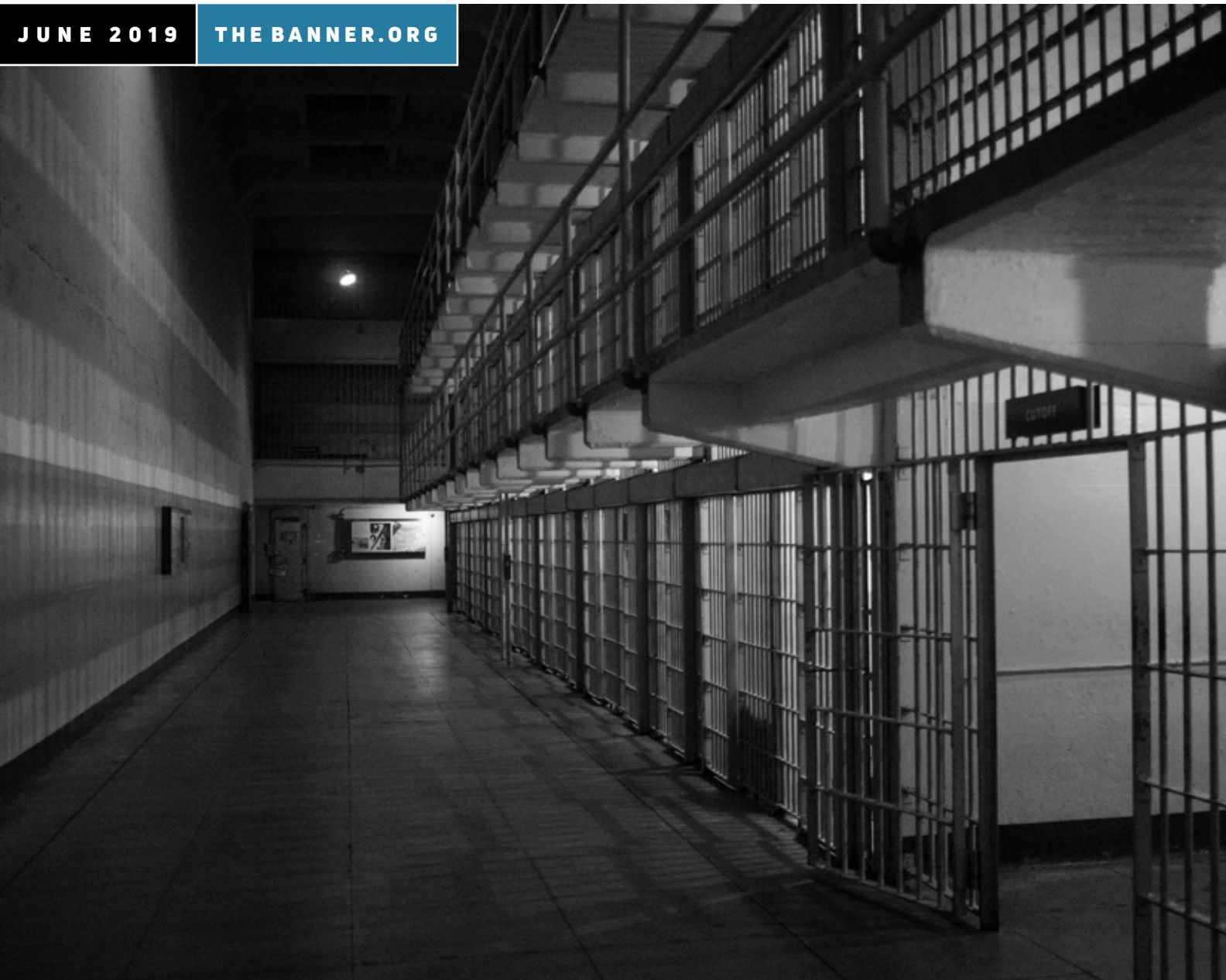


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BANNER

The Banner is the magazine of the Christian Reformed Church

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Display Advertising 616-224-5882 ads@TheBanner.org
Editorial 616-224-0824 editorial@TheBanner.org
News news@TheBanner.org

Published monthly (except August). Periodicals postage paid at Grand Rapids, Mich. Postmaster, send address changes to: *The Banner*, 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids MI 49508-1407. Canadian publications mail agreement #40063614. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: *The Banner*, 3475 Mainway, PO Box 5070, STN LCD 1, Burlington ON L7R 3Y8. Copyright 2019, Christian Reformed Church in North America. Printed in U.S.A. The Banner (ISSN0005-5557). Vol. 154, No. 6, 2019.

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**Christian
Reformed
Church**

Intellectual Pride

One of the reasons
I was attracted to
the Christian
Reformed Church
is its intellectual
robustness.



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

Spanish and Korean translations of this editorial are available at TheBanner.org.

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C. S. LEWIS WROTE: “According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind” (*Mere Christianity*).

One of the reasons I was attracted to the Christian Reformed Church is its intellectual robustness. That is arguably the Reformed tradition’s strength. It is also, I think, its greatest danger because it can lead to the sin of intellectual pride.

I confess that I struggle with intellectual pride myself. Ever since my youth, my intellect was the one strength that made me “successful.” Even after I became a Christian, I overly relied on my intellect to grow in faith and serve the church, devouring theological and spiritual books. My faith was more cerebral than emotional. Moments of “feeling right” occurred so rarely in contrast to “thinking right” in my spiritual journey that it showed an unhealthy imbalance.

I elevated my intellectual ability to comprehend God’s truths as the main way (or the only way?) for me to relate to God. I used theological knowledge as a spiritual yardstick. I looked down on those who knew less than me as spiritually immature. I was a proud young man who thought he knew a lot about God, about Scriptures and theology. I was often critical of and argumentative with those who differed from me theologically. I still have to suppress this judgmental urge today. Intellectual pride is the spiritual thorn in my flesh. Unfortunately, I think it is also prevalent among many Christian Reformed folks—clergy and lay people alike.

Scripture teaches that “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble” (James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5; Prov. 3:34). God had to humble me through a period of dark depression that nearly caused me to fail university. By God’s grace, I received help for my depression and was able to resume my studies. Now, older and (I hope) wiser, I know how much I still do not know. I see now with greater clarity the human mind’s limits, our confirmation and negativity biases, and how foolish I was—as anyone is—to overly depend on intellect.

We should be grateful to God for the robust intellectual gifts of the Reformed tradition. But we cannot be blind to the very real temptation of loving the gifts more than the Giver. Have we loved our Reformed theology and confessions more than the God they point to? Are we so intellectually arrogant that we fail to learn from “non-Reformed” Christians? Have we so idolized our Reformed theological system to the point that we cannot even question it?

