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God Is Bigger Than Everything

I LOVE the buildings
 I love the houses
 And I love the drawings
 Our God is an awesome God
 He made the roads and the people
 He made the lights of the cars and
 the windows of the houses
 The little fences
 He made the crunch of the leaves
 He made the doors, the little doors for
 the cars so they can close them
 He made the little bitty windows
 He made the pools
 He made the babies
 He made the grass
 He made the bushes
 He made everything
 He made the people
 He made the roads and the sidewalks
 He made the alphabet
 A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R
 S T U V W X Y and Z
 He made the numbers
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 He made the sidewalks, and the gardens
 He made the highways
 He made the buildings
 He made the roofs
 He made the beautiful drawings

He made the sunshine
 He made the moon
 He made the clouds
 He made the arrows
 He made the different-colored lights
 He made the airplanes
 He made the people
 He made the stars
 He made the blue sky
 He made the cars
 He made everything
 He made the shapes
 There's lots of lines that show you
 where to go
 Any road has those kinds of lines
 White, or yellow
 White tells you to go
 Yellow tells you to stop
 Woah
 You better remember to stay in your lane
 He made the garbage
 He made the grass
 He made the little sides to keep the grass
 on the ground but not the road
 Every day ask your mommy and daddy
 to pray for you and they can
 You can pray whatever you want
 He made the children
 And what about the rainbows?

He loves us and you
 He loves the children
 He loves the colors
 He loves the lights
 He loves orange, blue, and yellow
 He loves green, blue, and pink
 He loves purple, black, and brown
 He loves every color
 He loves the leaves that turn orange and
 blue and green
 Light green, dark green
 Gives us story
 Gives us sunshine
 Gives us everything
 Gives us the moon
 Gives us sunshine
 Gives us the moon and the sky
 The clouds are nice but
 God is bigger than everything
 Yeah

Daddy, can you put on some music? ■

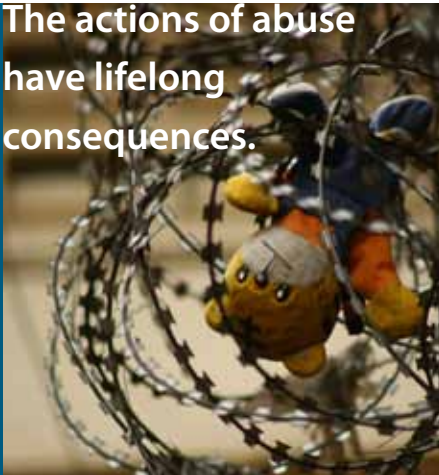


Sophia is a Grade 1 student at Calvin Christian School in Hamilton, Ont. Her dad recorded her hymn of faith on the way home from school. Sophia and her family attend First Christian Reformed Church in Hamilton.



Where Was God?

The actions of abuse have lifelong consequences.



I GREW UP in a large family with three older brothers who raped me whenever they wanted. One of the brothers often flew into a rage, and I was his punching bag.

My mother blamed me for everything. She called me names and treated me like a slave. Who says words don't hurt?

When I was young, I told a trusted friend's mother a little of what went on. My mom said I was lying and kicked me out. But I had nowhere to go.

Where was God in the midst of all this pain?

Whenever I hear about a person who experienced abuse, horrible memories come flooding back.

I tried talking to my family. One brother said, "I did that in my youth, and all my sins are forgiven." There has never been any remorse, let alone an apology, from my mother or any of the brothers. The brothers continued to abuse their wives and kids, even their grandchildren. They are all divorced, for which my mother blamed me too. When one grandchild, who was not yet school age, told me she was abused by her grandfather, I called the police.

The whole family was up in arms.

My sisters deny they were abused, but I know better. I was the only "crazy" one, because I went for counseling. They pretend they grew up in a loving family. I don't talk to many of my siblings because I can't deal with all the lies.

My first three counselors, all Christians, loaded me with Bible texts and said that I had to forgive, which made me even feel worse. They never affirmed that what happened to me was wrong. But how can there ever be reconciliation when my abusers don't acknowledge that what went on in our household was against God's will?

Before he died, my dad called me to his hospital bed and apologized to me. Dad said he couldn't go against my mother.

Three weeks before my mother died, I asked why she hated me so much and let all that bad stuff happen to me. She stuck her tongue out and turned her back to me.

It took me a very long time to believe and trust that there was a loving God. I beg God to help me. I still go for counseling because I am haunted with terrible nightmares.

So many Christians live with the pain of abuse. The actions of abuse have lifelong consequences for those who are abused. So why is the church not preaching about these sins? ■

—Name withheld. The author is a Christian Reformed Church member from Ontario, Canada.



Making Room

While I appreciate much of what is written in the editorial "Making Room" (Jul/Aug 2016), it does not accurately convey what synod decided regarding the reports submitted by the Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance re Same-sex Marriage. As the reporter for the advisory committee that dealt with this matter at synod, I believe it is important to clarify what synod actually decided.

It is not correct that synod "adopted the recommendations of the committee's minority report." The precise wording of synod's decision was to "receive the majority and minority reports for information and recommend to the churches the pastoral guidance of the minority report." While it is true that the recommendations synod approved include prohibiting officebearers from solemnizing same-sex marriages, on the subject of what participating in a same-sex wedding might entail, synod simply affirmed the minority report's "cautions about involvement of officebearers in such ceremonies."

Thus, in this matter synod did not so much adopt formal policy (with the prospect that church discipline might be administered to those deemed to have strayed from such policy) as it recommended pastoral guidance.

LETTERS

The editorial commendably identifies the need for pastoral sensitivity when discussing the subjects of same-sex attraction and same-sex marriage in our churches, and I hope that this clarification will help this pastoral sensitivity to flourish.

—Peter Hoytema
Strathroy, Ont.

Doctrine of Discovery

I can well imagine the discussions, meetings, correspondence, and concerns that prompted the writing of the article “Rehoboth, Zuni Churches Criticize Doctrine of Discovery Synodical Report” (June 2016). I too think it is unfair to criticize former missionaries who worked under the same CRC church empowered by the same Holy Spirit. We all made/make mistakes but did our best to be obedient to the call we were given.

Classis Red Mesa asked appropriately that synod not adopt the report until further study. We do not live in the shoes, culture, government of bygone decades. We do our best to rectify mistakes of the past, but the next generation will likely look upon present-day reports and shake their heads at mistakes being made today too. We need to appreciate with the Navajo and Zuni people that God allowed the CRC to be present on the reservation and be thankful for many good and fair decisions. God has blessed the efforts.

—Eunice (Post) Hop
Baldwin, Wis.

Re “Synodical Committee Rejects Doctrine of Discovery, Criticizes CRC Ministry to Navajo” (March 2016): First, I do not defend the Doctrine of Discovery as it was practiced by colonial nations. Nor would I deny the sad fact that missionaries in history have been guilty of teaching and imposing cultural mores when the real goal should have been to teach about Jesus.

However, I disagree strongly with the opinion of the CRC Task Force “that the CRC and the entire body of Christ in North America ‘drinks downstream’ from that historical reality.” This broad assertion completely ignores how many missionaries have gone to live among different people groups, showing sacrificial love and, at the same time, acceptance of cultural differences. If we are “drinking downstream” from the Doctrine of Discovery, we must also be “drinking downstream” from the heritage of those who have cared deeply for those to whom they have carried the name of Jesus.

—Stephen M. Boer
Kent, Wash.

Something Is Missing

Thanks for your editorial concerning the frequency of celebrating the Lord’s Supper (“Something Is Missing,” May 2016). Do you think it might be possible to assemble some worldwide data on this subject? It would be interesting to know how often the Lord’s Supper is celebrated in the Americas, China, Africa, South Korea, etc.

Keep up your good work!

—John Slager
Hoover, Ala.

I am 88 years old and a lifelong member of the Christian Reformed Church. We always had communion and also the Ten Commandments (“Something Is Missing”). The commandments were read at every service, but not anymore. I believe we need the Ten Commandments to start our day *every* day. None of us is perfect so we need them to remind us how to live. We must try to keep the commandments with God’s help. I miss this practice in worship and am going to ask our pastor why we don’t hear them regularly. Please write an article on the Ten Com-

mandments and why we need them to be read at every service.

—Marlys Wilts
Holland, Iowa

Invite Me for Coffee

The article “Why I Want You to Invite Me Out for Coffee” (May 2016) certainly makes one stop and think. Every person, regardless of age or status in life, needs and wants to know that somebody cares. With the constant chatter of TV and handheld devices we are losing the personal eye contact we need to fill our lives with love and a sense of belonging. Thanks, Hannah Biggs, for a job well done.

—Esther M. Rayburn
Battle Creek, Mich.

Sol de Valle Ministry

The news story “California Community Center Helps Church Reach Out” (May 2016) incorrectly portrayed the Sol del Valle Community Center as having been started by Bethel, Sun Valley CRC. In reality it was begun by Home Missions’ Sol del Valle ministry. In 1987 the “amnesty” law was passed and the Center responded to the need to assist Hispanic immigrants with legalization documentation. Over 600 people were helped; this led to ESL and job training classes. The Sol del Valle church disbanded in 2012, but before then a Bethel Church member took the initiative to fund and direct the Center. Only a couple of years ago, an agreement was reached with Bethel Church to define the working relationship between the Center and the church. Many former Sol del Valle members and some recipients of Community Center services are now attending Bethel as members and leaders. There are valuable lessons to be learned from 30 years of complex strategy issues.

—Lou Wagenfeld
Escondido, Calif.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

NEWS

Connecting, Sharing, Extending: How Churches Are Using Social Media



Have you commented on, liked, or shared something your church is doing lately? More and more

congregations are using social media to share who they are with the wider world.

“Churches are being challenged to change how they perceive themselves in ministry, and how others perceive them and how to use technology to their advantage,” said Rev. Sidney Couperus, pastor of Mountainview Christian Reformed Church in Grimsby, Ont. Mountainview, a congregation with more than 700 members, has a growing collection of online videos produced and published to the video-sharing site Vimeo by volunteer Peter VanGeest.

VanGeest said the three-minute video testimonials they’ve shared have drawn the biggest reactions. “It doesn’t matter what kind of trouble you have in your life, if somebody shares theirs, then you right away feel you’re not the only one. . . . They’re very popular,” he said.

Those results reflect what Jerod Clark, project manager for Church Juice at ReFrame Media, has seen overall. “In general, social media has become a very visual platform. So sharing pictures or sharing video are far more successful than

just sharing text alone or even sharing a link to something else,” Clark said. ReFrame Media is part of Back to God Ministries International, the CRC’s media ministry.

Mountainview CRC also reflects something else Clark has noted. “Many CRCs are using Facebook better today than they were a few years ago. The biggest disconnect comes in church communications strategy,” Clark said, agreeing that many churches do not yet have a plan for intentional online communication.

“We’re getting there,” VanGeest said. “[At first] you use social media kind of haphazardly . . . but we’ve been more intentional in the last month and I’ve gotten as many hits in the last month as I’ve had in the last six months [on] Vimeo.” He said that instead of one person posting to social media for the church, each ministry is doing its own posting.

Clark pointed out that today there are still churches debating whether they can even take pictures of people in their congregation, while others have said, “You know what? We’ll set up a policy, we’ll make sure we’re doing it all legally and then we’ll just go because we know that showing

our church in action will actually get people to engage better with us online.”

For Victoria (B.C.) CRC, with a membership of about 250, social media presence includes church accounts on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The church’s part-time office administrator, Yvonne Van Rhyn, does the majority of the posting, but the church’s two pastors (husband and wife team Rev. Brittney and Rev. David Salverda) and the youth ministry coordinator also have administrative access on Victoria CRC’s Facebook page and post occasionally. Van Rhyn said the four check in with one another in weekly staff meetings to keep track of who’s posting what. She said that the use of social media in their congregation is an “ongoing process.”

“How do we evaluate what worthwhile means?” questioned Van Rhyn. “Some people would look at it with the number of likes or the number of hits . . . but I’d say it’s more that if we’re keeping people engaged who are starting to disengage—if social media can be a platform that’s keeping them engaged—then that makes it worthwhile.”

For more news

about the churches and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church, visit thebanner.org.



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Van Rhyn added, "Social media is just one aspect of how we show who we are as a congregation. We're still expecting that people come [to church] because of a relationship with someone else."

One church that is further developed in its online communication is Elmhurst (Ill.) CRC. "We have a social media calendar so that there is a balance between broadcasting events and extending the [worship] services," said Sheri Van Spronsen-Leppink, part-time director of communication for the church. "Since we know the folks on Facebook are not just local to us, we want a balance and not just advertising events. Our social media presence is part of our church—there is more of a message there as well."

Knowing its audience is part of Elmhurst CRC's strategy. A team of communication-focused volunteers participates in analyzing data—determining where followers are from and tracking responses to posts. Thursdays are pastor's blog post days, and Van Spronsen-Leppink said those personal messages have generated the most sharing and reposts. The church also has ministry-specific Facebook pages and sharing groups.

"Social media comes down to taking a look at your congregation or the people you're trying to reach and saying, 'Where are they hanging out?' and finding that right spot," said Clark. "For every church, it could be different."

—Alissa Vernon

Resources:

Peter VanGeest, audio and video volunteer at Mountainview CRC, said his church changed its one-person posting approach to a ministry-specific posting approach after listening to this church communications talk: <http://tinyurl.com/gpguuge>.

Church Juice operates The Juicys each year, a way to recognize and reward those churches who've worked to improve their church communications. Check out Fairborn UMC's 2015 winning social media strategy: <http://tinyurl.com/hc84ld8>.

Sheri Van Spronsen-Leppink recommends this article for churches just starting out: <http://tinyurl.com/z4s6mmf>.

Noteworthy

Holland (Mich.) Christian High School won its first state boys **baseball championship** in Division 2.

Unity Christian High School in Hudsonville, Mich., won its third straight Division 3 girls **soccer title**.

John Muyskens, a graduate of Calvin College, won a **Pulitzer Prize** in the National Reporting category, along with his colleagues at *The Washington Post*.

Angela Reitsma Bick, a member of Hope Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Courtice, Ont., won the **2016 Word Guild award** for her article "Every Moment Holy," published in *Christian Courier*.

Hubert Krygsman is stepping down as president of **Redeemer University College** in Ancaster, Ont., effective October 2016.

Wright Christian Reformed Church in Kanawha, Iowa, celebrated its 125th anniversary.

Lisa Eelkema, **David Robinson**, and a team of teachers from **Hamilton District Christian High School** were the first-ever recipients of the **John Rozema Awards for Teacher Excellence**, in partnership with the Christian School Foundation and Cardus, a Christian think tank. Rozema is a member of Redeemer Christian Reformed Church in Sarnia, Ont.

Ron Vanden Brink is the new national director of **Diaconal Ministries Canada**.

Drew Bremer was named to the **2016 U.S. Paralympic soccer team**. Bremer, a forward, is a member of Alger Park CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.

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



Holland Christian High School boys baseball team.



Unity Christian High School girls soccer team.



John Muyskens



Angela Reitsma Bick



Hubert Krygsman

NEWS

CRC Community Gathers to Lament

In response to shootings of black men and of police officers, Madison Square Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., held a service of lament in mid-July. "As a community we have to work through this together," said Jermale Eddie, director of reaching in at Madison Church: Ford Campus. "We needed a space for people to come and pray, cry, listen, sing, or just be. To just sit and wrestle with the heaviness of this."

Young families with children, college students, middle-aged adults, and the elderly made up the nearly 140 people in attendance. Others around the world could stream the service live, which is available to view on

Madison Church: Ford's Facebook page.

Julian Newman, pastor of Tribes Church in Grand Rapids, opened with a message based on what it means to "stand firm," as it says in Exodus 14:13, in times of fear and heartbreak. The service also included a time of prayer, song, and open conversation.

Newman and Stacia Hoeksema, a professor of social work at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, facilitated the conversation, in which over a dozen men and women of black, white, and other racial identities shared experiences, prayed, read poems, and asked questions.

A young black man shared his experience of living in fear every



LORI DYKSTRA

Julian Newman

day for his life and the lives of his friends and family. Newman responded by saying, "Acknowledge [the presence of fear], but do not accept its power over our lives."

Following the service, Katie Ulrich, a student at Calvin College,

said, "It was beneficial to hear some African Americans speak about the fear that they experience, especially because I don't know that experience myself. To realize it and put a face to it makes a huge difference."

—Lori Dykstra

New Jersey Nonprofit Receives 150K to Launch Food Co-op

Thanks to a \$150,000 grant, a food pantry in Prospect Park, N.J., is becoming a food co-op, a retail grocery store owned by its volunteers. The grant came from Richfield Christian Reformed Church.