I believe God has a role for the Reformed tradition and the CRC in his divine mission—thus there is all the more urgency for us to repent and be proper vessels for God’s glory. I hope God does not have to resort to drastic measures to humble us as a denomination before we can repent of our intellectual pride. But I trust that God, who began a good work in us, “will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6). God, and God’s mission, will not fail. **B**



REPLY ALL

Reformed Accent

Steve Timmermans' essay "Speaking with a Reformed Accent" (April 2019) proves an incentive to ponder the distinctiveness of the Reformed perspective. The social gospel movement emphasizes the social teachings of Jesus, not the Christ who is the divine son of God who gave himself on the cross for humanity's eternal salvation. The hymn "This World Is Not My Own" reflects much of fundamentalist thought about our world. Thus the motive for serving our Lord is the assurance of salvation. In contrast, "This Is My Father's World" reflects the Reformed perspective. The Reformed motive for serving our Lord is gratitude. Therefore, as Timmermans put it, Reformed Christians seek to better this world, in so doing avoiding "any division between sacred and secular."

» Robert Bolt // Grand Rapids, Mich.

Good People

After reading Christopher Schoon's "Do All Good People Go to Heaven?" (April 2019), I recalled the words of John 11:23-24. Here Jesus responds to Martha's comment about her dead brother Lazarus by assuring her "Your brother will rise again," to which she responds, almost annoyingly, by saying, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." It seems to me that instead of speculating about who eventually may or may not enter heaven, it would be better to heed N.T. Wright's words: "All Christian language about the future is a set of signposts pointing into the mist" (*Surprised by Hope*).

» Frank DeVries // Surrey, B.C.

"Do All Good People Go to Heaven?" really helped me understand that we have to trust God for our salvation. I will put it in my Bible for rereading.

» Suze Mast // Chatham, Ont.

Pew or Canoe

The author (of "Pew or Canoe," March 2019) raises some good questions and interesting responses. But I believe he misses the boat on the biggest one: After all that hearing, giving, and talking, Jesus describes putting our beliefs into action—not just on committees or in organizations, but hands-on. Rather than talking about justice, poverty, the environment, and more, we should be personally involved in helping one person, situation, or emergency at a time. This gives us opportunity to live our beliefs (and maybe talk about it too) while following the Lord's example. I am a beginner in the area and I'm disappointed that it took me so long.

» Paul Triemstra // Portage, Mich.

Gary Burge ("Pew or Canoe") is a voice in the wilderness, a redemptive voice we need to hear from the pulpit about our cultural mandate to do social justice, which is as important as the Great Commission. A similar voice to Karl Barth's along the lines of: Take the Bible and your newspaper and interpret the latter with the Bible.

» George Lieuwen // Langley, B.C.

Like Gary Burge ("Pew or Canoe"), I am a 50-something, disillusioned lifetime CRC member. My disillusionment is not on account of being a member of a constituency to which the church fails to cater. Exactly the opposite: my disillusionment comes precisely because the church thinks I am part of a constituency to which it must cater. It is as though the church is a service club that must create reasons for and promote membership. No doubt the Spirit is as likely to be found in the canoe as in the pew, not on account of any failing on the part of the church but because the Spirit comes and goes

as it wills. We neither control the Spirit nor have it at our disposal. Whatever the allure of the canoe, it cannot be to gather with brothers and sisters—members of the covenantal family of God.

» Ron Nightingale // Kitchener, Ont.

Gene Editing

I'm not very knowledgeable about gene manipulation ("Big Questions: Ethics," March 2019) but believe it can target a specific mutation related to a specific consequence. We operate on many people to correct such conditions—hip dysplasia, for instance. Gene editing could fix that instead. It is not like a new drug, which can have a myriad of side effects. Regardless, God has commanded us to have dominion over creation. He has gifted us with inquisitive and creative minds. Suppressing new developments like gene editing is akin to the early church insisting that the world is flat. It will not enhance our message that Christ rules over all. Better that Christian scientist jump into a leading role to guide those who might not hold to the same ethical standards.

» Bill Wybenga // Picton, Ont.

Kudos for The King's University

A gospel of exclusion will never reach those who have already been systematically excluded from the majority of Christian institutions ("Churches Talk with The King's University about LGBTQ Issues," March 2019). I applaud The King's University for playing its role in the world—that of an educational institution—by engaging in the culture as Christ did, in a way that starts with belonging and relationship. This is Christ's example for us. To engage with a marginalized community, you need to be in relationship with a marginalized community. I encourage everyone in the denomination to relinquish the need for judgment

'A Sea of Madness'

until you are in relationship with and find belonging in the marginalized community you are judging.

» Darren Sytsma // Abbotsford, B.C.

Where Were the Women?

Congratulations to Sarah Hoogendoorn for persevering despite difficult circumstances ("Called to a Different Kind of Ministry," Our Shared Ministry, March 2019). The photo of white males blessing Sarah was not a photo I would recommend to demonstrate inclusivity in the CRC. Were all the (other) females occupied in the kitchen?

» James Vanderleeuw // Waterloo, Ont.

READ MORE ONLINE



As I Was Saying

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- » Shaky Steps and Germinating Seeds
- » The 'Scandal' of the Cross
- » What Should Christians Do about Gentrification?

LAST NOVEMBER, we listened to an eager campus pastor drive home the need for a full gospel. He called for grace and obedience as our response to Christ as Savior and Lord. Obeying Jesus' call to "take up our cross" no matter the cost means we must also accept his lordship. Delighting in forgiveness means accepting grace.


Celebrating Jesus' birth as it's done worldwide signifies an acceptance of grace. But in some cases, no life changes are expected to accompany that grace. It's all just amazing grace. I wonder, are we as a church enjoying the gospel of grace while forgetting the gospel of obedience? Is the Christian Reformed Church so determined to increase its numbers that it's willing to fit in, make no waves, and offend no one?

With that in mind, I read Andrew Kuyvenhoven's devotional book *Daylight*. It couldn't be more affirming. Its November devotions focused on the book of Revelation. In the devotional "The False Prophet" (Nov. 24), describing the beast of Revelation 13, the former *Banner* editor wrote, "The beast needs might and meanness, but it needs more. It needs an ideology that justifies its worship. Every tyrant needs a prophet. Every dictator needs a manifesto." A prophetic insight!

I wondered when Kuyvenhoven had written this. So I checked. The first edition came out in 1977. Who were the world leaders in 1977? Did "fake news" exist? Was ISIS an ideology waiting to take shape? *Roe v. Wade* had just left us reeling. Written 40 years ago, Kuyvenhoven's words are still startlingly relevant.