The food pantry, now operated by New Hope Community Ministries, started out in the basement of Bridgeway Community CRC in Haledon to serve a changing neighborhood that included Hispanic and Arabic immigrants who were struggling below the poverty line. The pantry outgrew Bridgeway's basement, and its clients needed more than food. In response, New Hope Community Ministries was established in 2005.

Phil Beverly, executive director of New Hope, came up with the idea of a food co-op while watching food pantry participants bagging groceries, unloading food



trucks, and restocking shelves. What if this was actually a store? he thought. What if our volunteers were actually owners?

Jen Williams, New Hope's director of development, said, "We see a co-op as empowering low- to

moderate-income residents by giving them ownership in a business. It also could create a greater sense of community and provide jobs in our neighborhood."

New Hope, supported by several CRCs, also offers family, cou-

ples, and individual counseling; ESL classes and immigration clinics; women's and teen support groups; and foreclosure prevention counseling.

"Our food pantry still exists within the mentoring programs," Williams said. "It provides assistance to 150 families, or 600 people in the Prospect Park and Haledon areas each year."

—Callie Feyen

Wayside Chapel Lives On in Northern Michigan

Ellsworth (Mich.) Christian Reformed Church has taken over official ownership and continued care of the Wayside Chapel on Highway 31 leading to Charlevoix, Mich. The move was partially an act of caregiving toward members of the former Atwood CRC in Ellsworth after that congregation closed and its members joined the Ellsworth congregation.

"The Wayside Chapel was started in the 1960s by members of Atwood CRC, and it serves as a stopping point on 31, going north, for those who liked the idea of a quaint little chapel where they could stop in and pray," said Rev. Alex Snider, pastor of Ellsworth CRC. As Atwood CRC went through the process of closing and divesting its assets, "one of the things that they really wanted to [keep] in operation was the Wayside Chapel," Snider said.

Just south of Atwood, the chapel measures 12 x 8 feet (3.5 x 2.5 m). It is open and lit 24 hours a day. Volunteers will continue to maintain the building—mowing the lawn at the small property, keeping the weeds at bay, and stocking the chapel with literature.

"Any time a church closes, obviously that's a difficult time for those members who are still around," Snider said. "It's a good practice for the neighboring churches to do what we can to kind of ease that transition. Many of their members have come to be a part of our congregation, and so our council has decided to do what we can to make them feel welcome and at home—and at the same time make it clear that their history and the history of that church is still alive."

Both churches have served their community for more than 100 years, with Ellsworth CRC turning 115 this year. Snider said their focus is on becoming a blended congregation and working ecumenically with the two other churches in the 380-person town of Ellsworth.

—Alissa Vernon

[The Wayside Chapel in Ellsworth, Mich.](#)



IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Roger Selles Greenway
1934-2016

Roger Selles Greenway, a gifted man who was especially known for his involvement in world missions, died on April 30 following the effects of a stroke suffered in 2014.

After studying at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, Greenway was ordained in 1958. He served with Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) in what is now called Sri Lanka and in Mexico City as the Christian Reformed Church's Latin American Secretary and as its director. He pastored one church in Michigan and also spent time teaching at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia and at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Mich.

"My dad loved the Lord, my mom, his family, the church, world missions, big dogs, fishing, and hunting, pretty much in that order," his son Scott said.

Greenway is survived by Edna, his wife of 61 years, by five children and their spouses, and by 15 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by a daughter and a grandson.

—Janet A. Greidanus

Further information on recently deceased ministers is available at thebanner.org.

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Dr. James Calvin De Young
1931-2016

Pastor, professor, missionary, pilot, gardener, and talented woodworker, James Calvin De Young died on April 23 in Sanborn, Iowa, at age 84.

De Young studied at Northwestern College in Iowa; Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich.; Westminster Seminary in Pennsylvania; and the Free University of Amsterdam, where he earned his doctorate in theology. De Young became the founding pastor of Prairie Lane Christian Reformed Church in Omaha, Neb., before dedicating the rest of his career to teaching.

He served at Reformed Theological Seminary in Mississippi as well as at Asian Theological Seminary in the Philippines. Besides teaching, De Young loved to preach and spent many Sundays traveling to churches without pastors. After serving as interim pastor for Conrad (Mont.) CRC, he retired in 1996.

De Young earned his private pilot's license at age 50 and was a volunteer chaplain for the Mississippi Civil Air Patrol.

In retirement he enjoyed woodworking and gardening.

De Young is survived by Mary, his wife of 63 years, and by six children and their spouses, 19 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

NEWS

From the very young to the young-at-heart—and every age in between—Christian Reformed folks gathered over the summer months for fun and fellowship, work and worship, connecting with each other and their communities. Here are just a few of those stories. (See thebanner.org for more.)

Superheroes at Ottawa's Special Needs SERVE

Twenty participants with special needs, 20 mentors, and countless other volunteers spent a week SERVE-ing in Ottawa, Ont., Canada's capital city. Hosted by Calvin Christian Reformed Church and supported by four Ottawa-area churches and more than 100 volunteers, SERVE participants discovered their inner hero by helping others while learning how Jesus is the ultimate superhero during a fun, action-packed week.

Along with time spent studying God's Word and in worship, participants harvested vegetables at the local food bank farm, cleaned school desks and lockers, and sorted items at Bibles for Missions. They visited and played games with residents at a nursing home and



SERVE participant Nicole Zantingh (L) and mentor Caralynn Berti working together on a craft project.

did yard work and other projects at a local mission.

Each participant received a Superman cape with "Jesus Loves You" signed on it as a memento. First-time participants also received a quilt from Calvin CRC's quilting group.

"[SERVE] gives families [of participants] respite care and a way that participants can serve their

communities," said Ron Hosmar, Calvin's pastor of youth and congregational life and SERVE organizer. "Another spin-off of SERVE, and there are many, is that volunteers from our church and other churches talk to each other, getting to know each other in ways they didn't before. That's worth the effort all on its own."

—Krista Dam-VandeKuyt

Campers with Autism Find Quiet Corner at Ontario Church



ALISSA VERNON

Clay spends time with Juanesteban (left, in tent).

Camp SHOUT (See Him Open Up Truth), a four-week day camp at Jubilee Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines, Ont., is noisy, fast, and crowded—exactly the wrong kind of environ-

ment for a child with needs on the autism spectrum. But kids with autism also need a safe place to spend time in the summer months.

This summer, the attendance of two boys needing accommodation required camp organizers to think outside the hoola-hoops, boisterous welcome songs, and active running games.

"We purchased child-sized noise-canceling headphones to ease anxiety due to overstimulation of noise," said camp committee member Joanne Tenyenhuis. Tenyenhuis also made a "quiet kit" that included sensory exploration items such as moon sand, play dough, and a stress ball.

The quiet kit sits next to a child-sized tent in one corner of

the multi-use sanctuary. It's a peaceful spot where a counselor or teen volunteer can provide time out for an overstimulated camper while still being part of the programming space.

The staff and volunteers have found the additional supports helpful for Juanesteban, 5, whose dad helped with the recommendations. "If you get him focused on something like the ball or the sand or play dough, he can focus and calm down," said counselor Grace Lynn, 17. "Or sometimes he'll just hibernate in the tent."

Owen, a 13-year-old volunteer, was a previous camper whose return this year was a great help for Juanesteban. "I worked with him at school," Owen said. "I volunteered to help at recess breaks.

[Here] I tried to help by doing what we did at school—try to calm him down and to sit with him."

Juanesteban's family was referred to camp by Chez Marie, a refugee assistance center in the same city.

"I think this is one of Jubilee's biggest opportunities with Camp SHOUT," said Anna Bailey, the church's youth and young adult ministry coordinator and the camp's director. "We should be looking toward making changes to our programming to benefit families from walks of life who don't get timely diagnoses, specialists, and tailored care plans because they don't currently have the tools to access those."

—Alissa Vernon



Crosby Kibbe enjoying the movie with his glow-in-the-dark glasses.

Michigan Church Draws Community with Outdoor Movies

River Rock Church, a Christian Reformed congregation in Rockford, Mich., is showing outdoor movies as a way to help the community become familiar with its location.

Church member Jen DenOuden said the idea for the series came as church members brainstormed ideas on how to promote its summer festival to be held in late August. "We were talking through ways to bring people to River Rock ahead of that event so they would be familiar with our location and who we are as a church," DenOuden said.

The series opened in June with the animated comedy *Minions*, followed by the Disney animated movies *Up* and *Finding Nemo*.

"River Rock is blessed to be situated in a wonderful space with lots of fields and beautiful creation all around us," she said. "The outdoor movie allows us to make use of this space and invite others to enjoy it with us."

—Greg Chandler



"Alive in NY" mission team.

West Michigan Church Ministers in Big Apple

Volunteering at a homeless shelter. Serving food in a soup kitchen. Tutoring kids during an afterschool program at an Arab-American school.

This is how some members of Alive Ministries, a Christian Reformed congregation in Jenison, Mich., expressed their faith during a recent intergenerational mission trip to New York City.

A total of 35 people ranging in age from teens to upper 50s took part in the week-long experience dubbed "Alive in NY." For many participants, it was a life-changing experience that strengthened their faith and gave them a vision of how they can minister in their own community.

"We all came in with some preconceived notions of what homelessness in New York City was going to look like, and I think by the end of the week we had a different image of what it actually was," said Aaron Bainbridge, a recent college graduate.

This is the third intergenerational mission trip Alive has put together. According to Carrie Rodgers, the church's college and young adult discipleship director, these experiences provide rich opportunities that might not be found in a similar experience limited to high school or college students.

"The depth of conversation, of life experience, of faith journeys, can all come together in a way where everyone is getting to learn from each other, be inspired by one another, and be challenged by one another," Rodgers said.

—Greg Chandler

Carnivals Bring Neighbors Together

Mountainview Christian Reformed Church in Grimsby, Ont., encouraged its members to bring mini-carnivals to their own front lawns with cotton candy and inflatables as a way of welcoming those who live right next door.

"It's an awesome opportunity for the members who are hosting the mini-carnival to get to know their neighbors," said Maria Oliveira, chair of the church's outreach committee. "It gives a connecting point so

that in the future they can have more conversations," she said.

Samantha and Jeff Bondy volunteered to host a Sunday afternoon mini-carnival at the house they moved into in November 2015. "We were really surprised and delighted with the number of people that showed up, and not just from our cul-de-sac," Samantha said. "There were old and young... a constant stream of people coming in and enjoying the games,

bouncy castle, prizes, and cotton candy."

This is the outcome the church expected after having sponsored four or five mini-carnivals thus far. "The large Mountainview carnival is a great way to impact the neighborhood, but the small 'Meet Your Neighbor Events' are where lives get touched and relationships start or are solidified," said Jason Vander Wier, Mountainview CRC member and carnival organizer.

—Alissa Vernon



Volunteer Diana Farrow makes cotton candy for neighbors in Grimsby, Ont.

Summer Day Camps Deepen Connection in the Community

Bethany Christian Reformed Church in Bellflower, Calif., took a new approach to offering summer camps this summer. For six weeks, the church offered one-day-a-week camps on weekday mornings, including soccer, basketball, science, and art, with a week of traditional VBS in the middle.

It was part of making their summer internships for college-aged students more than just support staff for existing programs. Instead of working with just the middle and high school youth of the church, those interns could have a bigger influence in the community.

Youth pastor Andrew Nishimoto said, "One of our conversations had been about . . . whether we could do something that connected families more consistently with our church through the summer. From that conversation was born the idea to have the interns plan and lead a variety of camps throughout the summer."

"The intern program includes required reading and discipleship training as well, so they get a well-rounded experience," said Deanne Grachen, office administrator at Bethany. Having the young people of the church step up to this leadership opportunity is definitely a highlight. Nishimoto said, "I have also loved seeing the young adults take over and run these programs so well. They are leading our church in our desire to love the lost and care for those in need, and that is so exciting!"

—Heidi Wicker

Science camp at Bethany CRC included experiments.



GEMS counselors enjoying the general sessions.

GEMS Leaders Gather for Mutual Encouragement

GEMS (Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior) counselors from all over the United States, Canada, and as far away as Africa traveled to Bozeman, Mont., to be encouraged in their distinctive leadership role. This year 370 women attended the annual leadership conference on July 21-24. GEMS is a girl's club ministry supported by the Christian Reformed Church.

Conference manager Alecia Van Hulzen said, "Every counselor walks alongside these precious girls, and we have the unique privilege to help encourage and invest in these amazing women."

Helena Bootsma, a member of Community Christian Reformed Church of Frankford, Ont., said, "I appreciated the worship times and training on next season's theme, Love Overflows. I am thankful for the blessing of this wonderful time of fellowship and refreshment."

GEMS leaders had the opportunity to choose among 45 different workshops with topics including "Connecting with



Kids in a Wireless World" and "Threading the Theme throughout the Year."

There was also time for fellowship. The women attended a pitchfork fondue dinner at a nearby ranch. Many also participated in whitewater rafting, zip-lining, a bus tour of Yellowstone Park, or a historical ghost town tour. "This is a fun way to build relationships and to fellowship and learn from women from around the world in a laid-back setting," said Van Hulzen.

"Our heartbeat is for every woman who serves to know that we support them and will walk alongside them," she added.

—Amy Toornstra



Cadets learned to kayak on Whitefish Lake.

Building Bonds at the All-Ontario Cadet Camporee

In early August, 108 Cadets, 36 counselors, and 16 support staff spent a week immersed in nature at Algonquin Park's Whitefish Lake for the All-Ontario Cadet Camporee. From learning more about being a child of God to learning how to survive among bears, their week was filled with activities from sunrise to sunset.

Cadets built their own shelters, learned to kayak and canoe, built and raced Styrofoam boats, and made a survival bracelet complete with whistle, flint, cord, and a small knife.

"For me, the camporee is the highlight of Cadeting. It's amazing to see the cadres working together, from strangers at the beginning of the week to the strong bonds that form," said Peter Vandersar of Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Woodstock, a Cadet counselor since 1989.

Camp Director Henry Fohkens of Westmount CRC in Strathroy, Ont., said Algonquin is a place close to his heart. But the highlight of the week was the spiritual development and witnessing among the boys and staff. "It's as much for the leaders as the boys, and they were really encouraged as Christians," Fohkens said.

The Calvinist Cadet Corps host committee is also busy planning for the 2017 International Camporee to be held in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

—Krista Dam-VandeKuyt

Puppet Workshops Connect Kids to Summer Ministries

Calvin Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich., found a way to bridge its school-year children's ministry programs, GEMS and Cadets, with summertime Wow Wednesdays in order to keep more community kids connected to the church.



Kids make puppets at Calvin CRC's After School Special.

Dubbed "After School Special," a series of three puppet-making workshops whetted kids' appetite for the dynamic summer program to come.

Twenty children ages 5 to 12 came out for what outreach coordinator and music director Randy Bouwer called "a big but fun mess," working with three volunteer leaders and several helpful parents to create puppets to take home and enjoy.

—Alissa Vernon

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Henry Ryn De Bolster

1926 - 2016

Henry Ryn De Bolster was not a man of great physical stature, but he was tall in presence and influence, bold in spirit, and strong in conviction. He died on April 22 at age 89.

De Bolster was born in the Netherlands. After training as a bookkeeper, De Bolster and his wife, Cobie, emigrated to Canada. He worked for two steel companies before heading off to seminary. He graduated in 1952 and went on to pastor Christian Reformed congregations in Alberta and Ontario.

De Bolster was the founding president of Redeemer College (now Redeemer University College), a position he held until his retirement in 1994. Until his last days, De Bolster remained a strong supporter of the college. In 2004, he received an honorary doctorate of divinity from McMaster University for being a pioneer of Canadian Christian higher education. In 2015, he received Calvin Seminary's Distinguished Alumni Award.

Predeceased by his wife in 2013, De Bolster is survived by five children and their spouses, and by 15 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Wilmer Roy Witte

1928-2016

Wilmer Roy Witte was blessed with a keen mind, intellectual curiosity, and a desire to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Rev. Leonard Hofman, a lifelong friend since college days, described Witte as "a careful interpreter of the Bible, a good exegete—faithful to the text and also to the Reformed faith." Witte died on May 10 after complications from a fall. He was 88.

Witte graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1951 and served Christian Reformed congregations in Iowa, Michigan, and Illinois. He retired in 1993.

With what has been described as a "radio voice," Witte participated in radio ministry during his time in ministry. Prior to and during retirement, Witte faithfully served the denomination on boards, committees, at synod, and by preaching whenever called upon.

Witte enjoyed playing golf with his wife, his children, and his ministry colleagues.

Witte is survived by Ruth, his wife of 64 years, by three children and their spouses, and by three grandchildren. He was predeceased by a daughter and a son-in-law.