Those who fill our pulpits and lead our Bible studies must understand and

proclaim them because "[t]he gospel is not an ideology. But the gospel of the Kingdom contains a world-and-life view," Kuyvenhoven wrote. "We need Christian ideas spelled out in theories and programs that apply to politics and economics. We need Christian students who can pick apart the slogans of the false prophets with the scalpels of keen analysis. . . . Christian businessmen have to speak up. Christian journalists must write sanely and soberly in a sea of madness."

Acknowledging that we live in "a sea of madness," we need sane and sober voices calling us to commitment and obedience while delighting in God's grace. We need sane and sober Christ followers of integrity who write and proclaim plain Scriptural truths. They're overdue in a world where we suffer the consequences of silence. Here is Kuyvenhoven again: "If we are merely concerned to save our souls, we are disloyal to the Lord and surrender the country to the false prophets of our age." Our world needs prophetic voices. No running or hiding! 



George Vink is a retired Christian Reformed pastor and author.



Restorative Justice: A Better Way

David LaGrand

In the United States and Canada, we hand over to governments the job of responding to crimes. After a crime is committed, governments primarily ask: Who is guilty? How should that person be punished?

The restorative justice movement began with Mennonite Christians in search of a better response. They started with a biblical understanding of justice and shalom, centered in the need for accountability, reconciliation, and peace. With these goals in mind, they concluded that after a crime takes place, the most important questions to ask are: Who was hurt? And how can that harm be repaired? Those questions focus attention on victims' needs and the repair of the community.

Restorative justice advocates understand the importance of punishment for wrongdoing. They also know that placing primary focus on healing the victim of a crime—and not just on the consequences for the offender—leads to a very different set of responses to crime. Asking restorative questions leads to empowering victims and other members of the community who have been affected by the crime.

The first step in a restorative justice approach is to really listen to victims. It's often our instinct to turn to an "expert" in response to a problem. We hire doctors to heal, accountants to manage money, teachers to teach. And because our government is in charge of responding to crimes, responses come from government "experts"—judges and prosecutors who are trained to answer questions of guilt and punishment, not questions of harm and healing. But as to the harm suffered after a crime, it is the victim who is truly the expert.

Governments' focus on guilt and punishment means that even when the victim *is* asked for input, the requests are scripted and formalized, designed to shape the victims' responses. We're familiar with courtroom sentencings where victims are brought forward to answer the question "How should we punish the offender?" This drama typically happens at the end of a process that allows victims no contact with an offender, very little input into the case, and only a short time to make a public statement. As a result, victims' responses tend to focus on punishment—and so the government's response to crime begins and ends with punishment.

There is a better way to listen to victims. If we take the time immediately after a crime to ask victims what they want, without preconceptions or an agenda, victim responses vary but often take a similar shape.

First, victims tend to wonder: Why did this happen to me? Being the victim of a crime disrupts the feeling that we are in control of our lives, and it often makes one feel unsafe. People don't choose to be victims, so anything they can do to understand why the crime happened to them can help re-establish a feeling of control. Knowing why a robber chose *my* house and not the house next door, why a mugger chose *me*, why the person driving a car ran into *me* are all really important questions. Answers to "why" questions usually top the list of victims' expressed needs.

Second, victims have a strong desire to tell the offender how much the crime hurt them. Victims of a break-in want to tell the thief that they and their entire family no longer feel safe at home. Victims of an assault want to tell the assailant that they fear assault all the time. Victims of embezzlement want to explain how that theft broke a trust and ended a valuable relationship.

Third, victims almost always want a real apology from the offender. They want to know that the offender understands the damage he or she did and that the offender is sorry. In order for that to happen, victims need to tell the offender about the harm done and have that information really sink in. Victims don't want an apology that was coerced. There's no worse format for an "apology" than a courtroom sentencing, where anything the offender says looks like a ploy to get a lighter sentence and where a victim has to talk about painful, often embarrassing things in public.

Victims tend to express their needs for asking, telling, and hearing an apology before expressing desire for punishment. That's not to suggest crimes don't deserve punishment, or that victims can't or shouldn't ask for punishment. It just means that all those other needs—which can't be met by any government expert—come *first*. They can only be met through an encounter with the offender. That's why victims who are offered the opportunity to have a safe meeting with the person who harmed them tend to want to ask why, to describe their hurt.

Despite what we see on shows that dramatize offenders as remorseless sociopaths, most offenders understand that what they did was wrong. Many are sorry for what they did and would fix the harm they caused if they could. Most offenders are willing to meet victims and revisit the crime and its aftermath. So why isn't the opportunity for such an encounter offered as a matter of course?

It goes without saying that such encounters have to be handled carefully. Cases where there is a large

Placing primary focus on healing the victim of a crime—and not just on the consequences for the offender—leads to a very different set of responses to crime.


disparity of power or where an encounter might lead to more victim trauma or where an offender is not willing to take responsibility are all situations in which an encounter may not be a good idea.

But if the encounter focuses on the needs of the victim, it can empower the victim and begin the process of healing. Conversations that include a discussion of consequences and amends may serve as a first step along the road to forgiveness. They might also provide a real opportunity for offenders to understand the magnitude of the harm they caused and to develop empathy with their victims. Such empathy is the best hope for preventing the offender from repeating the behavior.

Forgiveness is hard. It is also deeply personal. As much as we may value

forgiveness, we have to be very careful not to push it on anyone. For that reason, restorative justice practitioners are careful to focus on a process of listening to and empowering victims. They don't expect specific results. Victim healing is the goal of restorative justice, and that healing has to happen on a path where the victim is leading.

Offenders are different. Offenders offended, and restorative justice practitioners always work toward offender accountability, empathy, and reparation. Ideally, movement toward healing and real accountability can also begin the work of reconciliation and can involve the broader community, which is also hurt by offenses. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, for example, was modeled on restorative justice principles to heal not just victims, but an entire country scarred by injustice.

Restorative justice principles can be used in any situation involving hurt that needs healing: family fights, workplace conflicts, school discipline issues, and even national traumas. Wherever a community needs to be repaired, there is a role for restorative justice. 



David LaGrand is a Michigan State Representative from Grand Rapids serving his second term. David has been involved in jail ministry for 30 years and is an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church.

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the phrase "restorative justice"?

[READ MORE ONLINE](#)

BIG QUESTIONS

Digital Life

Is online dating a good option?

On my online accounts, the secret passphrase for the question “Where did you meet your spouse?” is “church,” so my own experience in this area is limited. But some helpful input convinced me that online dating is a viable option for anyone seeking a mate.

Shanda and Mandy thought dating would come naturally and easily. Not so.

Fighting the perception that online dating was somehow seedy or secular, Shanda secretly signed up with eHarmony. For Mandy, the more time that passed after graduating from college, the harder it was to find decent men to date. So she and a couple of her single friends decided to try the “online thing” at the same time.