—Janet A. Greidanus

NEWS

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. James Alvin Bultman
1924-2016

James Bultman was a modest man who enjoyed simple pleasures: singing around the piano with the family, eating ice cream, laughing at his own corny jokes, and taking long walks. According to his loved ones, the daunting challenges Bultman faced drove him even more to seek refuge and direction from God. His peaceful and gentle spirit was evident throughout his struggle with dementia during the last 13 years of his life. Bultman died on May 3 at Resthaven Care Center in Holland, Mich. He was 92.

Growing up on the family farm in Oak Harbor (Whidbey Island), Wash., significantly shaped Bultman. He always referred to western Washington as home.

After graduating from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1953, he served Christian Reformed congregations in Iowa, Colorado, Michigan, Texas, and South Dakota. He was also a short-term missionary in Russia and Ukraine.

Bultman was predeceased by his wife, Alida (Vander Weit), in 1992. He is survived by their two children and their spouses, and by several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

News Digest

Michigan Church Sends Teens to Camp in Dominican Republic

Teens and adults of Alger Park Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., continued their work in the Dominican Republic long after they returned from a mission trip by raising funds for teens in the D.R. to attend Young Life camp, or *Vida Joven*. They “filled a bus” at \$70 per kid, raising enough to send 63 kids to camp.



Melanie Veldman with a poster representing the busloads of kids being sent to camp in Dominican Republic.



Tyler was one of the men baptized at the Brothers in Blue retreat.

Brothers in Blue Leads to Baptisms in Iowa Prison

Twenty men at the Newton (Iowa) Correctional facility were baptized in the spring following an annual spiritual retreat weekend called Brothers in Blue. The retreat is part of the ministry of New Life Prison Community Church, a congregation of the Christian Reformed Church. Rick Admiraal, pastor of the congregation, said the retreat is essentially an intensive primer on Christianity. Admiraal, his wife, Rose, and a group of 23 volunteers led almost 70 men through the course at the most recent event.

Ontario Mom Swims across Lake Erie for Guatemalan Mission

On July 16, marathon swimmer Anita Doppenberg completed a 20-km (12-mile) crossing of Lake Erie from Sturgeon Point, N.Y., to Crystal Beach, Ont., in 7.5 hours. Doppenberg, 44, raised approximately \$20,000 for a

school in Guatemala that is part of a mission run by her brother and sister-in-law.

The former Coffee Break leader at Jubilee Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines, Ont., describes herself as “an ordinary wife and mother of five who lives in Niagara and has a great desire to do something extraordinary.” Doppenberg said she felt “extremely grateful for all God has given me: health, strength, ambition, ability, opportunity, family, friends, and even the beautiful water he created! I am overflowing!”



A crew of 11 people supported Anita Doppenberg in her crossing, using two support boats and a kayak.

Walk towards Reconciliation

Pieter VanderLeek, a member of Willoughby Christian Reformed Church in Langley, B.C., walked 40 km (25 miles) on a weekend in June as part of a “Walk towards Reconciliation.” Members of his church joined participants from Anglican, Roman Catholic, Mennonite, and United churches. They walked from Fort Langley, B.C., to St. Mary’s in Mission, B.C. St. Mary’s is the site of the nearest Canadian residential school where Native children were sent by the government. For VanderLeek and others, the highlight was the Saturday morning workshops featuring presenters and survivors who told their stories and led tours of the school.

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

—Banner Correspondents

FAQs

Faith Formation

Q Last week a worship team from our local Alcoholics Anonymous chapter led our service. The worship was filled with testimonies of the Spirit's transforming and healing work. But later I wondered, Why don't I have similar testimonies concerning the Spirit's power in my life?

A Your question is not surprising. In the two years that I've served as team leader of Faith Formation Ministries, one of the most common requests I've received from every corner of our denomination goes something like this: Our congregation really struggles with sharing its faith stories. Could you help us take steps to strengthen this practice?

I see four reasons for this question arising:

1. The most common form of testimony is the "gutter-to-glory" narrative, the kind often shared so beautifully at AA. But many of our lives do not fit this pattern, leaving us wondering if we have a testimony at all.
2. Our Reformed theology cautions us against self-glorification.
3. Our Reformed DNA is more comfortable sharing opinions than faith stories.
4. We are recognizing that passing on the faith to both the next generations and our neighbors requires learning how to share our faith stories.

I once ministered in a community where every week's worship included a three-minute faith story: a member read a psalm (or excerpt) and then described how this Scripture played a significant role in her walk with the Lord. The cumulative effect of this was a celebration of God's faithfulness, an awareness that we all do have faith stories, and a greater capacity to see each other as pilgrims on the way. And it was a simple step to take!

For more ideas for strengthening your church's faith sharing practices, check out the new Faith Storytelling toolkit (available September) at crcna.org/faithformation/toolkits.

—Syd Hielema is the team leader for Faith Formation Ministries. He is a member of Meadowlands Fellowship CRC in Ancaster, Ont.

The Samaritan woman at the well felt she belonged when Jesus accepted her for who she was, a sinner.

Outreach

Q I have been inviting my friend to my church for some time. But he seems far from committing himself to Christ. What do I do?

A Often evangelism in the church has taken place according to a pattern that can be summed up as "believe, behave, belong." That is, if you believe what we believe and behave how we behave, then you can belong to the church. However, this was not the model in the early church. Nor is it successful in our post-Christian culture.

Here is an alternative: "belong, behave, believe." That is, the church simply invites all people, no matter who they are, to belong in the community of Jesus' presence. In that community they learn to behave with deeds of compassion, justice, and worship. In so doing they are drawn to believe in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ.

We see this pattern in the New Testament. The Samaritan woman at the well, for example, felt she belonged when Jesus accepted her for who she was, a sinner. Then she behaved with an act of worship, asking, "Give me this water so that I won't get thirsty." Finally she began believing in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and "many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony."

In Acts 2, the early Christians opened their homes with such hospitality to their Jewish neighbors that they experienced a sense of belonging. There they witnessed Christian behaviors: the apostles' teachings, the Lord's Supper, worship and prayer, and *koinonia*. Then "the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

As one historian put it, "The new believers were attracted to the community of Jesus' followers first. Only then did they begin to realize that they were attracted to the person of Jesus."

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

Justice

Q Do official statements and petitions help to do justice?

A Words matter in justice work; words and actions together have more impact. It is often said that actions speak louder than words; making both count for justice is our goal.

A recent example is "Called to Resist Bigotry," a public statement by more than 50 religious leaders in the U.S. I was glad to see religious leaders give voice to a deep moral concern about the increasing appeal to racism, hatred, and fear for political purposes. At Synod 2016, black female delegates testified about the importance of the Belhar Confession for their struggle against racism in New Jersey. Others dismissed it as words, not action, but words and action came together as synod took steps to make these words a greater part of church life, shaping us as a church that takes justice seriously.

Sometimes official statements clarify our views; sharing a common statement is one way to express personal views. Petitions can be a tool for giving voice to people who are outside the decision-making circle, with the hope of influencing those who have power to make changes.

A problem arises if our actions contradict our words. Proclamations against racism or sexism, for example, do not eradicate such behavior overnight; over time they do influence behavior.

Silence in the face of injustice also sends a powerful message. May God grant us wisdom to choose both acts of speech and other actions that contribute to greater justice.

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



MY 4-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, Zoe, ran into the house after school, breathless and eager to tell me about her day. She stood in front of me in the living room with her hands on her hips and rushed through the details of what this boy did and what that girl did. She ended her story with an exasperated sigh: “Mommy, I had no peace all day long!” I laughed and hugged her. A single story has the power to make

us run, to take our breath away, to bring laughter and light to an otherwise grey afternoon.

A single story can also be dangerous. I recently heard the Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie deliver a TED talk entitled “The Danger of a Single Story.” She spoke of coming to study in the United States. Adichie’s university roommate had a single story about Africa, a single story of catastrophe. “She had felt

sorry for me even before she saw me. She had a default position toward me as an African. It was a kind of patronizing, well-meaning pity. In this single story there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way—no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals.” Adichie admitted that she had a single story about people from Mexico. When she actually visited Mexico, her

A single story can open the doorway to the many stories that make up a person or a community.

single story was challenged. “The consequence of the single story is this,” Adichie said. “It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.”

The Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA) is filled with many stories. But when we are considering the position or the perspective of someone with whom we disagree, we may be tempted to view the other through the lens of a single story—one that neatly and efficiently fits the other into the boxes of our stereotypes and assumptions. I know I do this. All too often.

Because there are relatively few women in ordained ministry in the CRCNA, it may be that some of you have a single story about what we are like. Ironically, perhaps, the best way to confront the danger of an overarching and stereotyping single story is to listen deeply to the real and multifaceted story of another. Here is my story.

What If?

On March 5, 1994, my dad and I went to see a production of *Hamlet* at Western Washington University. We were celebrating his 44th birthday. On the way home, my dad, a Christian Reformed minister himself, asked me if I had ever thought about going into the ministry. I had not. What if God was calling me to ministry? Could God even do that? I did not know. I was 17 years old. No women had yet been ordained in the CRCNA. I had never heard a woman preach. I had never met a female pastor. The story of women in ordained ministry was not a story with which I was familiar.

I remember looking out the window as we drove and thinking about all the things I loved doing: writing and studying, singing and playing piano; speaking and listening; spending time with God

and with all kinds of people. What other career could embrace all of this? There was no other.

After graduating from Lynden Christian High School, I attended Dordt College, studying philosophy and psychology. Upon graduating in 1999, I married Layton DeVries, a young man from Pella, Iowa. A music teacher and a budding singer/songwriter, he surprised me on our wedding day with a song he had written: “You encourage my goals when I am full of doubt. You love me through my faults, that’s what love’s all about. You love me even though my hair’s all falling out! You’re the inspiration for all my dreams. We’ll walk through life hand in hand, together. Oh my Heidi, Heidi, Hi, I love you forever.” We had the beginnings of a great story.

A year after we got married, we moved to Grand Rapids so that I could begin my studies at Calvin Theological Seminary. Our walk through life together was cut short on a cold December morning. Black ice, a curve in the road, and a pickup truck ended Layton’s story in this life.

The students, faculty, and staff of Calvin Seminary became like family to me. They listened to my story in classes and hallways, over coffee and meals, through assignments and sermons. They gently stewarded my story of loss and heartily rejoiced with me when a story of new love surfaced. Fellow seminarian Tim De Jonge and I were married in the Cal-

vin College chapel in August of 2002, a wedding witnessed by dozens of pastors and pastors-to-be.

Accepting the Call

My first ordained ministry position was at Calvin Seminary, where I served as the pastor for discernment and as a pastor to the female students. Professor emeritus Ron Nydam gave me some welcome counsel as I prepared to minister in the school that had trained and shaped me. He told me that I would need to learn to be empathetic to the stories of the women at the seminary who didn’t have such a positive experience there. My conviction that Calvin Seminary was safe and loving was just that, my conviction, based on my experiences. In order for me to pastor there, I needed to make room for other experiences and convictions.

From this I learned that a single positive story can hinder us and our relationships to others as much as a single negative story. If I were to have expected that other women would or should experience the seminary (or the denomination) as a safe context within which to learn and serve, I would not have left room for their stories. Ron’s words taught me to leave room and make room for the stories of others.

On December 11, 2006, Tim and I learned that our 3-month-old daughter, Samara, had neuroblastoma, a solid tumor childhood cancer. We found ourselves checking into the Helen DeVos »

Children's Hospital on the sixth anniversary of Layton's death on that same hospital campus. Samara's fight with cancer was short and triumphant. She was declared cancer-free when she was 7 months old and has been so ever since.

The seminary community stewarded Samara's cancer story as well and rejoiced with me when Tim and I became pregnant again.

I interviewed for my first position in a parish on Mother's Day of 2008, eight months pregnant with my second daughter. The Celebration congregation of Harderwyk CRC—and Tim and I—were all a little bit nervous and curious. What were we on the verge of? The Christian Reformed Church had been ordaining women for over 10 years at that point, but Classis Holland had never had a full-time female preaching pastor. We were all doing something new and difficult. They extended the call, and I accepted it.

Finding Room

I have often wondered if my stories of being a young widow and parenting a child through cancer were significant factors in the story of my receiving and accepting calls into parish ministry. The simple fact that I had been through these difficult things may have given me a certain kind of credibility in the eyes of those who wondered if a young mom could ever pastor a congregation. It is also possible that going through these difficult things gave me the confidence I needed to pursue parish ministry. I knew that I could do hard things in the strength of the Lord.

I have now become a mom to three daughters and have pastored two congregations: Harderwyk CRC in Holland, Mich., (2008-2012) and Westside Fellowship CRC in Kingston, Ont., (2012-present). Though Layton's death and Samara's cancer have certainly given me connecting points to others who are walking through valleys and shadows, I am finding more room in myself—and, more important, more room in the heart

of God—to steward the many stories of others. Stories of heartbreak, loss, and fear; stories of anger, resentment, and depression; stories of injustice, oppression, and marginalization; as well as stories of joy, fulfillment, and gratitude.

The important thing is to take the time to listen to the stories so that we do not reduce the other person to the single story we carry around about “people like them.”

If you are like me, you know lots of stories of women serving well in ordained ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. But not so many real and multifaceted stories of people who maintain that women's ordination is not supported by Scripture. If you are not like me in this respect, the story scales might tip the other direction.

I have been learning to ask myself a series of questions. What single stories am I telling myself or others about which groups of people? How many real stories do I know about people who are, for example, immigrants, refugees, or aboriginal; gay, straight, or transgender; poor or rich; conservative or liberal; progressive or traditionalist; old, young, or teens? How could I hear or learn more stories? Am I willing to hear those stories?

Chimamanda Adichie says that “the single story creates stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete.” We must take the time to complete the picture, or at least to gain a more complete picture. We must take time to listen. We must *make* time to listen. A strong reason that I (sinfully) prefer a stereotyping single story over a multifaceted single story is that I over-value efficiency, and I am selfish with my time. It takes time to listen well to the many stories of another person, or to listen deeply to the many stories of a country, a city, or a neighborhood.

But it is always time well spent. Because in the listening and learning, we recognize the ways that we are like

the other person, we recognize the God-given dignity of the other person, and we get to know God better.

My congregation took on a guiding vision this past January: “As we abide in our authentic relationship with God, we will make Westside Fellowship CRC a safe and authentic community, speaking our truths [or stories!] in love and listening with love to the truths [or the stories] of others, including those of our surrounding community.” This is also my hope for us as a denomination. Perhaps one day our synod gathering will include even more storytelling time: stories of the positive and amazing work that our denomination is doing all around the world, certainly, but also the stories of those who have not found our denomination a gracious place to minister or to live.

A single story can be powerful. A single story can be dangerous. A single story can open the doorway to the many stories that make up a person or a community. At the end of the day, a single story does unite us. Herman Bavinck summarizes this Story so well: “God the Father has reconciled His created but fallen world through the death of His Son, and renews it into a Kingdom of God by His Spirit.”

This is the Story that brings the most laughter and light to all of our grey. This is the Story that takes our breath away and promises new breath, even after we have taken our last breath in this life. This is the Story that gives us strength to run the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of all our stories. ■



Heidi S. De Jonge is the pastor of Westside Fellowship CRC in Kingston, Ont., She enjoys cycling, cake decorating, and digital scrapbooking. She and her husband have three young daughters.

Six Degrees of Mortification

BELIEFS about original sin aside, many of us typical Christian believers probably have an image of ourselves as relatively good and decent people. So what happens when someone close to us—someone we know, trust, and perhaps identify with—suffers a humiliating public fall from grace?

I've been thinking about this phenomenon that has happened quite a few times in recent years, of finding myself just one degree of separation away from a person who has suddenly become notorious, perhaps even infamous, in some way. Whether the person is a friend, a family member, a former colleague, or simply an acquaintance, the effect of watching someone I know come under the glare of the public spotlight is downright chilling. Not many of us could withstand having our lives publicly dissected, virtually every decision and motivation questioned, discussed, and evaluated, mostly by strangers.

This is true not just because of the questions that arise in my own mind about how I could have failed to see these events coming, or how I could have missed the clues that something wasn't right in that person's life. I'm a Calvinist, after all, and I believe the doctrine of total depravity. Moreover, I get it. I get how deep, how hidden the past and present pains, failures, and problematic realities of people's lives can be.

However, for me the real chill factor in such situations comes when I realize how easily that could have been me up there in the pillory of public opinion, being asked to explain (and answer for) my worst life choices, my stupid mistakes, my most humiliating moments of characteristic or uncharacteristic infamy.

I—along with most other adults, no doubt—have truths about myself that I find difficult to face, even in private. To



Mortification is something we're called to do to ourselves. Regularly.

have them dragged out before a national audience would be painful, mortifying. But then, mortification, as I recall, is something people of faith and conscience are supposed to do to themselves. Regularly. *Mortify* (literally, “to put to death”) is a word people don't use much in everyday life, and rarely, if ever, in its original sense. Scripturally speaking, the word means to subdue, control, or overcome the parts of ourselves that, left uncontrolled, will almost inevitably lead us to damage, shame, and self-destruction.

I suppose we're called upon to mortify our own fleshly failings—our out-of-control egos, our selfish passions, our covetousness, our concupiscence—all sorts of incontinent desires and inordinate affections, so that the world doesn't have to do it for us. Even King David realized this truth when he declared, “I am in deep distress. Let me fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is very great; but do not let me fall into human hands” (1 Chron. 21:13b).

I am thinking of people I have called friends and coworkers, brothers or sisters in my church, community, or ministry who are now or have been recently in the news. Some of them are merely under heavy scrutiny, being subjected to difficult questions and rampant, mostly uncharitable speculation. Others have been openly discredited and disgraced in public and in publication. A few are even convicted felons now, their families, reputations, and future prospects destroyed.

You probably know people like that too. So what if, rather than engaging in self-congratulatory condemnation whenever we hear of someone we know who has fallen under the light of public scrutiny, we pause to pray for them. And then take a hard look at our own need for personal mortification. ■



Jennifer Parker is a writer, editor, and teacher from Mississippi.

The Church Goes to College

by Matt Kucinski



Historians, nurses, and psychologists see the world from certain points of view. So do musicians, geographers, sociologists, philosophers, artists, and political scientists.

John Witvliet, director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (CICW), said that often these different perspectives enable flourishing.

During his plenary talk at the “Taking Your Church to College: Strengthening Congregational Life through Liberal Arts-Style Learning” event at Calvin in June 2016—part of the Worship Institute’s annual Vital Worship Grants Program colloquium—Witvliet used a recent family trip to Rocky Mountain National Park to illustrate his point.

A series of small signposts helped visitors navigate through stunning vistas,

each sign offering just a few sentences of insight provided by geologists, plant biologists, meteorologists, and even poets.

“Even these short teaching notes were enough to prompt awareness, to cause us to pay attention in new ways, to open our minds and hearts to new dimensions of the wonder of the place,” Witvliet said.

And, he added, the messages were amplified, expanded, and brought to life by the teaching-oriented park rangers who also served as guides along the way.

“They are people who really care about the parks, whose enthusiasm and insight were mutually reinforcing and palpable; contagious,” said Witvliet. “These people not only taught information, they professed it.”

So too, Witvliet said, the arts and humanities, the sciences and social sci-

ences—the liberal arts—can help churches to flourish. “This liberal arts learning experience creates a space for divergent thinking, for creativity, for imagination.”

It also creates a space for sheer wonder.

“One of the beauties of Rocky Mountain National Park is the language of testimony that echoes around every viewpoint: ‘Isn’t it amazing?’ ‘Oh wow!’ ‘I can’t take it all in,’” Witvliet said. “It is a place filled with doxological speech. Little testimonies.”

In the same way, he suggested, professors at Calvin College are the guides helping people pay deep attention to different dimensions of wondrous things, “allowing us to return to God thanks and praise for all the ways God is at work—at times in spite of us.”

Event attendees were encouraged to sample the liberal arts. Here is a signpost's worth of information from each of the 60-minute sessions. (Note: CICW will be launching a podcast series in Fall 2016 that aims to provide further education on these and many more topics.)

Promoting the Health of Urban-Dwelling Adults and Children



Adejoke Ayoola

Nursing professor Adejoke Ayoola shared her view of what the church in community should look like: an approach to seeing and loving your community that is rooted in listening and questioning.

Based on her experience with a community-based research project she is conducting with nursing students, Ayoola has developed a passion for encouraging worshipping communities to take the initiative in assessing the needs of their community by asking questions like these: "What are the issues your neighbors and worshipping members voice? What questions can you ask and how can you pose them so that they lead to building communities of trust, empowerment, and agency?"

She said the church in community needs first to cultivate listening ears to hear and perceive the needs of its community.

Mapping and Visualizing Your Congregation and Its Community



Mark Bjelland

As a scholar and professor of geography, Mark Bjelland's fascination with physical location isn't surprising—but in the context of church, that fascination raises challenging ques-

tions that may help to shape the future of ministry.

"Is it possible that congregations across North America can better understand who they are by examining where they are?" he asked. For Bjelland, this question of place is a consistent thread found throughout Scripture.

"We read in *The Message* translation that 'The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood'—and it's true. Jesus gave a geographical framework to his own ministry, then passed that framework on to the disciples. He called them to Jerusalem, Judea, to Samaria and to the ends of the earth. I believe that literal understanding of location can help us guide our ministry today and help us fulfill Christ's mission in our own places."

Faithful Citizenship in a Pluralistic World



Kevin den Dulk

For Kevin den Dulk, director of the Henry Institute at Calvin College, churches are an important part of civic society, a key place where citizens learn such virtues as tolerance, patience, humility, and trust.

"The two things you're not supposed to talk about in polite company are religion and politics," said den Dulk. "Today we're going to talk about both." And both, he said, contribute to a sense of identity, which is why conversations around the topics can sometimes be seen as threatening and thus are to be avoided. But to do so, he believes, is a mistake.

The church, he said, can and should be a place where people learn to trust and to tolerate. Indeed, he contended that in an age of diminishing civic engagements, the church remains one of the last places where people can learn

the virtues and dispositions necessary to be good citizens.

Shiny, Happy People: The Vice of Vainglory, the Church, and You



Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung

Philosophy professor Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung unpacked "vainglory," a vice that is embarrassingly familiar but unfamiliarly named. It means finding glory in empty things, and she said its root is in pride, the source of

all vice and a strong propellant to sin.

Christians can ward off this vice through practices of detachment from disordered glory-seeking, she said. Looking back to the early church fathers and mothers, "we see solitude and silence as important disciplines to cultivate and engage in."

DeYoung says these disciplines lead to forming communities of attachment rather than detachment. "In solitude and silence, we practice being who we are in Christ when no one is watching. God develops in us capacities for creating a culture of good glory: by becoming a good audience who receives with deep gratitude the gifts God has given to us."

How Musical Style Affects Meaning



David Fuentes

Calvin professor of music David Fuentes believes music "tells about that which we long for and what we care about." And he takes great pleasure in Psalm 104:26: "There the ships move along, and Leviathan, which

you have formed to sport in it." »

It doesn't say anything about music, he admits, but as a musician and a music professor he believes that we can praise and magnify God with our song even as the Leviathan was formed to play in the oceans.

Fuentes helped participants better understand how musical style affects meaning and the implications of that for worship. He did so by playing and getting reactions to 10 different versions of the song "Over the Rainbow." By the end of his session, he had helped those in attendance better understand how, whatever the literal meaning of a song's words, the music carries one further into a world of feelings and intuition.

Faith Formation from Birth to Age 20



Marjorie Gunnoe

Psychology professor Marjorie Gunnoe said it is important for the church to understand brain development as it relates to faith formation.

Gunnoe said teachers of 2- to 6-year-olds need to focus on one or two simple themes, such as: "We are like sheep. Jesus loves sheep. That's all for today."

Because 7- to 11-year-olds place so much emphasis on fairness and reciprocity in their peer relationships, teachers need to work to temper this age group's natural tendency toward a works-righteousness theology: "Unlike people, God doesn't give us what we deserve."

She also noted that adolescents need formal instruction in doctrine, with tests. They need to be able to articulate what they believe in their own words, which makes practices like profession of faith vitally important.

Your Brain on Arts

While we may understand the differences between the left brain and the right brain, it's the integration of the whole brain that



Jo-Ann Van Reeuyk

leads to knowledge. For instance, experiencing a work of art is much more powerful if we know the history behind it. Calvin art professor Jo-Ann Van Reeuyk challenged attendees to think in such terms.

"Brain science informs us that the arts are needed for complete learning and comprehension," said Van Reeuyk. "Well before the science, worshipers have recognized the power of the arts.

"We now know why deep understanding and conviction are developed when multi-sensory aspects are incorporated in worship services. We can build on this knowledge for deeply impactful praise and offering."

The Dramatic Story of the National Baptist Hymn



Eric Washington

Eric Washington, professor of history, showed how case studies can help people gain perspective and rethink ministry. Through a brief history of Southern Baptist and African American Baptist traditions

in the U.S., Washington explored the history of the National Baptist Convention through the work of Richard Henry Boyd.

Boyd, a former slave, advocated for and created church materials that served African American congregants. He published the National Baptist Hymn Book, a collection of hymns popular in African American Baptist churches. The hymn book was Boyd's attempt to regularize African American Baptist worship and to promote

literacy in country churches. Today, the hymn book is considered a primary source of National Baptist theology.

When a Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words



Roman Williams

How do you examine the effectiveness of your church's programs? Sociology professor Roman Williams believes the best place to start is with a cell phone—or, more specifically, a cell phone camera.

Williams leads congregational study groups focused on visual feedback. Through crowd-sourced cell phone photography, he facilitates discussions that can help churches more honestly and accurately evaluate their ministry work.

"This kind of visual evaluation offers permission to start conversations we don't often like to start. It allows people to have a voice where they may not otherwise speak—and we need to hear those voices within our congregations," said Williams. "The visual narrative creates a new avenue for expression and helps uncover truths we might miss." ■



Matt Kucinski is the assistant director of media relations for Calvin College. Phil de Haan, Gwyneth Findlay, Michael Geertsma, Lynn Rosendale, and Kristen Verhulst also contributed to this story.



A Vision for Healing

Olga Rubel said she was deeply disturbed when she heard news of Russian invasions into her home country, Ukraine, in 2014.

“I was so shocked that I couldn’t even do any of my work,” she said. “But God told me that he is good.”

Rubel, who serves as a program coordinator with the Mennonite Church in Ukraine, said the message that God is good came in the form of volunteers and others who contacted her with a desire to help the internally displaced people (IDP) living in Ukraine as a result of the conflict.

She and other members of the church began relief efforts by coordinating food and water distribution. Since then, their work has progressed into a longer-term program as they focus on meeting with families, addressing the trauma people have faced, and dealing with the legal issues of starting new businesses.

In all of this, Rubel said, she recognized a great need for healing in Ukraine.

“I’ve met many internally displaced people who feel nothing but anger. There’s a lot of bitterness there, and I was looking for a specific way to reconcile people.”

At the same time Rubel was working on the front lines of the IDP camps, George de Vuyst, who serves in Ukraine with Christian Reformed World Missions, was also searching for a way to bring reconciliation. His search led him to a workshop called “Healing the Wounds of



People wrote the wounds suffered by their ethnic groups on pieces of paper and nailed them to a cross. They shared some of these wounds with one another before burning the paper.

Ethnic Conflict,” a curriculum developed for victims of another horrible conflict: the Rwandan genocide.

De Vuyst decided to adapt what he learned from this workshop to the situation in Ukraine.

“Even before this recent conflict with Russia, Ukraine has been a deeply wounded nation,” said de Vuyst, who has been serving in the eastern European nation for 18 years. “Its people have been denied their own language and even their ethnic identity. So much so that most people outside of Ukraine think of it as Russia.”

De Vuyst assisted in introducing the “Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict” workshop in March to several ministry

The final event of the workshop was the Feast at the King’s Table, where people from different ethnic groups took turns serving food to one another.

leaders in Ukraine, including Rubel. In May he led the workshop with 20 people from Ukraine, Russia, and Hungary. This diversity was essential for many of the workshop’s exercises.

At these events, participants shared their own people’s perspectives on the conflict with Russia, delved deeper into the effects of trauma, and explored God’s intent for the wide variety of people he created.

Through these exercises, Rubel witnessed many of her negative ideas toward others disappear. “Instead of seeing different people, I began to see God,” she said.

Now she is applying some of what she learned to her work with other Ukrainians who have experienced trauma.

De Vuyst plans to continue leading workshops like these to help people recognize their greater identity in Christ.

“Pray with us for continued healing and reconciliation, and for the continued growth of God’s holy nation, of which we are all citizens,” he said. ■



Brian Clark is a writer for Christian Reformed World Missions.

Blessings from Generation to Generation

Nearly 100 years ago my grandmother Marguerite left the family farm in Allendale, Mich., after graduating from high school.

She moved to Grand Rapids, found child-care jobs, and enrolled in the teacher preparation program at Calvin College, completing it in 1922. After additional study at Western Michigan Normal School, now Western Michigan University, she taught at Creston Christian and Baxter Christian schools.

As I reflect on the journey this young woman made so many years ago, I'm astonished at the courage and drive she demonstrated in order to study at a Reformed, Christian institution and serve the Lord as a teacher.

Her story isn't unusual. Similar stories played out year after year in communities across the continent as young men and women pursued Christ-centered education, often at great cost and effort.

Some suggest that Christian education is a bubble isolating youth from the world. Certainly this wasn't the case for Marguerite. She left the comfort of home and family to care for the children of a wealthy attorney, traveling with them during the summer, and all the while learning new things, developing her pedagogical skills, and growing in her faith. That trip from farm to campus expanded her world.

What about generations to come? The options are numerous. There are many K-12 schools founded on Reformed principles. Colleges and universities such as Calvin, Dordt, the Institute for Christian Studies, King's, Redeemer, and Trinity provide splendid opportunities for higher education.

But there are threats to Christ-centered education, especially at the university level. Some are external. Gordon College in Massachusetts has been hounded by its accrediting agency over

its commitment to Christ-centered education. And according to recent reports, a bill before the California state senate would restrict the exemption that has allowed faith-based institutions in that state to operate according to their religious mission and identity.

Other challenges are situational. For some students the cost of tuition is a major obstacle. Others are attracted by the vast

array of specialized programs offered at state or provincial universities. Distance can be a barrier, as can the lack of diversity at a smaller college.

So what about the generations to come? Will the people in the pews, in the church council rooms, at the classis meetings, and on the floor of synod be well-grounded in Reformed theology and thought? Or will we drift into the generic, often individualistic views that we see in much of the North American evangelical world?

Earlier this year my wife, Barb, and I showed up at a Christian education fundraising event at Creston CRC—not because we're members of that

church but because one of their immigrant families was cooking up a feast. That Ethiopian family, like other families there, understands the importance of Christian education for the next generation—to produce young men and women who balance first-rate, specialized knowledge and skills with broad appreciation for every square inch of God's world. Men and women whose faith has deepened so they are not afraid of questions; who recognize that God doesn't always provide easy answers; who understand the toxicity of our society and God's call for us to be his redemptive agencies; who exercise the gifts of the Spirit in the body of Christ, providing a light to those who do not yet know him.

Christian education does all of these things, and more!

What can we do? First, we need to encourage each other, as families and congregations, to support schools where knowledge is advanced, faith is nourished, and Christ is central. The blessings will be seen from generation to generation. I'm a recipient of those blessings, and I'm forever grateful for the journey my grandmother, Marguerite Wolma Reminga, dared to take. ■



Some of the faculty and students at Calvin College in 1922. Marguerite Wolma is in the second row from the bottom, fifth from the right.

“I'm forever grateful for the journey my grandmother dared to take.”



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

You add.
God multiplies.

Students, Athletes, Christians

When new coaches at Ferris State University (FSU) first meet their athletic teams, many are told about Pastor Mike Wissink before he even has a chance to introduce himself.

Wissink has been supporting FSU student athletes since 2001. Because students appreciate his presence, they make a point of telling their new coaches about him right away.

As the chaplain for FSU's Athletic Department, Wissink said, he works with students from all of FSU's athletic teams, offering them guidance with God's direction.

"I am not here to cram theology down players' throats or to convert them," he said. "My job is to come alongside and be supportive of the players and the program through the work of God."



Pastor Mike Wissink with Ferris State University player Jake Heneveld before a football game.

Wissink does this by offering prayers or devotions before games as well as leading the Fellowship for Christian Athletes and Fellowship for Christian Students ministries with weekly worship times that

focus on what it means to live and compete as a Christian.

Many FSU students faithfully attend these meetings. Teams from all of the 17 varsity sports FSU offers are represented in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. One of the best parts of this ministry, said Wissink, is the camaraderie that forms between the different teams.

For example, he said, football players are attending soccer games and vice versa because they have gotten to know each other through the fellowship and want to support one another.

This campus ministry is one of many CRC campus ministries across North America that are funded and supported in part by Christian Reformed Home Missions. ■

—by Annemarie Byl,
Christian Reformed Home Missions



Yessy displays the certificate she earned from a BTGMI Bible correspondence course.

Yessy's Relationship with God

Yessy, who lives in Brisbane, Australia, proudly holds her certificate for completing the Bible study correspondence course produced by the Indonesian outreach of Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI).

Yessy first learned about the correspondence course through the *Wasiat* (Testament) daily devotionals while living in Jakarta, Indonesia.