“During my year-long subscription, I was matched with probably 80 men,” Shanda said. “I only met two in person. I learned so many things about myself! Could I date someone on the other side of the country? Could I date someone with kids? A smoker? Divorced? Throughout the process, I kept everything secret. When I finally decided to meet someone, I told my family. Reactions were mixed. That first date had many family members praying for safety and a few friends cheering me on.”

Being self-aware is important, Mandy said. “You definitely need to know who you are as a person. [Online dating] can be very defeating at times and make you question yourself.”

Safety is also important. “When I first started online dating, I would always tell my friends where I was meeting



Illustration for *The Banner* by Gisela Bohorquez

the guy, and we always met in a public place,” Mandy said.

Shanda and her husband, Gary, will celebrate their 15th wedding anniversary this year. Mandy and her fiancé, Jeff, plan to be married this month.

Shanda’s coworker commented, “I don’t know why more people don’t use online dating. It is like using a fish-finder to catch fish.”

“That made me feel good and maybe even smart for using online dating,” Shanda said. “And I began to own how my husband and I had met.”

Dean Heetderks is co-director of Ministry Support Services of the CRC and art director of *The Banner*. Wondering about any part of the digital side of your life? Tell him about it at dean.heetderks@gmail.com

Church/Bible/Doctrine

Why didn’t the early Reformers more seriously seek reunion with Eastern Orthodoxy after rejecting the excesses and innovations of Western Catholicism?

The Protestant Reformers tried, but it did not work out. The story is intriguing.

Western Christianity and Eastern Orthodoxy had split from each other centuries before, with mutual condemnations in 1054 and the Fourth Crusade of 1204, when Crusaders

sacked Constantinople. Desperate attempts by the Byzantine emperor and the leaders of the Orthodox Church to gain reinforcements against the onslaughts of Muslim forces under the Ottoman Turks led to the Council of Florence in 1439. The price Rome demanded for that support was adoption of Roman teachings and practices—a price the Orthodox were unwilling to pay. A few years later, in 1453, Constantinople—without assistance from the West—was conquered by the Ottoman Turks. This much the early Protestants knew. But aside from recognizing a shared opposition to Rome and a common respect for the Church fathers, the early reformers were not familiar with Eastern Orthodoxy itself.

In the 1570s, some Lutheran theologians reached out to Eastern Orthodoxy by writing to the Patriarch of Constantinople, Jeremias II. The Lutherans hoped that Orthodoxy largely agreed with Lutheran views on doctrine and practice. If that proved to be true, then some sort of alliance against Rome might be achieved.

The patriarch wrote back, and a significant period of communication followed. In due course, the patriarch brought an end to the discussions, pointing out that Orthodoxy did not share the views set forth by the Lutherans.

Not long after this, an Orthodox clergyman, Cyril Lucaris, studied theology in Geneva and embraced Reformed

teaching. In the early 1600s, he was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople. In that office, he attempted to introduce Reformed teaching and practice within Orthodoxy. That endeavor was rejected, and his views were condemned as non-Orthodox in the Confession of Dositheus (also known as The 18 Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem).

Attempts in the 16th and 17th centuries to draw Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy together also failed. Protestant churches and Eastern Orthodoxy would not really begin to develop ecumenical openness toward each other until the 20th century.

Jim Payton is a professor of history at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ont., and a member of Ancaster Christian Reformed Church.

Vocation

What are our callings when we reach retirement?

Most reflection about vocation focuses on career transitions and development. By comparison, we spend very little time thinking about calling and retirement. According to a recent study by Michelle Pannor Silver (*Retirement and Its Discontents*), for those who are deeply devoted to their professions, retiring is a time of deep ambivalence, grief, and fear of irrelevance. For them, retirement parties are more like funerals than celebrations. Both homemakers and former CEOs feel similarly lonely and miss their earlier occupations and related identities.

Our callings unify the otherwise disparate aspects of our lives and occupations. At every stage of life God calls us to receive love from and to care for others.

On one hand, many people entering into retirement and older adulthood experience grief, suffering, and loss of health and loved ones. On the other hand, many people's most creative and productive activity comes late in life. During retirement we are called to discern the varied ways our new status can become an opportunity to be of

service to others—our children, grandchildren, siblings, parents, churches, and wider communities. We must also discern and accept the often-needed help of others.

Our later years are times of remembering our past as well as preparing for entering into everlasting life. As we remember our past, we are called to be thankful rather than to focus on regrets. My father once told me that when my grandfather was dying, he told my father that he would not have changed a single thing that had happened to him throughout his life. That life included surviving the Great Depression and enduring the death of his teenage daughter. My father was surprised by these words and said he doubted he'd feel the same way when he faced his final days. Apparently, my grandfather had a deep sense of God's goodness and providence and was giving thanks for the life God had given him. Gratitude, as the Heidelberg Catechism teaches, is at the heart of the Christian life; it is also at the heart of the later years of our lives.

Douglas J. Schuurman is professor of religion at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn.

Stewardship

When we take the offering in our church, almost nobody puts anything in the collection plate. The deacons say that most people are paying electronically. I've even heard of churches that allow people to swipe a credit card in the service. Isn't this undermining the worshipful nature of the offering?

I have noticed this trend too and admit to contributing to it. Years ago, I set up automatic monthly contributions to the church. Checks are delivered automatically the first week of each month. It's certainly convenient. I have no guilty feelings from missed contributions, and the deacons are grateful for

consistent giving. I still contribute in the collection plate for benevolence or special offerings.

You are right that all this convenience and predictability comes at a cost. My computer has a greater connection to regular giving than I do. Maybe I set up the automatic payments, but once set up they simply keeps going out until I change the instructions. God loves a cheerful giver, says 2 Corinthians 9, but there is nothing cheery about computers automatically transferring funds from my account to the church's.

Two things for further thought. First, the Bible does not mandate any particular way of giving. In the Old Testament, sacrifices of produce or animals were brought to the altar. In the gospels, alms were placed in the temple treasury box. Neither of these matches what many of us grew up with: placing cash or budget envelopes in a collection basket to be brought to the front of the sanctuary. Let's not romanticize the past.

Second, we can be creative in devising moments in worship where we do bring things forward and physically offer them. Special offerings are one such occasion, so celebrate in the worship service these gifts to God.

Or what about this? A church I attended collected a "firstfruits" offering. Toward the end of July, when people's gardens were just coming in, people brought firstfruits from their garden to offer. These were placed on the communion table. The produce was then brought on Monday to a local food bank for distribution. What a lovely, tangible offering!

Rolf Bouma is interim pastor at Dearborn Christian Fellowship, Dearborn, Mich., and teaches in the University of Michigan's Program in the Environment in Ann Arbor.