"One day, when my family and I were reading *Wasiat*, inside was a Bible correspondence enrollment form," she said. "It attracted our attention. We are very eager to learn the Bible and Christian values."

The lessons drew Yessy into Scripture, and she finished all four levels after moving to Australia.

"In the Bible correspondence study, we were taught about the right relationship with God, with our neighbor, and with nature around us. The questions were very useful for our growth," she added.

BTGMI's Indonesian staff sent Yessy a certificate of completion, plus copies of devotional booklets for various ages. In addition to *Wasiat* (similar to the *Today* daily devotionals), BTGMI produces devotional booklets for children, teens, young adults, and senior citizens.

Every other month, more than 67,000 individuals or families receive these devotional booklets to guide them in their daily walk with God.

Many people living in other countries or Indonesia's remote regions want to dig deeper into God's Word, but don't have access to a small group study. The Bible study correspondence program was created especially to help them grow in faith. ■

—by Nancy Vander Meer,
Back to God Ministries International

Inclusive Education in Cambodia Welcomes All Children

When he was still an infant, Vat Venn's parents could tell that something was different about him.

The young boy, who lived in Prey Ampil, a village in Cambodia, was slow to reach many of the milestones that other children achieved.

By the time he was a toddler, his parents knew he had an intellectual disability. His speech was delayed, and he didn't sing, count, or talk to others the way his peers did.

In 2009, World Renew began an initiative with one of its partners to encourage communities to consider inclusive education and to reach out to children such as Vat Venn and their families.

This included inviting parents and teachers to attend a workshop where they were given ideas about how to work with children in the classroom to overcome disabilities.

Parents were also taught that inclusive classrooms are important for lessening



Vat Venn works at the blackboard.

discrimination and improving understanding of disabilities within the community at large.

"Before World Renew began to work with Cambodian communities to promote inclusive education, most children with disabilities were not sent to school," said World Renew staff member Kathleen Lauder.

Instead, people with disabilities were often viewed by their families and their communities as being inferior and even an embarrassment.

"By the end of 2015, 16 of the 19 children with disabilities in World Renew's target communities were attending school," Lauder stated.

Vat Venn, now 10, was one of them. After attending training on inclusive education, Venn's parents sent him to the community kindergarten. With the skills from the inclusive education training, the teacher was able to teach and encourage him until he eventually learned to sing children's songs, count, and answer questions.

Vat Venn's parents are no longer ashamed or afraid to send him to school, and Venn is excited to continue learning with other children. Venn's teacher has even had the confidence to make him a class leader. ■

—by Kristen deRoo VanderBerg,
World Renew

2016 Chaplains' Conference Kicks Off 75th Anniversary

In June, more than 110 individuals, 86 of them current CRC chaplains, met at Calvin College's Prince Center in Grand Rapids, Mich., to network, learn, and begin celebrating the 75th anniversary of chaplaincy as an official ministry of the CRC.

Most of the former directors of the Chaplaincy and Care office attended and were honored at this year's conference, which focused on the theme "Spirituality and Psychology—Duality or Dichotomy?"



More than 110 people attended this year's Chaplaincy & Care Ministry conference.

The CRC's Chaplaincy and Care Ministry, which formally began during World War II, actually goes back more than 100 years to 1913, when infor-

mal chaplaincy began at Bethesda Sanatorium in Denver, Colo., and at Pine Rest Christian Hospital in Grand Rapids.

As the total number of endorsed chaplains continues to increase—it now stands at 144—their influence is growing in a range of settings including the military, health care, senior care, corrections, and the workplace.

In the coming months, CRC churches will be invited to recognize and celebrate this ministry, with a final recognition planned during Synod 2017. ■

—by Ron Klimp,
director of the Chaplaincy & Care Ministry

You add.
God multiplies.

Scholarships Pass on a Legacy of Learning



Jen Settergren manages a roster of over 200 named scholarships and awards.

When Calvin Seminary students receive their scholarship awards in September, they will be getting more than dollars toward their tuition.

Many of them will also be getting a story—and a relationship—as the seminary begins its 141st academic year.

That's because families have created various legacy scholarships in memory of a previous generation of ministers, chaplains, missionaries, and church leaders.

Calvin Seminary offers more than 200 scholarships and awards every year. This year, it will award \$1.3 million to its students.

"The legacy of the church that is represented in our scholarships is

astounding," said Jen Settergren, director of financial aid. "So many servants of the church who have already invested their time and talents for the sake of the gospel are now sharing their treasure with the next generation of gospel leaders."

Matching a student with a fitting scholarship takes time, Settergren said, "but seeing the relationships that are built during the course of a student's program is very rewarding. It is a blessing to watch donors come alongside students and support them, not only with scholarship gifts, but with prayer and other encouragements as well."

These legacy scholarships also inspire the next generation of stewardship.

For example, when the great-grandson of mis-

sionaries to China needed help funding his education, his grandparents gave him financial support that he hasn't forgotten.

Now a successful professional, he makes a donation every month to the family scholarship his grandparents established to support Chinese students called to ministry in their home country.

—by Jinny DeJong,
Calvin Theological
Seminary

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

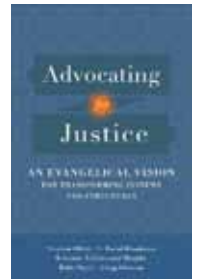
SHORT TAKES

The Fight Against 'Blood Diamonds'

Christian Reformed World Missions missionaries played a key role in helping end the civil war in Sierra Leone in 2002, according to the new book *Advocating for Justice: An Evangelical Vision for Transforming Systems and Structures*.

The book recounts how rebel fighters forced missionaries Paul and Mary Kortenhoven to flee their mission field of more than 20 years in Sierra Leone. Later, the Kortenhovens joined with others in the CRC and with U.S. officials to stem the illegal diamond trade fueling the fighting. ■

—Chris Meehan,
CRC Communications



Coffee Break for Seniors

Coffee Break, the small group Bible study program for evangelism and discipleship, has released its Bible Discovery materials in printable versions with different text sizes.

Coffee Break groups with elderly members have been grateful for the extra-large print choice since it is now much easier for them to read.

There have been many instances recently of Coffee Break groups starting in retirement homes and using the extra-large-print Bible study materials.

—by Annemarie Byl,
Christian Reformed Home Missions

Weather Watch

It's September! Summer is almost gone. Autumn is on its way, and winter isn't far behind. Change is in the air. The weather is cooling. Days are becoming shorter. Plants and animals are preparing for colder weather. Birds will soon fly south.

Plants and animals that stay will prepare for cold weather.

Now is the perfect time to go outside and watch creation prepare for winter. You can easily see this happen if you know what to look for. Read these pages first. Then go out-

side on a "weather watch." Look closely at the trees, the animals, the skies, and the birds. Do the same thing tomorrow. Then do it next week. You'll see them all prepare for cold weather.

Watch the Animals

Several animals put on winter coats. They shed thin summer fur and grow sleek new thicker coats. This happens to deer, wolves, and coyotes. Dogs are related to wolves and coyotes. If you have a dog, brush it often this month. That helps it shed the old fur. Then you can closely watch its winter coat grow in.

Some animals store extra food to get them through the winter. Tree squirrels and chipmunks do this. Sit quietly outside and listen to them scurry through trees and chatter at each other. They scurry to collect food, nuts, and pinecones. They chatter at each other to claim territories with lots of food.

Some squirrels pull pinecones apart to keep only the seeds. Look for messy piles of pinecone pieces beneath trees. That's a clue that a squirrel has been stashing away the seeds found in the cones.

Some chipmunks store the whole cones in the ground. They'll dig a narrow, deep, roundish hole. Then they'll pack the cones tightly into the hole just like you see pickles packed into a jar. That keeps the cones together with the "good stuff" inside. It's very difficult to find those "pickle jars." But if you watch carefully, you may see a chipmunk bury its cones.

It makes sense to store food and put on winter clothes for cold weather. But animals can't think that far ahead. They just do what comes naturally to them. They act on instinct. Who do you suppose gave them that instinct? God cares for all creatures.

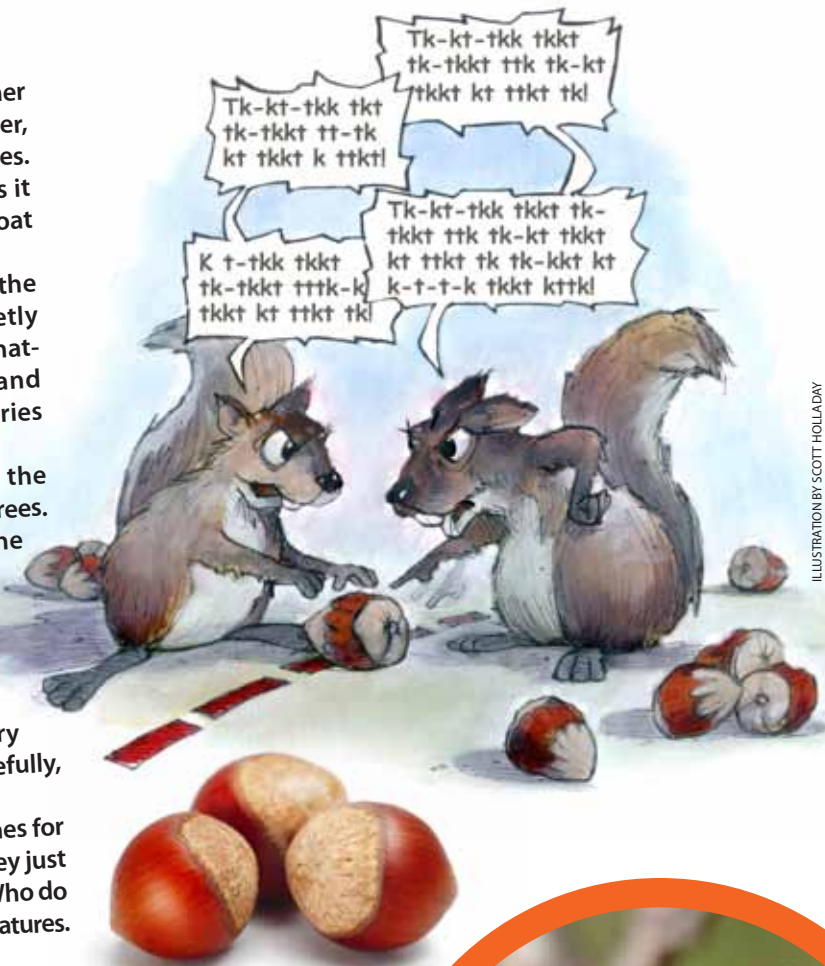


ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY



God's Promise to You

You can be absolutely sure that winter will follow fall this year. Long ago, God promised that it would. You can find that promise in Genesis 8:22.

Read God's promise to you several times, then try to write it in the blank space below.



Watch the Skies

The days are becoming shorter and nights are longer. You've probably noticed that if you play outside after supper, there's not much time before sunset. And maybe now it's still dark when you get up in the morning.

You can check your sunrise and sunset exactly by going to sunrise-sunset.org. Type in the name of your city or a city near you. You can find out exactly when the sun will set, when the moon will rise, how long today is, and how much shorter tomorrow will be.

You can also watch the sky during the day for migrating birds. Read on for more about birds.

Watch the Trees

If you watch trees carefully, you'll see at least three kinds of changes.

First, leaves will change color. Watch for big flat green leaves to turn red, yellow, orange, or brown. You can also see some pine and spruce needles turn a lighter green, and then brown. Scientists tell us that these colors are in the leaves all summer. We just can't see them because the green is too strong.

Second, the leaves will drop. When they are changing color, they're also changing their "plumbing." During the summer, water is piped into the leaves from the branches. Right now trees are plugging those water pipes. Nothing will drip from or freeze in the tiny twigs left on each tree.

Third, next year's leaf buds will appear on the twigs. Look closely at the ends of the tree twigs. You should see small, well wrapped, freeze-proof buds. Next spring when the tree's water pipes are working again, the buds will swell and then open into new leaves.

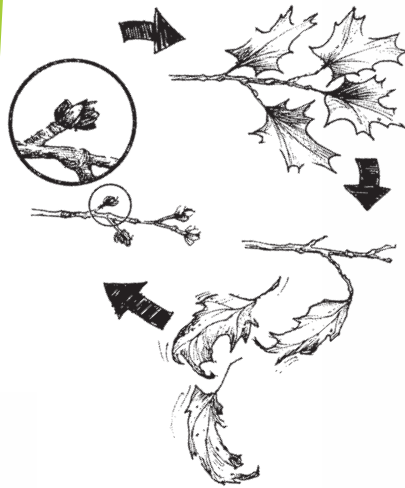


Watch the Birds

Look up to see swarms of sparrows. Now is the time they begin to flock. All summer they've been busy with their own families. Now they're visiting their neighbors and becoming acquainted with each other. You may see them sitting close to each other on high wires or bare branches. They often migrate in swarms to avoid predators. It's true that there is safety in numbers.

Have you had hummingbirds in your yard this past summer? They certainly are getting ready to leave. Hummingbirds burn a lot of energy when they migrate. So right now they're storing food for the journey. They're eating lots of small bugs and drinking nectar or sugar water. If you see a hummingbird outside, watch closely. You may see it every day, then suddenly it will disappear. It's gone for the winter.

How about robins? In the spring we often look for the first robin to appear. Now that it's autumn, keep track of your robins. Look for the first one to disappear. They're about ready to go to warmer regions.



Joanne De Jonge is a freelance writer and a former U.S. National Park ranger. She attends West Valley Christian Fellowship in Phoenix, Ariz.



BY LEN VANDER ZEE

THE DRAMA OF DOCTRINE

WHY WE NEED TO REVIVE CATECHISM FOR OUR TEENS

I'VE HEARD IT OVER AND OVER from pastors and elders in the Christian Reformed Church. As a decreasing number of young people come forward for public profession of faith, too many display a general ignorance of the basic doctrines of the Christian, much less the Reformed, faith. They say they love Jesus but can't really explain what their faith means.

In his book *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, Christian Smith describes the religious beliefs of the majority of teens in the church as "moral therapeutic Deism." It goes like this:

1. A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about yourself.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in a person's life except when needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

It's plain to see that this version of Christianity has little to do with the Bible or with the Christian faith. But I have little doubt that it actually describes the lived faith of a large number of Christian Reformed teens. It seems that the church has failed to teach an adequate understanding of the Christian faith to many of its youth.

It was not always so. Many of us remember having to go to those midweek catechism classes, often taught by the minister. In third grade we learned our little summary catechism called the Compendium. Growing older, we memorized at least some Q&As of the Heidelberg Catechism. We had some basic theological foundation that could inoculate us to the banal religion of moral therapeutic Deism.

Most of us would not want to return to those sometimes dull classes and their rote memorization. What we have done instead is far worse. Over the last 20 years or so, a large number of congregations have abandoned catechism classes altogether and parents have given the theological education of their teens a low priority.

THE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL DRAMA IS A COUNTER-STORY TO THE WORLD'S STORY.

In many congregations Sunday school (which often consists only of telling Bible stories) and youth groups (often defined by activities and mission trips) are the only kind of education on offer for children and teens. Other churches don't include children and teens in worship services where they can hear the sermon or participate in the drama of worship. By sending them out to be with their own age group, we send the message that worship is not really that important.

Teaching the theology or doctrine of the church to our teens is not optional. Theology is essential *alongside* the Bible for an understanding of the Christian faith. Doctrine is a key that unlocks the biblical treasury. To put it another way, doctrine offers us a map through the often confusing and trackless biblical terrain.

That's why our confessions and creeds and catechism are so important. It's theology that helps us understand that the God we meet in the Bible is the triune God, the original and eternal community of love who made this world and everything in it. It's theology that enables us to grasp the enormity and depth of human rebellion and the covenant of grace by which God set out to save us. It's theology that teaches us that Jesus Christ is the new human that God intended us to be, that his death and resurrection usher in a new creation, the kingdom of God, and that this world will be made new in him.

Dorothy Sayers once wrote that the gospel "is the greatest drama ever told . . . a terrifying drama of which God is the victim and the hero." Evangelical theologian Kevin VanHoozer picks up on this with his book *The Drama of Doctrine*. Theology is what the church does when it takes up the biblical script and stages it for the church and the world to see, he says. But it's more than a drama we watch for entertainment or inspiration; it's a drama in which we are also actors every day. It is the drama of life in God's world.

The Christian theological drama is a counter-story to the world's story. It changes how we perceive our place in the world and transforms how we live. The Bible is the indispensable script, the underlying true story, but it's the theological drama written over the centuries and told afresh in every generation that enables the biblical story to come alive in every age.

The 16th century Heidelberg Catechism does so with the ringing words of Q&A 1: "I belong, in body and soul, in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. . . ." The catechism goes on to provide a powerful outline—guilt, grace, gratitude—of how we are to live into that belonging. Did you ever stop to think how important it is, for example, that the law of God comes under the rubric of gratitude? Law and

gospel coalesce, obedience becomes freedom. That's the kind of important insight doctrine can give.

More recently in the CRC we have another treasure that tells the drama of Christian theology even more vividly, the contemporary testimony "Our World Belongs to God." In stirring, poetic language, it tells the biblical story as the drama of life in this world that belongs to God.

In the contemporary testimony we discover that God is not a benevolent deity out there somewhere but a divine community of love intimately and deeply involved with the world God made. Sin is not some unfortunate mistake but an act of radical rebellion against our Creator that infects every aspect of our lives. Salvation is not just that Jesus died for our sins, but that he, as our human brother, brings us into the fellowship of our *Abba* Father as adopted children through the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ, now enthroned as Lord and King, calls us to share the message of his saving love and to bring the transforming power of his kingdom into every area of life. And no matter how the powers of evil seem to flourish, we are people of hope, looking for a new heaven and a new earth purged of sin, injustice, pain, and death.

That's the Christian drama! It's exciting, it's transforming. It challenges our minds, feeds our souls, warms our hearts, and stimulates our imagination.

It is the task of the CRC to discover new ways to make that theological drama real for our teens. Our most recent synod called on Faith Formation Ministries to report on the feasibility of new curriculum materials. Hopefully, this will include catechetical materials as well. We can do this at a time when we have new tools—digital technology and the Internet—with which to accomplish this important task. We have access to a variety of media that can deliver imaginative and engaging teaching materials to our churches and our homes.

We have the world's greatest drama to excite our teens, and we have the technological tools to deliver it to every church and every home. What remains is the commitment of parents and congregations to *expect* our youth to have that drama of doctrine in their spiritual DNA, and to provide the financial and pedagogical resources to make it happen. ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE



Len Vander Zee is a retired CRC pastor now serving as interim minister of preaching at Church of the Servant CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.

True to Life

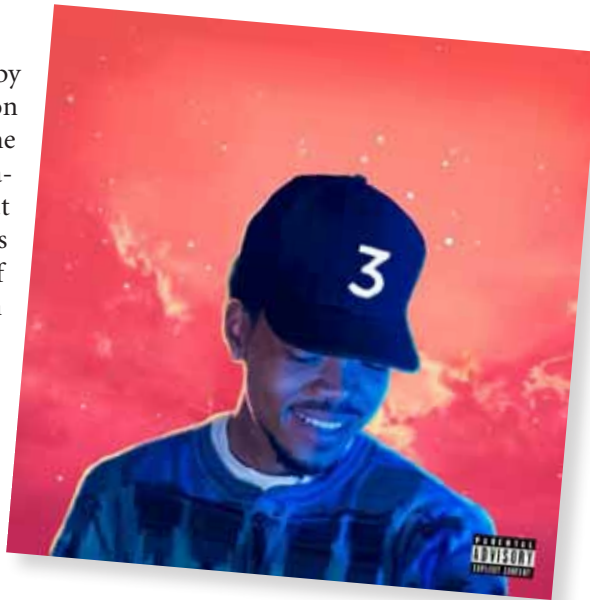
IN A RECENT VIDEO RELEASED by Fuller seminary, Eugene Peterson and Bono—the lead singer of the rock band U2—had a conversation about the psalms. In that conversation, Bono expressed his frustration at the tendency of Christian artists to shy away from expressing any sort of pain, anger, or hardship, which is something the psalmists were unafraid to do. He urged Christian artists to be honest, to come to God from the place they are rather than where they think they should be.

Bono, meet Chance the Rapper.

Chance, a 23-year-old rapper from Chicago, has built a reputation for pairing a playful adolescent voice with mature observations on growing up in Chicago as an African American. His third release, *Coloring Book*, continues the strengths of his past work while bringing an increased spiritual focus.

These 14 songs are an exercise in being grateful in blessing, honest in pain, and faithful in hardship. Chance's lyrics are sometimes jubilant and at other times confessional, but always rooted in the faith of the redemption of all things. "I speak to God in public," he says on one track. That seems like an apt summation of the album, as he is unafraid to be vulnerable in his brokenness while looking toward God for deliverance.

It is important to note that *Coloring Book*, though touching on themes that will speak to many, is an album written for the African American community in Chicago. "I've got my city doing front-flips," Chance says of his influence in his community at one point on the album. Considering the institutional racism and



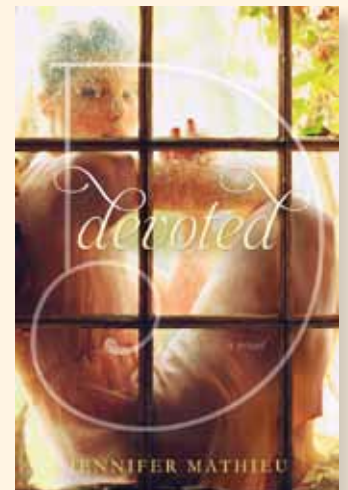
political exploitation that have plagued the city, it's a wonder anything has the power to awaken a positive spirit there. One only has to read about the police shooting of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald and the subsequent cover-up during an election year to see how important it is to have a figure like Chance the Rapper creating his art in a climate of political and institutional indifference.

Coloring Book is honest in its approach, recognizing injustice for what it is while providing a unifying call to worship and rejoice in a good God. Chance includes a gospel choir, horns, and a sample of Chris Tomlin's "How Great Is Our God," but also reflection on pain and calls for deliverance in the face of institutional racism.

Some listeners may find language that offends them, but at its core *Coloring Book* is a gospel album for an oppressed people. As a white man from West Michigan, this album was not written for me. But it provides me with a glimpse into some experiences and suffering that I will never know and showcases God's kingdom at work in the midst of seemingly insurmountable evils. ■



Jordan Petersen is a senior at Calvin College, where he studies accounting and history. He is a member of Kelloggsville CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.



Devoted

by Jennifer Mathieu
reviewed by Kristy Quist

As the oldest daughter at home, Rachel is expected to run the house and homeschool her younger siblings. Her family is a part of a patriarchal Christian church that avoids the outside world and emphasizes strict gender roles. Rachel loves her family and God. But she is starting to question the rules and the lifestyle, especially after she makes contact with Lauren, who left their church community years before. This young adult novel, respectful of the beliefs of everyone involved, raises the questions of faith and identity that are so prominent in the life of teens. Beautiful writing and fully developed characters bring these important themes to life. *Note:* Lauren's choices and language are true to her state of rebellion, but they might be a little much for younger teens. Ages 14 and up. (Roaring Brook Press)

A gospel album for an oppressed people.



Facing a Task Unfinished

by Keith and Kristyn Getty
reviewed by Robert J. Keeley

When the Gettys release an album of new material, we church musicians listen to it as a work of art, and we listen for songs that we can use in worship. *Facing a Task Unfinished* succeeds in both areas. Keith's arrangements continue to be lush and inventive, and Kristyn's voice is clear and up-front so that the theologically rich texts come through. There are a few standouts that I'm eager to use with my congregation. "My Worth Is Not in What I Own" and "The Lord Is My Salvation" are beautiful in both tune and text. The high point, though, was written by Matt Merker. "He Will Hold Me Fast," a song of comfort and encouragement, is as profound as it is simple. Fans will find much to love in this new album. (Getty Music)



Love and Friendship

reviewed by Phil Christman Jr

They say great books make mediocre movies (and vice versa). Jane Austen has always been an exception to this rule—*Sense and Sensibility*; the Colin Firth *Pride and Prejudice*—but even with this competition, *Love and Friendship* is the best Austen film I've seen. Based on an unfinished early novella, it concerns a charming sociopath, Lady Susan (superbly played by Kate Beckinsale), who tries to maneuver herself and her good-hearted daughter into ill-advised marriages. Despite herself, she leaves everyone better off. On disc now. (Amazon Studios)

Bringing the Outside In

by Mary McKenna Siddals
reviewed by Jenny deGroot



In a generation where children spend too little time outside and have too many adult-driven commitments, *Bringing the Outside In* is a reminder of the exuberance of playing outdoors and the joy of bringing the outside indoors at the end of a day. Written in lively rhyme with tender illustrations, this picture book shows children experiencing spring showers, summer warmth, autumn leaves, and winter snow. The story is a lovely celebration of the playful abandon of children. Ages 3 and up. (Random House)

Vitamin N: The Essential Guide to a Nature-Rich Life

by Richard Louv
reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

According to Richard Louv, doctors should "consider prescribing 'vitamin N'—'N' for nature—as an antidote to nature-deficit disorder . . . the price paid, particularly by children, for our societal disconnect from the natural world." Louv offers more than 500 activities to help people of all ages and abilities reconnect with nature, along with helpful resources and insightful essays with stories of how participation in and awareness of nature has changed people's lives. Particularly interesting is the section on "Vitamin N for the Soul: The Potential of Faith-Based Organizations." (Algonquin)



THE LOWDOWN



Must Sea: Book club favorite, *The Light Between Oceans*, gets the big-screen treatment on September 2. (Touchstone)

It's History: Attention all CRC history buffs, G.H. Gerrits has written a book just for you: *Immigration, Settlement, and the Origins of the Christian Reformed Church in the Maritime Provinces of Canada, c. 1950-c. 1966*. (Vinland Press)



A Marvel? The summer blockbuster, *Captain America: Civil War*, is due out on disc this month. Find our take on it at thebanner.org. (Marvel)



Live Music: Grammy-winning gospel artist Fred Hammond's latest entry is a concert album called *Worship Journal*, due in stores on the 30th. (RCA)

MORE REVIEWS ONLINE

Hospitality Over Fear

I AM CHATTING with my friend Terry in a small prison yard on the outskirts of the prison where Terry has spent his days for the last three years. The yard sits on the edge of a river valley, and Terry and I watch the valley’s criss-crossing roads and bridges. As we speak he busies himself raking spruce needles into piles. “So that the ground can breathe,” he explains.

I ask Terry how he’s doing—a couple of days after having been granted day parole and another chance at life in the community.

“Pretty good. Not bad. Just waiting, I guess, for the next step.”

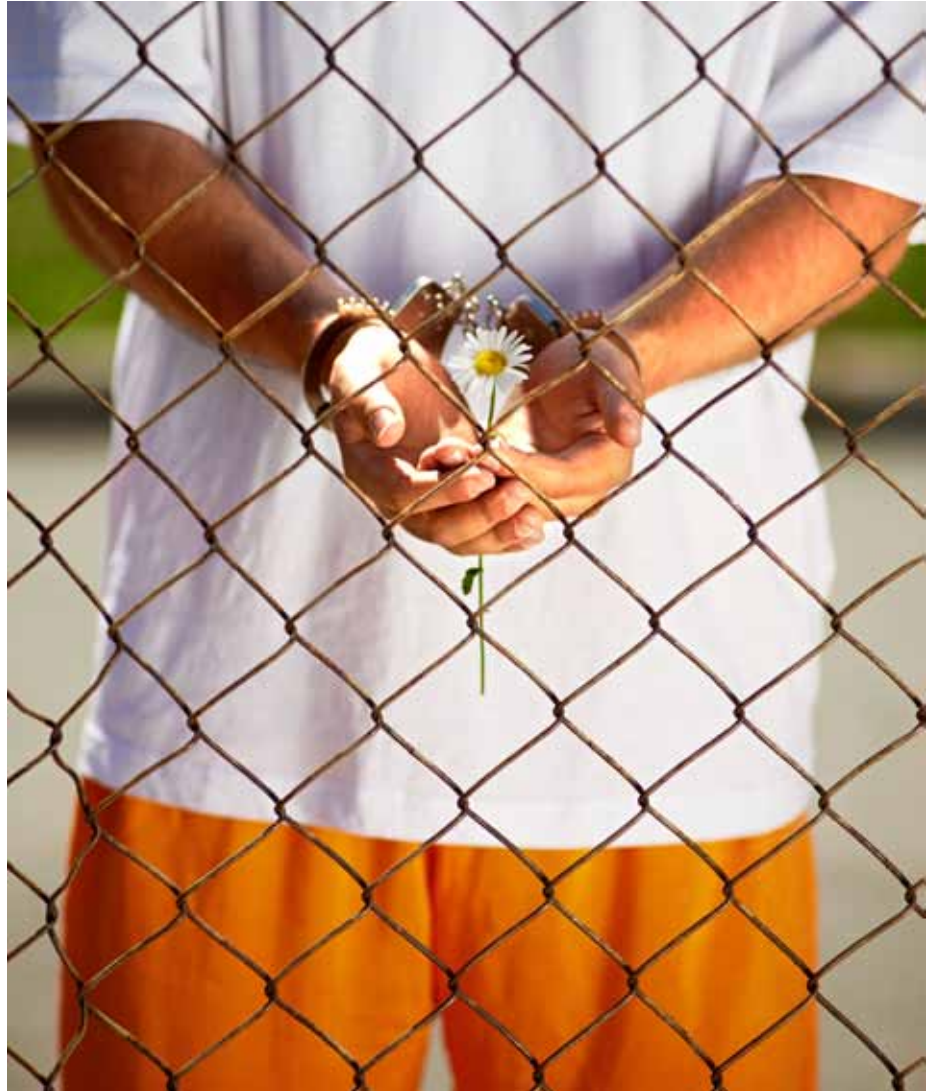
Terry’s answer masks some serious apprehension. This is his third time being released on parole. The first two attempts ended in a slow spiral of substance abuse, unhealthy relationships, and thoughts of suicide. Both times Terry breached his parole conditions and was sent back to prison. He feels like this third time is his last chance. He constantly weighs his hope for a positive future against his memories of previous missteps.

With the watchful eyes of the community and his own checkered history in the back of his mind, Terry is understandably nervous.

But I am excited.

I first met Terry three years ago on one of the many visits I make to the prison where he is incarcerated. In my role as a chaplain for men leaving prison, I meet dozens of men on the cusp of their release into the community after long prison sentences.

Terry quickly stood out among the others. His honesty and earnest demeanor were at odds with the tough-guy posture many prisoners adopt. He always asked how my family was doing, was interested in my life despite his own



struggles and frustrations. We shared a love of music, and when the prison took his guitar away because of noise complaints, Terry would spend hours in my office playing my guitar. Music is Terry’s “soul food,” and I had the privilege of listening in on his feast each week.

Terry quickly got involved in the men’s group I led at the prison. For the first several months, he would sit quietly in a corner, refusing to participate for fear of rejection or judgment. But before long

we saw glimmers of newness breaking through Terry’s shame and anxiety. He would share pieces of his story with other men in the group, or offer insights after we watched a film together. At our summer barbecue, he spent the entire evening singing 1980s praise songs with a volunteer, prompting equal parts smiles and eye-rolling by the rest of the group.

One night, after a year of attending the group, Terry shared his story—the childhood bullying, the substance abuse,

It is a mistake to
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modeled.

the failed burglary and accidental murder, the prison time and the failed releases. He concluded his story with words that I'll never forget: "I know that nothing I do will bring back that man's life, so all I can do is just ask God and everyone else for a second chance. . . . All I can do is trust and ask." After a year of accompaniment and welcome, Terry came to sense that maybe, just maybe, he is worthy of another shot.

So while Terry struggles with new anxieties and fears before he steps outside the gates, I am excited.

In many ways, after two failed paroles Terry is a candidate for the "lock 'em up and throw away the key" approach to crime and punishment. How many chances should one person get? But I've come to believe that a second chance for Terry is not just good for Terry and for society. I've come to think that our decisions about prison and release say something about our common life and our vision of God's kingdom of shalom.

As citizens, extending a second chance to Terry—or, in his case, a third or fourth chance—shows our commitment to a unique vision of the common good. Often, in an effort to make ourselves feel safer, we define someone by one of the worst decisions they've ever made. We label them a criminal and decide they need to be locked away, in some cases for life. And in doing so we strip these folks of the chance to be a great mechanic, a nurturing mother, a creative chef, a respected elder, a gifted worship leader. Our communities lose the opportunity to be blessed by these folks' gifts and skills, wisdom and character.

For followers of Jesus, the idea of extending second chances should be nothing new. Since its early days, the church has been committed to new beginnings. We know that "all have sinned" and fall

short of God's glory, and that all of us rely on God's mercy. We are all on our second chances. The Bible offers multiple examples of second chances extended to lawbreakers and hospitality offered to rule-breakers and oppressors: Paul (who, as Saul, was involved in the murder of Jesus' followers) urged Philemon to welcome fugitive law-breaker Onesimus. Jesus offered a second chance to a prostitute and invited himself over to the local tax fraudster Zacchaeus's house, to name just a few.

Steeped in these stories, we are reminded that it is a mistake to define anyone by their worst moment, because not one of us measures up to the kind of humanity Jesus modeled: loving God and loving each other. All of us need second chances and the welcome of a forgiving community.