Got a Big Question for any of our panelists? Email it to editorial@thebanner.org with "Big Questions" in the subject line.

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May 2019 Council of Delegates' Actions

The Council of Delegates met in Grimsby, Ont., on May 2-3, 2019. It took action on several issues. For much more detail on these items, visit TheBanner.org.

Calvin Theological Seminary professors Sarah Schreiber, Mariano Avila, and Amanda Benckhuysen; Calvin College chaplain Mary Hulst; and pastor William Koopmans are recommended to serve on the denomination's new **Bible translations committee**.

Violetta Diamond, Jane Bruin, Abdul Havougimana, Jack Koorman, Hillary Scholten, Claire McWilliams, Tom Ackerman, and Marie Ippel were appointed to serve on a committee to guide and support the **work of the Office of Social Justice (OSJ)**.

The Council recommended that Synod 2019 keep the **ministry shares rate** at \$346.48 per adult professing member. Ministry shares are the money churches send to support the ministries they have agreed to do together.

The Council prepared a comment to a synod advisory committee that will consider assigning **support for overseas missionaries** to just one or two classes (groups of churches). The Council said

that the request is well-intended but not flexible enough.

The Council also prepared a comment regarding a request to Synod 2019 to **keep an immigration attorney on retainer** for congregations and pastors who need help. The Council said it has already prepared a report on how the CRC can help immigrant churches. That report does not include having an attorney on retainer.

Council had some discussion about how appropriate it is to even **comment on an overture** (request) going to synod. Delegate John Lee said it violates church polity. Delegate Mark Volkers said that using the words “for consideration” means that synod can reject it if they don't like it.

The Council received a lengthy report raising many questions about **bivocational ministry**. The Council recommended that Synod 2019 appoint a task force to delve deeper into the issues.

After a comprehensive study examining the CRC's **church planting efforts**, Resonate Global Mission director Zachary King said that “one of the biggest problems we have holding us back as a denomination is that we seem to lack a common vision.” The Council endorsed establishing a team that will help set and implement church planting goals.

—Gayla R. Postma



'Skype Has Allowed Me to Continue Playing in Band'

Teacher Nicky DeBoer lives in Byron Center, Mich.; the band is located in Sunnyside, Wash. Dean Wagenaar, the principal of Sunnyside Christian High, didn't see that as a barrier.

Since 2016, the school has used Skype to connect students and teacher. DeBoer conducts her band class remotely every day on a large screen in the classroom.

“Skype has allowed me to continue playing in band,” said John Prins, 17. “The experience is almost identical to having a teacher in the classroom. She sees and hears us just as well.”

An adult supervisor also provides on-site presence, monitoring what DeBoer might not be able to notice.

“It might seem awkward,” said Wagenaar, who is a member of Sunnyside (Wash.) CRC, “but it has flowered into an excellent option for the school looking for a qualified Christian band teacher.”

—Jenny deGroot



Congregation Backs Member's Rodeo Outreach

James Douma (on the horse) in 2015 when he was still riding the rodeo circuit as a hobby.

James Douma, a former rodeo rider and member of Discovery Christian Reformed Church in Bowmanville, Ont., leads a part-time rodeo outreach ministry, encouraged by his pastor and supported by his church.

After a few years of enjoying the rodeo circuit as a participant and after some conversations with pastor Martin Spoelstra, Douma decided to start an Ontario branch of Cowboys of the Cross, an organization founded by American rodeo rider Scott Hilgendorff. Douma worked through a four-month course in outreach ministry with Spoelstra and in 2016 began showing up regularly at Ontario's Rawhide Rodeo circuit, pulling a Cowboys of the Cross trailer. Douma, together with his wife, Jen, and their young son, Mason, welcomes guests for lunch or coffee in the trailer and organizes a "cowboy church" talk and prayer on Saturdays and "church in the stands" on Sundays.

Discovery CRC supports the Doumas in their outreach, having commissioned James as an "elder at large." The congregation includes the ministry in regular prayers and member reports and offers financial support to help cover expenses.

—Ron Rupke

New Leader for Faith Formation Ministries



Chris Schoon, most recently senior pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in Hamilton, Ont., has been named the new team leader for Faith Formations Ministries, effective June 1.

Schoon, 46, takes over the position from Syd Hielema, who has led the ministry group since it was formed in 2014. Faith Formation Ministries provides resources and coaching to support CRC congregations as they help people grow in faith. The team includes 15 mainly part-time staff throughout the U.S. and Canada.

While equipping team members to keep on doing their work well, Schoon also wants to find new ways to communicate faith. "I hope to recognize diversity within our churches and to find and share resources that speak to diverse congregations," he said.

Hielema, who will turn 65 this year, plans to begin working half-time in a new position funded by a Lilly Foundation grant, encouraging team-based connections between CRC agencies and local churches.

—Ron Rupke

Noteworthy



Joe Covaci (left), a member of Kitchener (Ont.) Community Christian Reformed Church, achieved a **bronze medal in the 3,000-meter run at the 2019 Special Olympics World Games** in Abu Dhabi.

The Banner was recognized by the **Evangelical Press Association (EPA)**, receiving **Awards of Merit** in both the **digital and print categories** for a denominational magazine and seven other awards. **The Banner; RCA-CRC Disability Concerns; and Reformed Worship**, the journal of the Christian Reformed Church's Worship Ministries, all received recognition in the **"Best of the Church Press"** awards from the Associated Church Press, for work published in 2018.

The **Parliament of Canada established May 5 as Dutch Heritage Day**.

"The purpose . . . is to honor all those who made the sacrifice to liberate the Netherlands and to honor those who had the courage to leave everything and everyone behind and start up a new life in a strange land," said Member of Parliament Dave Van Kesteren, who proposed the bill.

Timothy Christian School in Elmhurst, Ill., celebrated **accreditation as a national arboretum**—a garden of trees. Bible teacher Mac Wiener, who attends Lombard (Ill.) CRC, was responsible for mapping the trees that led to the designation. John Harkema, retired teacher and longtime volunteer who attends Western Springs (Ill.) CRC, planted the school's more than 60 varieties of trees.

Synod 2019: What to Watch For

Synod 2019 (the annual leadership meeting of the Christian Reformed Church) convenes on June 14, when more than 200 delegates and advisers will gather at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. The *Agenda for Synod 2019* is a lengthy one, with much for delegates to consider before they adjourn on June 20. Here's what to expect. (Page numbers for the *Agenda for Synod 2019* are given for further reference.)

For our first-ever, user-friendly guide to the *Agenda for Synod*, visit TheBanner.org.

Changing the Church Order

The Church Order is the rulebook that all the churches covenant together to uphold. Some revisions proposed by Synod 2018 are up for adoption this year. Other changes are being proposed for adoption next year. It takes two synods to approve a change in the Church Order.