And yet, when it comes to public discussions of crime, punishment, and second chances, we rarely share this biblical wisdom. Second-chance people that we are, we rarely speak up when voices in local media decry the release of a former prisoner into our community. Rarely do we voice concern when politicians mandate longer sentences, deny

voting rights to those with criminal records, or make the possibility of parole more difficult—all subtle ways to say "No second chances here."

Of course our concern for our personal safety is understandable, and so is our sense that folks who transgress or ignore the established boundaries of our communities should take responsibility for their actions.

But the church also holds to the vision of God's shalom in which all people—victims and oppressors, the harmed and the offender—are offered the chance to begin again, to reconcile relationships and create spaces where everyone can flourish. It is this vision that the biblical prophets held to, Jesus embodied, and the church at its best has kept alive. With this shalom vision, we can balance our concerns for personal safety with a wider concern for community well-being—a well-being that refuses to leave anyone behind.

Whether or not the church puts this vision into practice, hundreds of men and women like Terry continue to work toward their eventual release into society. For the time being, Terry and I will keep chatting in the prison yard. Terry will continue to move from fear to hope and back. As a representative of the church, I will be there with him, keeping hope alive for him until he can hope for himself. And I will keep praying that the community Terry returns to will choose hospitality over fear. ■



Jonathan Nicolai-deKoning lives with his wife and two young kids in the Alberta Avenue neighborhood of Edmonton, Alta. A

Christian Reformed pastor, he currently serves as a chaplain and community pastor to former inmates at The Neighbour Centre. He is a member of Fellowship CRC.

Church Furniture

As I was reading the parental vows for baptism, the child slammed his fist into his brother's head.

THIS PAST MAY, I was in my old church with a young and talented videographer. While he was shooting parts of the sanctuary, I saw the three pieces of church furniture—pulpit, font, and table—where I had conducted God's amazing grace.

My mind raced back to the children upon whom I poured the shocking waters of God's covenantal love. To all those Sundays of proclaiming the wonders of God's story of fierce pursuit in the two Testaments to flawed human beings who were thinking about Detroit Tigers scores, getting back to Sunset Manor Retirement Village for lunch, or the cookies on the back table in the fellowship room.

In those three pieces of furniture I saw three wooden storytellers that we have taken for granted in our churches. They could speak to us about our salvation stories if only we would stand still long enough to listen.

Here's one baptismal crime story. A family presented their new young son for baptism. The couple's middle son was standing next to his parents. As I was reading the parental vows for baptism, the child slammed his fist into his brother's head. I stopped immediately. The parents and congregation were shocked by the juvenile assault. This kid's action answered the first question I asked the parents: "Do you acknowledge that our children, who are sinful from the time of conception and birth. . . ."

This child showed us all what the baptismal font reminds us: that God's faithfulness remains, despite the sins that are seen or hidden. The font reminds us again that God first loved us in Jesus Christ.

My friend Rev. Peter Gordon once told me the baptismal font should be the entry door as we come to the worship space. Why? The font reminds us how we got into God's family in the first place. The font whispers to us "Remember your baptism."

From the pulpit I preached funerals, weddings, and worship services. While I was being considered for Roosevelt Park Church in 1993, a young Cary Kuiper sent me a letter asking me to come as the first pastor because she said there were a lot of good people there. She said that if she liked them, I would like them too. In 2007, Cary died suddenly. She was only 34 years old. I remembered standing in the back of church, crying. I wanted to run because it was too hard to preach Cary's funeral. She meant a lot to me despite all the annoying questions she'd asked after a service. The pulpit was the support I needed to proclaim the gospel in the midst of tears and questions. Cary's father once told me that death stops everything. Preachers for centuries have stood behind the wooden stand to proclaim that death has been swallowed up in victory by the risen Savior.

The pulpit stands as a witness that there is a Word from the Lord. As Reformed Christians, "the historical reality of the words and acts of the Savior becomes the content of proclamation. The preaching of the church always pointed back to that event" (*Psalter Hymnal Supplement*, p. 6). The pulpit is our Good News witness.

The communion table invited memories of an old man who never believed he would receive the sacrament from a black pastor. Bill was a recovering alcoholic. He joined Roosevelt Park Church because he felt welcomed and accepted. He told me that he was racist because he was fed a steady diet of racism from his parents. Bill was from the Netherlands. But Bill received the bread and juice from me as Christ's gift to him. He never missed it until his death.

Church furniture tells our story of God's redemptive thread of grace and faithfulness. Grab a seat and listen to the story of God's grace from the witnesses of wood. ■

[STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE](#)



Rev. Reginald Smith has served churches in Michigan and New Jersey and is still an avid fan of the Chicago Cubs.

ADS

Deadlines: Oct. issue is 9/5/16; Nov. issue is 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.

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Denominational and Classical

Calls Accepted

WELCOME CELEBRATION! The Council and Congregation of the Kanata Community CRC (Ottawa, ON) is grateful to the Lord for leading **Rev. Chris Schievink** to accept our Letter of Call. A Welcome & Installation Service will be held on Friday, September 9th, 2016. Barbecue at 5:30 p.m., service at 7:00 p.m. Any words of welcome and/or encouragement may be sent to office@kccrc.com

Eligible for Call

WE ARE PLEASED to announce that **Bradly Zwiers** has now completed his academic requirements and are eligible for call as candidates for the ministry of the Word.

WE ARE PLEASED to announce that **Drew Hoekema** has now completed his academic requirements and are eligible for call as candidates for the ministry of the Word.

WE ARE PLEASED to announce that **Timothy Kooiman** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word.

WE ARE PLEASED to announce that **Kyong Won (Joshua) Jung** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word.

WE ARE PLEASED to announce that **Tara Foreman** 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

Congregational

Church's 150th Anniversary

FIRST CRC OF PELLA, IA is planning to celebrate its 150th Anniversary August 21 – 28, 2016. Celebratory services, a barbecue and various activities highlighted the week as we praised God for His Faithfulness. For information, e-mail firstcrrc@iowatelecom.net, visit our website www.firstcrrc.org, or call 641-628-2606

NIKERK CHRISTIAN REFORMED at 545 Country Club Road in Holland Michigan will celebrate 150 years of God's faithfulness. Everyone who has participated in the life of the congregation is welcome to join us for the celebration of worship at 9:30 on September 25, 2016.

Church's 125th Anniversary

FIRST CRC OF ROCK VALLEY, IOWA is celebrating its 125th Anniversary this year. All who have participated in the life of this church are welcome to join us Wednesday evening, September 14th, for dinner and a Praise Service; and on Sunday, September 18th, for a morning service of celebration as we "Grow Deep, Live Tall" in our Lord! If you can join us, please RVSP to pam@firstcrrcv.org or 712-476-5902.

Birthdays

105th Birthday

NELL HAAGEN (VANDENBERG) Celebrated her 105th birthday on August 22. Her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great grandson, praise God for His faithfulness and blessings to her. Contact Janny Moedt, 5-9088-158 Street, Surrey, BC. V4N 5G4

90th Birthday

HOWARD & VONNIE BEELEN will celebrate their 90th birthdays on September 11 with an Open House from 2-4 pm at the Christian Rest Home, 1000 Edison Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI. Their 69th wedding anniversary was August 19. Praising God for His faithfulness and celebrating with them are their 4 children and spouses, 10 grandchildren and spouses, and 19 great-grandchildren. Cards welcome: 1010 Edison Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

BETTY KINGMA DEJONGE 1028 Allen Springs Jenison, MI will celebrate her 90th birthday on Sept. 5. Her family gives thanks to God for His faithfulness.

GARRET J. DYKHOUSE Happy birthday wishes (on August 24) to Garret J. Dykhouse of Wyckoff, NJ from your admiring and loving family—sons and daughters-in-law David and Barbara, Larry and Carole, and Tom and Linda, 11 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. Great has been God's faithfulness to you, for which we all praise Him.

RUTH BOENDER FABER, widow of Peter (deceased 1985), of 2681 Route 394, #523, Crete, IL 60417, will celebrate her 90th birthday on September 16. Children: Barbara (David) Werblo and Joan (Daniel) De Block, 6 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren. We are thankful for God's faithfulness and continued blessings in her life.

ROGER & PEARL (MEEKMA, HOLWERDA) HARRISON celebrated their 90th birthdays this year. They thank God for their 5 children & spouses, 16 grandchildren and 21 great grandchildren.



SIDNEY H. ROOY retired pastor, missionary, and seminary professor, will celebrate his 90th birthday on September 16. Our husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather has been a true inspiration and a loving presence for all of us. We thank God for him!

Anniversaries

70th Anniversary



DEVRIES Eddie and Nellie 343 Williams St, Uxbridge, MA 01569 are celebrating 70 years of marriage on September 11, 2016. We praise God for his blessings and faithfulness to them and to our extended family. Henry and Jan DeVries, Doug and Maribeth Kenbeek, grand-children and great-grandchildren.



SLAGTER John and Eleanor, 2000 32nd St. SE, Box 407, GR., MI 49508 Celebrate 70 years of marriage September 12. Their children, Rick Slagter and Barb & Jerry Andreas and grandchildren praise God for His love and faithfulness to them.

Together Since 1946! Roses are red, violets are blue, "Thanks be to God it's been 70 years, I love you!!"

VANDE HOEF Richard and Harriet (Vander Maten), Sibley, IA, celebrate 70 years of marriage on September 4, 2016. They and their family give thanks for God's faithful and abundant provision.

75th Anniversary

On September 25th, Jay and Lucille (Victory) Schutte, are blessed to celebrate 75 years of marriage. Their children are, Roger & Mary Schutte, Jerry & Barb Schutte, Bob & Thelma Driesenga and Cal & Jan Schutte. They enjoy 14 grandchildren, 31 great-grandchildren and 10 great, great grandchildren who celebrate with them.

65th Anniversary

ROOY Sidney and Mae (Van Dyk) celebrated their 65th anniversary on August 15. Children: Dianne and Duane Zandstra; David (deceased); Paul Rooy (deceased) and Mary Lightfine; Gayle and Ken Ritsema; ten grandchildren; four great grandchildren. We thank God for their many years of love, support, and guidance.

60th Anniversary

BAKER Bernard and Gert (Sybesma) of Edgerton, MN, along with their children: Glenn/Janna Baker, Darla/Colin Feikema, Janet/John Stellingwerf, Julie/Thomas Van Soelen, 8 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild, celebrated their 60th Anniversary on August 30. They thank God for the many opportunities to serve in His kingdom!

SIMMELINK Bill & Lenie celebrate their 60th anniversary on August 23, 2016. Their family is thankful for their example of God's goodness and faithfulness. We all love you very much.



VAN STRYLAND Harry and Hilda, RR#2 Clive, Alberta T0C 0Y0, celebrate 60 years of marriage on June 14. Their children, Philip and Joanne, Tymen and Sylvia, Craig and Marcella, Doug and Becky, Mike and Elin, Ron and Gloria, 17 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren thank the Lord for His rich blessings and faithfulness.

VANRINGELESTEIN John and Cynthia "Lee" (Brandsma-Brietzke) were married Sept. 7, 1956 in Denver, CO. Members of Cedar, IA CRC. 3 children, Steven, Craig, & Lisa, 7 grandchildren, & 7 great-grandchildren. God has blessed our family.

VEENEMA Mel and Marilyn (Bolt) celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on August 11. Their children, Dave and Ruth Veenema, Bob and Heidi Veenema, Glenn and Sherry Merz, Eric and Barb Schulz, 11 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren give thanks for the blessing of Godly parents and the love that flows from generation to generation!

WEVERS Richard & Sylvia (Baas) 2037 Mallard SE GR, MI 49546 celebrated their 60th anniversary on August 8. They, with their children Jan/Dick, Judy/Dan, June/Dale, Jackie/Jim, 13 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren thank God for His love and faithfulness.

50th Anniversary

OSTERHOUSE Rev. Jim & Norma of Solomons, MD thank God for 50 wonderful years together on August 26. We rejoice in the privilege of serving Him and in the blessing of family, Cheryl & Brian Johnson (Andrew, Brandon) and David & Melanie (Jadon, Lorelei).

VAN TUINEN Gord and Skip (Simerink) will celebrate 50 years of marriage on Friday, September 9, 2016. Their children and grandchildren, Scott & Cheryl Van Tuinen (Katelyn/Austin Vander Weide, JR and Tyler) and Guy & Christine Suchecki (Hannah and Addie) are thankful to God for His blessings and faithfulness from generation to generation.

Obituaries

ARNOLD Bradley Joel, 28, went to be with his LORD on Sunday, June 19th, 2016, N1546 Oak Shores Lane, Fontana, WI 53125. Precious son of Thomas and Cathy Arnold; beloved brother of John (Jennifer) and Christopher Arnold; cherished grandson of Doris and the late John Groenboom, and Rev. Dr. Harry and Kathryn Arnold; uncle of Ella Jo and Abigail Lynn; loved nephew and cousin of many. Memorials to Bethshan Association, 12927 S. Monitor Ave, Palos Heights, IL 60463 or Elim Christian Services 13020 S Central Ave, Palos Heights IL 60463, are appreciated.

DEYOUNG Harry age 85, passed away June 16, surrounded by his family. Harry is survived by wife Vivian, sons Mike (Gail) and David (Jill), 6 grandchildren and 3 great-children, brother Alvin (Gerry), sister Ruth(Corwin) Schenk plus deceased sister Evelyn(Bruce) Keuning. Donations may be made to the Scholarship Fund of Rehoboth Chr. School, Rehoboth, NM 87322.

HUIZENGA Nicholas John of Grand Rapids, MI died peacefully at home, surrounded by his family on June 19, 2016 at the age of 90. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Joan Huizenga (nee Katte); their children, Mary Lynn (Roger) Wesorick, Timothy (Annette) Huizenga, Ruth (Douglas) Everhart, Beth (Richard) Huizenga-Murillo and Susan (Bennett) Cleveland; 13 grandchildren; and 11(+)-great-grandchildren.

KLEINHEKSEL Marlene "Mickie" went home on June 20, 2016 to be with her Lord and Savior. She is survived by her husband Ken; children, Jim and Carol Boverhof, John and Mary Kleinheksel, and David and Sarah Kleinheksel; grandchildren, Joel and Kaitlyn Boverhof, Brent and Brittany Boverhof, Samuel and Ellen Boverhof, Chad Boverhof, Amanda Joy Kleinheksel, Johnny William Kleinheksel, Colleen Kleinheksel and her fiancé Kyle, and Drew Kleinheksel; and great granddaughter, Amelia Marlene.

KUIPER Caroline Bode, age 97, of Sanborn, IA went to her heavenly rest on July 10, 2016. Predeceased by husbands Henry Bode and Tony Kuiper, son Dennis Bode, and great-grandson Anthony Vos. For many years she taught 6th grade students at Ontario Christian School. She is survived by sons Ronald (Ruth) Bode, (d-I-I Cathy Bode), Alden (Jan) Kuiper, Les (Marlene) Kuiper, Brad (Marcia) Kuiper. 16 grandchildren, 46 great-grandchildren. God was her refuge and strength.

MEUZELAAR William "Bill" J., age 87, of Lansing IL, was called home on 7/13/16, to be with the Lord and Savior he served. Beloved husband for 35 years of Cathie Dykstra, Meuzelaar, nee Recker. Loving father of Lynnette (Ron) Lott, Julie (Brian) Vliem, Amy (Jon) Dekker, Valerie (Don) Fedor, Rhonda (Ron) Dommisse, Rachelle (Greg) Oppenhuizen, Brad (Joyce) Dykstra, Russ (Darla) Dykstra, Mark Dykstra and Joe (Iby) Zsigmond. Proud grandfather of 28, great-grandfather of 23 and 3

expected great grandchildren. Preceded in death by his first wife Dorothy (Wielsma), brother Isaac Meuzelaar, sister Grace Woldhuis. Survived by sister Doris Bielma

VEGTER George H. age 79 of Hudsonville, MI, passed away May 24, 2016. He is survived by his wife Sue, his children Sandra, John, Dan & Judy Vegter Ten Hoopen, Gary & Tracie Vegter, 9 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. He is now free from pain and safe in the arms of Jesus.

Real Estate: Sales and Rentals

SAAN CLEMENTE CA 200 yards to beach access close to outlet mall & restaurants. 1 bed 1 bath comfortably sleeps 6. vrbo.com 795245 or 209-552-6139

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FOR RENT - CONDO Naples, Florida. Beautiful 2 bedrooms, 2 baths. Available - Jan, Feb and select weeks in March 2017. dkeizer@comcast.net or 708-650-0300.