There's a proposed change to Article 42, adding a mandate for **regional pastors**. Article 39 contains the **definition of a classis**, with expansion to that definition being proposed. (See p. 64.)

The denomination's Candidacy Committee has expanded and reformatted the *Commissioned Pastor Handbook*, for approval by Synod 2019. Another suggested change is to the supplement of Article 8, regarding ministers coming to the CRC from other denominations. If adopted, that material will be also be applied to **ministers coming from independent congregations**. (See p. 266.)

The Candidacy Committee is also proposing that the Church Order Supplement, Articles 82-84 be changed. Those articles contain the protocol for suspension and deposition of ministers. The Candidacy Committee proposes that a statement be added to that section, requiring a classis be involved in the suspension or deposition of a commissioned pastor. The committee notes that this change would provide a parallel to the process for Ministers of the Word.

The church's Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee (EIRC) plays a role in reminding us that we are part of a worldwide Christian church. It currently classifies the CRC's relationships with other churches in four categories, from the closest (ecclesiastical fellowship) to the most distant. The EIRC wants to simplify the categories of affiliation, proposing that all but the first one be grouped into **a new category called churches in cooperation**. (See p. 321.) That new category would then encompass all the various relationships undertaken by various mission agencies.

The **Judicial Code Committee** (JCC) hears appeals of decisions made by a local church council, a classis, or an agency of the CRC if the decision is alleged to contravene the Church Order.

After hearing a complicated case that involved "Guidelines for Handling Abuse Allegations Against a Church Leader" in 2018, it is now **calling for a task force to be assigned by synod to study the committee's work**. Acknowledging that it could raise eyebrows, the JCC said it observed "a significant 'mismatch'" between the complexity of the JCC case taken up at Synod 2018 and "the capabilities (or lack thereof) of that body to adequately process it." You can find the JCC proposal starting on p. 69 of the *Agenda*. (See also "Judicial Code Committee Asks Synod 2019 for Review" on TheBanner.org.)

Abuse of Power

Synod 2018 spent many hours on the topic of abuse and instructed the Council of Delegates to bring recommendations to Synod 2019 about how the CRCNA can best address patterns of abuse of power at all levels of the denomination. See "Synod 2018 Confronts Abuse," July/Aug. 2018. A large report, "Addressing Abuse of Power in the CRC," is coming to Synod 2019. Its recommendations include taking much stronger actions than have been enacted by synods past, actions that some delegates might see as infringing on the authority of the local church council. Will delegates to this synod, most not having sat through last year's discussions, be willing to adopt such actions? The report will be contained in the 2019 Agenda for Synod Supplement since it was not completed in time for the Agenda deadline. See story "Recommendations to Prevent Abuse of Power," page 18.

U.S. Committee to Guide and Support the Office of Social Justice (OSJ)

Some actions taken by OSJ bring kudos from many people in the pews but raise consternation from others. The divide was discussed at Synod 2018, with synod instructing the Council to put together a committee to support and guide the ministry. Synod 2019 will see the Council-approved mandate, process, and composition of the committee. (See also "Synod 2018 Creates New Justice Committee," July/Aug. 2018.)

Ministry Shares

Synod 2019 will ponder some major changes in how ministry share amounts are set and how the budgets involving ministry shares are created. Ministry shares are the money churches agree to pay to support the ministries they have agreed to do together, rather than individually. The "**Reimagining Ministry Shares**" report (Agenda, p. 111) recommends asking churches to work within each classis to pledge the amount they will send for shared ministries, so budgets can be created with that information rather than with a best guess. (See also "Council of Delegates Discusses Reimagining Ministry Shares," Dec. 2018.) The Council

is recommending that Synod 2019 hold the per member rate at \$346.48.

Study Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality

This committee was appointed in 2016 with the task of providing “guidance for **what constitutes a holy and healthy Christian sexual life**” and to serve the church “with pastoral, ecclesial, and missional guidance...” Within that broad outline, the committee was specifically instructed to include (1) discuss how a Reformed hermeneutic does or does not comport with readings of Scripture being employed to endorse what are, for the historic church, groundbreaking conclusions regarding human sexual behavior and identification and (2) discuss, and potentially critique, untraditional conclusions arising from arguments about a new movement of the Spirit (e.g., Acts 15), as well as conclusions arising from scientific and social scientific studies.

This interim report lays out the committee’s **biblical theology of human sexuality**, starting on page 415 of the *Agenda*. The committee intends to add two additional sections. The first will explore numerous issues of human sexuality facing the church today with an analysis of the cultural context, the scriptural teaching that must shape the church’s approach to each issue, and proposals for pastoral care.

The second will explore the **confessional status of church teaching on sexuality** and whether the church should consider adopting a new statement of faith on sexuality. The committee has included in this interim report a copy of the Great Lakes Catechism on Marriage and Sexuality (see p. 437).

Because it is an interim report, there are no formal recommendations made. The final report will go to Synod 2021.

Synod Review Task Force

This report recommends some fine-tuning to the process of synod. Some of the recommended changes include limiting the length of speeches by delegates; providing better training prior to synod to help delegates acclimate to the large agenda and fast pace of the meeting; having classis send one or two delegates for two years in row. For a brief summary, see “Task Force Recommends Refinements for Annual Synods,” Feb. 2019. The full list of 32 recommendations is found on p. 454 of the *Agenda*.

Recommendations of charging a registration fee for delegates, imposing requirements for female and ethnic minority representation in delegations from the classes, and calling for power and privilege training for delegates are getting some resistance by way of overtures. See also “No Synod Delegate Fees, No Delegation Requirements” on *TheBanner.org*.



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Overtures & Appeals

Overtures are requests that synod take an action (or not).

- » Overture 6 asks synod to increase awareness of the **conflict between Israel and Palestine** (p. 482).
- » Overture 7 asks synod to **declare teachings of kinism a heresy**, in particular the teaching that interracial marriage is sinful and the teaching that God has ordained separation in a religio-ethnostate that necessitates racial separation in all areas of life (p. 489).
- » Overture 8 asks that synod **withdraw the Synod 2012 assertions about climate change**, in particular the assertions that climate change is occurring and is very likely due to human activity, and that human-induced climate change poses a significant threat (p. 505).
- » Overture 11 (p. 514) asks that funds for Resonate Global Mission missionaries come from a specific classis, rather than asking missionaries to fundraise across the denomination. It asserts that **missionaries are not called to fundraise first** and provide ministry second. The Council of Delegates is sending a comment to the appropriate synod advisory committee, saying that while well-intended, the proposal is not flexible enough.
- » In the spirit of reconciliation, Classis Lake Superior wants Synod 2019 to declare some **ministers who left the CRC for the United Reformed Church** due to convictions of their faith as “honorably released” (Overture 12, p. 515).

—Gayla R. Postma

Coming to Synod 2019: Recommendations to Prevent Abuse of Power

In the era of #MeToo and #ChurchToo, the Christian Reformed Church may be on the cusp of beefing up its policies to prevent and respond to abuse of power in the church community. The report, "Addressing Abuse of Power in the CRC," is coming to Synod 2019 with 11 recommendations calling for training and accountability.

"Effective prevention and response requires focused attention and intentional actions on all levels of the church, from the local church to the denominational offices," wrote the task force formed to address this issue.

The recommendations include: mandatory training for all persons entering vocational ministry in the CRC; a code of conduct that must be signed by ministry personnel employed at all levels of the church; and ongoing training for officebearers at the classis level.

The task force wants to strengthen the church's response to abuse of power when it happens, including tracking enquiries about abuse situations to prevent transfer of abusive leaders to other churches. And it wants non-disclosure agreements limited to those that include the best interests of both the survivor and the church.

Expanding the Definition of Abuse

The task force was formed at the behest of Synod 2018. That synod spent many hours considering the impact of abuse on the church's mission. It consequently mandated the creation of a task force to recommend strategies for both prevention and improving the response to those who suffer harm as a result of abuse.

The task force report focused on gaps in current policies, building on previous synodical reports.

Looking at the deeper factors that contribute to incidents of abuse, it broadens the focus from physical and sexual abuse to abuse of power, including bullying and harassment, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual assault.

The task force noted the spiritual implications of abuse for the church as the family of God and quoted Philippians 2:3 as a biblical picture of how power is to be used "in service to the other and not for 'selfish ambition or vain conceit.'"

Not Just Leaders

The task force noted that pastors and other ministry personnel can also be vulnerable to abuse of power. "Abuse of power by lay leaders puts pastors in vulnerable positions under our current systems of governance," the report stated. Other contexts include internships, senior pastor/associate pastor relations, and dynamics between pastors at classis or synod. "Harm can be done when the line between appropriate exercise of authority and abuse of power is crossed."

The committee also heard of cases in which staff within the CRCNA offices have been subjected to harassment, name-calling, and attacks on their personal and spiritual integrity by elders from individual churches. "The behavior goes beyond disagreements over specific actions or policies to harmful personal attacks."

The task force consulted with CRC members from the Korean, Chinese, Latino, African-American, and Indigenous communities and noted that in addition to the patterns of abuse found in the dominant culture, culturally specific differences are also present. Different life experiences of immigrant parents and children born in North America can contribute to misunderstandings that can lead to abuse of power. Also, in some culturally diverse churches, "there are incidents of powerful lay members both taking advantage of their positions within the church and engaging in abusive treatment of pastors."

At an institutional level, leaders from the dominant culture may dismiss or silence concerns raised by minority members and leaders. The task force wrote that an effective strategy to fight that would be to include examples from specific cultural contexts in training materials.

No Accurate Data

The task force reported that the CRC lacks accurate data about the patterns of abuse. "Abuse of office, sexual misconduct, and 'ungodly conduct,' the generic term in the Church Order, are found as the reasons for removal of pastors, other officebearers, and hired staff from their positions each year, but more specific records are not kept," the report stated. "A repeated complaint from churches is that they find out about previous patterns of abuse by a pastor only after a repeat incident because there are no notations on personnel records and churches do not share that information when a pastor is called to a different church."

The CRC's Office of Pastor-Church Resources reports an increase in requests for advice and workshops to deal with bullying and emotional abuse. And data provided by the CRC's Safe Church Ministry over the last three years indicate an increase in significant incidents of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse: 42 situations in 2016, 46 in 2017, and 76 in 2018. The incidents range from inappropriate contact and harassment to sexual abuse by a pastor.

Safe Church Ministry's approved protocol for responding to enquiries abuse is limited to allegations of physical or sexual abuse against a church leader. Safe Church responds to the calls with advice but does not have a mandate to follow up and does not have records of whether further action was taken.

Hope College's 'Awakening' Equips Youth in Worship Arts



Some Action, But Not Enough

It isn't that the CRC hasn't been active in abuse prevention for a long time. There has been a dedicated denominational Safe Church ministry in the CRC for 25 years (formerly known as the Office of Abuse Prevention). Since 1997, classes have been encouraged to have Safe Church teams.

Year after year, synods have recommended ways for classes and churches to prevent abuse. Denominational leaders at synod have advised, recommended, even pleaded with delegates to have their classes (regional groups of churches) create Safe Church teams, create and enforce Safe Church policies, develop protocols to respond to allegations of abuse, and incorporate training into church educational programs.

There has been progress. In 2011, 56 percent of the denomination's 1000-plus congregations had a policy; in 2017, that percentage was 72. In the most recent *Yearbook* survey of churches, 760 churches provided Safe Church data:

- » 86% reported having a policy
- » 36% have response protocols in place
- » 28% have a Safe Church team
- » 16% require training for officebearers regarding use and potential abuse of power
- » 7% include provide prevention training

The classis statistics show less improvement. Out of 48 classes, only 12 have an active Safe Church team, while 28 are working toward that.

If Synod 2019 adopts the task force's final recommendation to ensure implementation, those statistics could show improvement in time.

The final draft of the report was finished too late to make it into the *Agenda for Synod 2019*. It will be included in synod's supplementary agenda.

—Gayla R. Postma

The Awakening Institute, a summer worship arts camp at Hope College in Holland, Mich., is helping shape young worship leaders. Awakening IV runs June 9 to 14. In 2018, 55 high school students, including 14 from Christian Reformed congregations, attended the third annual session.

"One of the primary goals of Awakening is to have students understand and know the voice of God in their lives in the midst of a cacophony of sounds and distractions . . . and to be able to listen to him," said Jim De Boer, institute director.

In workshops, students delve deeper into various worship-related topics including theology, preaching, music (from guitar to organ), visual arts, and dance. Last year highlights of the week included worshipping on the shores of Lake Michigan and the Festival of Worship, a student-led worship service at the end of the week for family and friends.

Johanna Boelema, a member of Bauer CRC in Hudsonville, Mich., attended Awakening for the second time in 2018, when she was 17. She was attracted to Awakening specifically because it was "a worship-based camp and not a music-based camp." She said at the time she hoped to continue leading in school chapels and sharing with her fellow students some of the different worship styles she learned.

In 2016, Hope College received a \$500,000 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., to help fund the Awakening Institute.

—Susan Vanden Berg

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Benjamin Ypma

1919-2019

World War II veteran, minister, missionary, and pastoral counselor Ben Ypma lived a full life before he died on March 7, a month after his 100th birthday.