Church Position Announcements

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 secondcrgandhaven.org, or contact Search Committee Chairman, Jeff Binnendyk at 2ndcsrcsearch@gmail.com or 616-844-4144

PASTOR OF PREACHING & WORSHIP Emmanuel CRC in Calgary Alberta. We are an active, large church with a full range of ministries including contemporary Reformed worship and a community development ministry. We are looking for an inspiring, motivating leader able to apply Scriptures to our world and lives and to work collaboratively with ministry leaders and staff. In a city that offers everything from sports to arts and prairies to mountains, we invite you to consider helping us build a body that is alive in Christ! For more information contact Hessel Kielstra hessel.kielstra@vyfield.ca

SOLE PASTOR First CRC in Edmonton, Alberta Canada is seeking a full time Pastor. We are seeking a relational and creative leader who can walk with our congregation as we seek to follow Christ. The pastor will be a collaborative leader who encourages and coaches members to develop and express their faith. For more information please contact ststolte@gmail.com

PASTOR Fairlawn Christian Reformed Church, located in the heart of the beautiful Blackstone Valley, is seeking a pastor to shepherd our congregation in Whitinsville, MA. Fairlawn is a community of believers committed to Reformed theology and worship who embrace a traditional style of liturgy and music with organ, piano, brass, and/or strings accompaniment. We are praying for a man of God who will share our love for the gospel, as expressed in the historic Reformed confessions, and will be an effective communicator of that gospel to our multi-generational congregation, as well as to our larger community. The successful candidate will have a thorough grounding in, and commitment to, the Reformed faith, as well as relevant training and experience in preaching, teaching, leading worship, fostering spiritual formation, providing pastoral care, administrative oversight, and outreach to the community. M. Div is a requirement. Please send a resume, references, and inquiries to: Search Committee, Fairlawn CRC, 305 Goldthwaite Rd., Whitinsville, MA 01588, or searchcommittee@fairlawnrc.org.

YOUTH ADULT FAITH PASTOR Do you have a passion to share God's grace and hope? First and Redeemer CRC Churches, Sarnia, Ont. Canada are seeking a highly relational "Young Adult Faith Formation Pastor" for our combined ministry. We are looking for someone who

will engage the young adults from these two churches in spiritual growth by coordinating and administering an effective youth ministry. As a member of the pastoral team you will provide discipleship and pastoral care for the youth and young adults and be a presence in the churches. For Job description please contact Dianne Visser at 519-542-4512 or dianne@degroofs.ca

CHURCH SECRETARY Lakeside Church in Alto, MI is searching for a friendly and helpful administrative assistant. Professional experience and computer proficiency preferred. Position requires 20 hours per week, 9AM-1PM, Mon-Fri. Pays \$14.50/hour. For more information or to submit a resume, call 616-868-0391 or email pastordave@lakesidecommunity.org

PASTOR Gateway Community CRC in beautiful Abbotsford, BC is seeking a full time Pastor of Preaching and Congregational Care for our congregation of 664 members. We are seeking a people-oriented individual who has a strong desire to faithfully preach the Word, nourish the spiritual growth of the congregation through pastoral care and teaching and to join a growing, energetic team. Visit gatewaycrg.org for church profile and full ministry role description. Contact Marcel deRegt, Executive Pastor, at marcel@gatewaycrg.org or call 604-859-5908

YOUTH PASTOR Almond Valley CRC in Ripon, CA is seeking candidates for a youth pastor position. We are searching for applicants with a passion for mentoring relationships with our youth and engaging students in spiritual growth using God's Word. This position has a primary focus on middle school and high school youth, and combined with an additional role (worship leadership, preaching, community outreach or education coordination) is a full-time position. For a complete job description and contact info visit almondvalley.org.

PASTOR: 1st CRC of Wellsburg, Iowa is seeking a pastor to lead our rural congregation in spiritual growth, provide pastoral care, and guide in community outreach. For more information, our profile is located at CRCNA.org or contact Bill Noteboom at bwrjc53@gcuni.net.

"PASSIONATE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST making passionate disciples for Jesus Christ," of the Hebron CRC of Whitby Ontario, is seeking 2 Pastors. Hebron CRC is seeking a Full Time Pastor for Preaching & Teaching, a Part Time Pastor for congregational care. The two positions have overlapping duties. Send Resume or Pastor Profile to Tom Zekveld - tomzekveld@gmail.com

SENIOR PASTOR POSITION Maranatha CRC in Belleville, Ontario is seeking a senior pastor to lead a full/part time staff of seven and approximately 600 people that consider Maranatha their home. Our mission is to Reach the Lost, Restore the Broken, Equip the Saints and

Release the Workers. For more information about the church and its ministries, go to our website <http://maranatha-church.com>, or contact the search committee at maranathasearch@gmail.com for more information and church profile.

PASTOR The Rudyard CRC in the upper peninsula of Michigan (God's Country) is in need of a full time pastor. We are a somewhat conservative Rural Congregation with active programs in place for kids, youth and adults, with great leadership. We are looking for the person God has selected for us to lead us in our Worship services and any activities that time and ability allows. (Side note) Our area has been selected to host the 2020 Cadet Camporee the Good Lord Willing so we have lots of opportunity to Praise the Lord through Prayer, Worship, Work and Deed. Please respond to Monica Hoosema at monisema1@hotmail.com and or Walter Bandstra at wbandstra@yahoo.com 906-248-5388

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT PASTOR For almost two decades a thriving Christian church, aptly named New England Chapel, has become a haven for the broken and for people who may have given up on church but not on God. We are seeking someone who is gifted and experienced in working with Middle & High school kids and young adults, helping them find their way in faith. Visit newenglandchapel.org/nextpastor for complete job description.

WORSHIP/MUSIC COORDINATOR Graafschap Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan is seeking to fill a position for Worship and Music Coordinator. This position requires a servant of Christ who understands the biblical concepts of worship and appreciates the emphases of Reformed theology in worship. The individual will be a vital part of Graafschap's life and ministry and should be able to love and empathize with her. Interested candidates can submit a resume with references or other inquires to: Graafschap CRC, 5973 Church Street, Holland MI. attn :Worship/Music Search Committee or graafschapworship@gmail.com.

MUSIC DIRECTOR East Paris CRC in SE Grand Rapids, MI is seeking a part-time Music Director to lead blended services. The job and salary can be matched to your skills and experience, but ideally you will lead worship with piano/guitar/voice, including hymns, direct praise team singers and band, help plan services. For information contact Lyn Nelson 616-292-3450, lynpiano@hotmail.com.

PASTOR Community CRC Dixon's Corners, a rural church south of Ottawa, is looking for a full time pastor. Please contact the Search Team at ccrc.vacancies@gmail.com for more information.

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MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

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First Christian Reformed Church
Hanford, CA

Pastor
Escazu Christian Fellowship
Escazu, Costa Rica

For more information on opportunities from ChapterNext, the leader among pastor search firms serving RCA & CRCNA congregations, visit www.chapter-next.com or email info@chapter-next.com.



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ISRAEL STUDY TOUR Kuyper College Israel Study Tour, May 3-16, 2017, led by Dr. Dan Kroeze, Professor of Biblical Studies. Journey to the land of the Bible, studying the text as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Adults, \$3,950. Contact Dan at (616) 249-1829; dkroeze@kuyper.edu.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND March 20 – April 1, 2017, led by Pastor Bill and Lyn Vanden Bosch in partnership with the Calvin College Alumni Association and Calvin College Academy for Lifelong Learning. A “disciple’s pilgrimage” following in the footsteps of Jesus to not only understand the Gospels and the early church in their historical, geographical, and cultural context, but to also increase our commitment to wholeheartedly respond to His invitation to “Follow Me.” Visit New Testament sites in Galilee, along the Jordan Valley, and Jerusalem. Contact Pastor Bill at (616) 826-1927 or intheightofjesus@gmail.com. www.intheightofjesus.com. Arrangements by Witte Tours

DANUBE RIVER CRUISE, hosted by Henk and Thessa Witte, June 26 – July 6, 2017. This delightful river cruise abounds in spectacular scenes of castles, palaces, vineyards, picturesque villages and historic gems in Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary. Optional post cruise tour of Croatia and Slovenia. Learn more at a “Cruise Talk” hosted by Henk Witte: September 13, 3:00p.m. at Witte Travel & Tours, 3250 28th St. S. E., Grand Rapids, MI or September 14, 3:00p.m. at the Holland Museum, 31 West 10th St., Holland, MI. RSVP required to Witte Tours at 616-957-8113, 800 GO WITTE or groups@wittetravel.com. For a complete list of Witte signature tours, visit www.wittetours.com.

33RD ANNUAL NETHERLANDS WATERWAY CRUISE—Join Henk and Thessa Witte, April 21 – 29, 2017 on this *NEW* itinerary. Two optional post-cruise extensions! Northern Netherlands or Germany and Switzerland. Learn more at a “Cruise Talk” hosted by Henk Witte: September 13, 1:30 p.m. at Witte Travel & Tours, 3250 28th St. S. E., Grand Rapids, MI or September 14, 1:30p.m. at the Holland Museum, 31 West 10th St., Holland, MI. RSVP required to Witte Tours at 616-957-8113, 800 GO WITTE or groups@wittetravel.com. This cruise sells out quickly! For a complete list of Witte signature tours and cruises, visit www.wittetours.com.

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Employment

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DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR Timothy Christian School, a K-8 CSI-accredited school in Wellsburg, IA is seeking a full-time Development Director. This new position will strive to cultivate and sustain funding development and new family recruitment in support of the school’s mission of “Training for Christian Service”. Motivated individuals who have a passion for Christian grade school education are encouraged to contact Rev. Jonathan Spronk, TCS board secretary, for a full job description at board@timothychristianschool.net

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH Holland, MI - Neighbors Plus is currently seeking the next Leader and Steward for our organization. Our ideal candidate is a professional who embodies leadership, feels called to relational ministry/social justice, and loves God. Neighbors Plus is a nonprofit Christian Community Development Organization with Harderwyk Ministries as its only church partner. The ministries of Neighbors Plus center around educating, guiding, and caring with a focus on building supportive relationships with adults, students, children, and families. Application deadline is September 15, 2016. Submit application to: Applications@neighborsplus.org. Apply Now! Visit neighborsplus.org to access the job description and application form.

HEAD OF SCHOOL Zuni Christian Mission School (Zuni Pueblo NM) is seeking an experienced educator/administrator to serve as the head of school starting August 2017. Our mission school gives witness to the Gospel through quality Christian education for up to 100 K-8 Native American children. Working with the Zuni Christian Reformed Church, our mission-driven, cross-cultural ministry is entering a second century of service. We are grateful to God for the completion of a new facility and the opportunities for expansion this brings. For more information/application, visit our website at zunchristianmission.org or contact Kathy Bosscher at 505-782-4546.

IN HOME-CARE COMPANY, small, locally owned, non-medical, looking to hire part-time, 8-10 hours a week to start. We are looking for people who enjoy working with seniors, have reliable transportation, and a flexible schedule, including some weekends. Send enquiries to: truebluecaregivers@gmail.com

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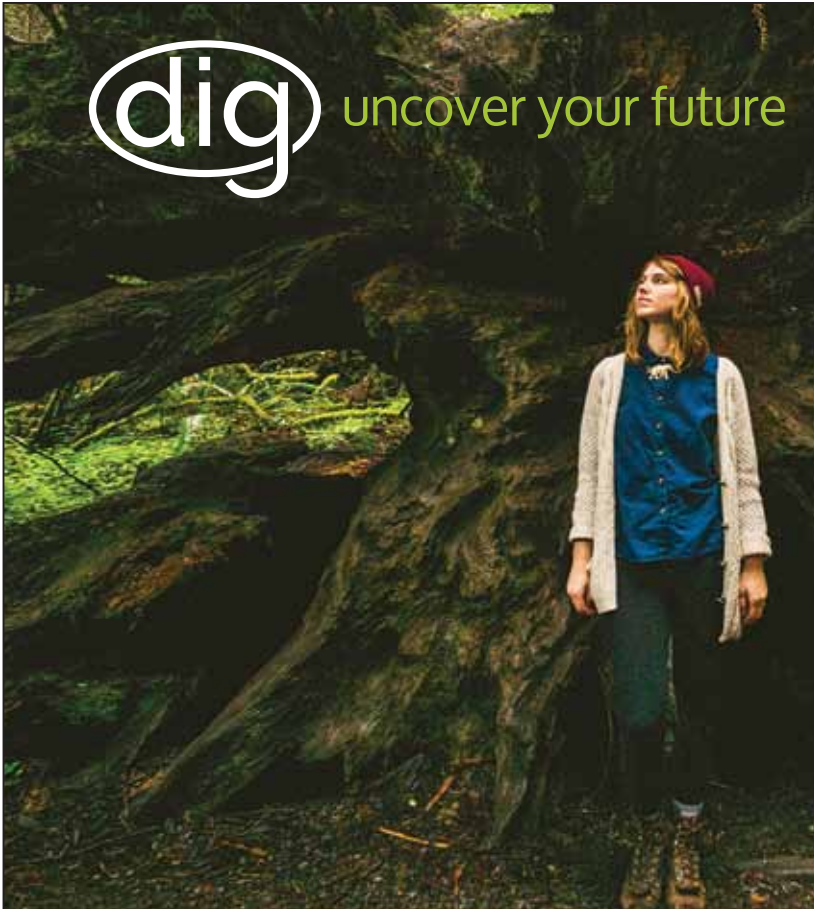
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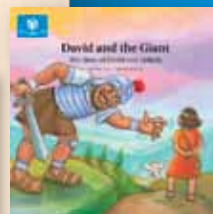
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Punch Lines

What has made *you* smile lately? Got a joke or funny incident you'd care to share with your wider church family? Please send it to *The Banner* at 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407; or email it to editorial@thebanner.org. Thanks!

My family visited the Netherlands for spring break and toured Keukenhof Gardens just as the spring flowers were starting to bloom. I was trying to explain to my youngest son that the daffodils and hyacinths bloom first and then different varieties of tulips start to bloom. I said, "You see, Asa, God designed the flowers so that some bloom early and some bloom later."

He replied, "You'd think God would make some that bloom right on time!"

—Carol Bremer-Bennett

Q: Who is the best comedian in the Bible?

A: Samson. He brought down the house.

—Maddy Janecek

During circle time in Little Lambs class, I was telling the story of the prodigal son. I explained that the son had wasted all his money and had to find work feeding the pigs. I had just finished saying that he was so hungry that he wanted to eat the pigs' food

when one 3-year-old piped up, "Well, he could have had bacon."

—Joanne Oosthoek

How about the guy who quit his job at the doughnut factory?

He was fed up with the hole business.

—R. Smit

Our 5-year-old great-grandson was a guest at a friend's house for dinner. As his friend's mother set out pancakes on the table, she asked him, "Does your mother ever serve pancakes for dinner?"

His response?

"No, my mom can tell time."

—Rose Vander Vliet

I hate it when people use big words just to make themselves sound perspicacious.

—R. Klajnscek

Many years ago I was looking after my then 5-year-old grandson Tom and took him for a visit to my colleagues. On the way home he proudly told me that his brother Owen knew how to spell his name: TOMME.

"No," I said, "your name is spelled TOMMY."

"Oma," he insisted, "it is TOMME."

I replied that I was pretty smart and knew how it should be spelled.

Then Tom said, "Oma, God is much smarter than you and he

has my name written in the clouds: TOMME."

How could I argue with that?

—Mary Van Delft

Did you hear the one about the man who ordered a self-help DVD called "How to Handle Disappointment"?

When the package arrived, he eagerly opened it.

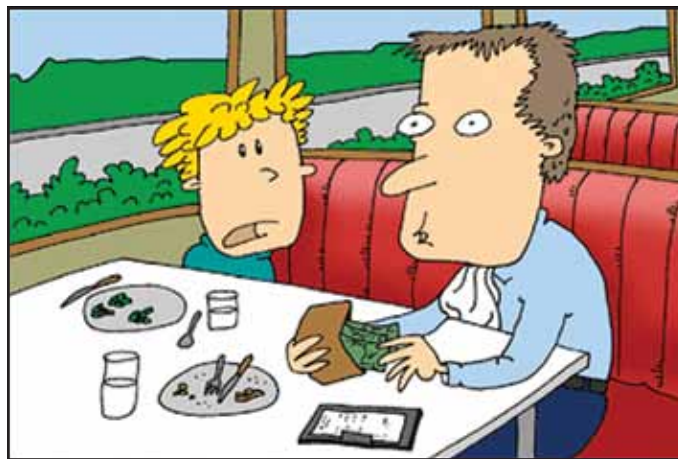
It was empty.

—Dick Bylsma

Two bacteria walk into a bar. The bartender said, "Get out! We don't serve bacteria in this bar."

The two bacteria protested: "Hey, wait a minute. We work here! We're staph."

—L. De Boer



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