Drafted into the U.S. Army in 1941, Ypma served as a military policeman and as a bodyguard for Gen. Douglas MacArthur. While in New Guinea he suffered a severe infection of the feet and spent a year at Walter Reed Hospital.

After ordination in 1952, Ypma and his wife were missionaries in India, Japan, and Korea. He pastored First CRC in Grand Haven, Mich., and Bauer CRC in Hudsonville, Mich., before training in pastoral counseling. He then served at Koinonia Medical Center in Muskegon, Mich., until 1995. He also worked as a probation officer, substance abuse counselor, bailiff for the Ottawa County Court, and part-time at World Vision and Fruitport (Mich.) CRC. For decades he enjoyed helping at his son's tree nursery. Ypma never retired, said one of his daughters. "His active hobby was to serve others, in service to Jesus."

Predeceased by Marjorie, his wife of 54 years, and Ruth, his second wife of 12 years, Ypma is survived by two daughters and their spouses, seven grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Allen J. Bultman

1929-2019

Humble, hardworking, and compassionate, Allen Bultman had a way of being present with others that made them feel they were important to him. His sense of humor made him approachable. Not easily offended, Bultman welcomed different opinions and was a good listener. When the doctor told him that nothing further could be done and he would die, Bultman said, "This is not the end for me. It's another step in the journey, and what awaits me is wonderful." He passed away on March 8 at the age of 89.

After graduation from Calvin College and Seminary and ordination in 1959, Bultman pastored Irving Park Christian Reformed Church in Midland Park, N.J. He then served six churches in Michigan: Southern Heights CRC, Kalamazoo; 36th Street CRC, Wyoming; Hanley CRC, Grandville; Vogel Center CRC, McBain; Bauer CRC, Hudsonville; and Hope CRC, Grandville. He retired in 1992.

Bultman enjoyed gardening, sports, reading, current events, and time with family.

Preceded in death by his first wife, Joyce, Bultman will be lovingly remembered by his second wife, Betty; four children and spouses; and five step-children and spouses. Together Allen and Betty loved 22 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-granddaughter.

—Janet A. Greidanus

Alberta Church Hosts Interfaith Conference on Family



2019 Conference on the Family, Medicine Hat CRC.

For the third year, groups in Medicine Hat, Alta., concerned for the state of the family, held an annual conference. Medicine Hat Christian Reformed Church was the 2019 host.

Over 150 people attended, either in person or via livestream. Jeremy Williamson, a member of Medicine Hat CRC who was on the conference's organizing committee, said the purpose of the conference is for "building up, defending, strengthening, informing, and preparing families" for challenges they face.

2019 speakers included James E. Evanson, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and Jojo Ruba, executive director Faith Beyond Belief, an organization dedicated to Christian apologetics.

Though there are differences among the conference's supporting groups, Medicine Hat CRC pastor George Koopmans said belief in parents as responsible teachers and guardians is the common ground.

—Dan Veeneman

Remembering the Synod of Dort

On **Sunday, April 28**, many churches in Classis Minnkota came together to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Synod of Dort, a historic meeting of the Dutch Reformed Church that produced the Canons of Dort. About 325 people attended the afternoon **service hosted by First CRC in Edgerton, Minn.**

Pastor C. James den Dulk of Trinity CRC in Sparta, Mich., preached from Isaiah 12, "Behold, God Is My Salvation." Den Dulk noted that this passage was used at the end of the Synod of Dort and described how the members of the synod drew from the wells of God's grace to create the canons. Contemporary Christians have the opportunity to draw from the same wells of God's grace in our own lives.

First CRC pastor Scott Muilenberg said that the service's planning committee desired "to both introduce and reacquaint the Lord's people to this wonderful confessional document."

Dordt College (now Dordt University) in Sioux Center, Iowa, hosted "**The Prodigal Love of God: Reencountering Dort at 400 and Beyond**" conference in April. About 240 people attended the three-day event presented by Dordt's Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service. Speakers included authors Marilynne Robinson, Richard Mouw, James K.A. Smith, and Jemar Tisby, as well as other pastors and theologians. Dordt president Erik Hoekstra said, "I hope this conference re-energizes the Dordt community about the treasure that the canons are and the beauty that they expose of God's grace to us in Jesus Christ."

—Kyle Hoogendoorn

Past Director of Disaster Response Services Dies



Neil Molenaar, developer and first director of World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS), died on April 20, 2019. He was 86.

Molenaar created DRS in 1972 when he was domestic program director for what was at the time called Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. He was director until 1990.

World Renew U.S. director Carol Bremer-Bennet said, “[He] encouraged a generation of willing volunteers to step into disaster with love. . . . Every time DRS [volunteers] arrive to rebuild hope in a region of need, we pay a debt to Neil’s faithful courage.”

After leaving DRS, Molenaar and his wife, Kay, moved to Bremerton, Wash., where he managed a chapter of the Red Cross and coordinated with National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). He also networked congregations in the Lynden, Wash., area. The Molenaars moved to East Wenatchee, Wash., in 2006. Molenaar had been living in hospice care there since April 1.

—Alissa Vernon

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Steven J. Van Heest

1952-2019

Described as thoughtful and a man without pretense, Steven Van Heest blessed many in his years of ministry as a hospital chaplain. “Countless hurting patients and families were ministered to with grace and compassion because of Steve,” said one colleague. Van Heest, 66, passed away on March 10.

A graduate of Calvin Seminary and Drew University, Van Heest was ordained in 1979. He served Alamosa (Col.) Christian Reformed Church and Irving Park CRC in Midland Park, N.J., before taking Clinical Pastoral Education from 1990-1992. After that he pastored Westwood CRC in Kalamazoo, Mich., for seven years. He then began hospital chaplaincy at Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids, Mich., where he became director of pastoral care, and then at Bronson Healthcare Group in Battle Creek, Mich. He retired in 2015.

Van Heest loved his family and was a “great dad and grandpa” and an environmental steward. He had a great love of the water and enjoyed swimming, kayaking, and canoeing. He had recently become certified as a lifeguard and had started lifeguarding at the pool in a local gym.

He is survived by Sue Van Heest, their four children and their spouses, and eight grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Marinus A. Harberts

1930-2019

Marinus Harberts (also known as Mike or Reeney), ministered for 35 years in New Mexico, where he grew to love the people of the Navajo Nation. A humble and generous man, he was always willing to give what God had blessed him with to others. Harberts died on March 19.

After dropping out of high school, Harberts delivered telegrams by bicycle for Western Union, worked in a furniture factory, and served for two years in the U.S. Army before hearing God’s call to ministry and enrolling at Reformed Bible Institute. He remained in the Army Reserves for six years.

After serving Shiprock CRC and Naschitti CRC, Harberts went on to pastor Tohlakai CRC while he studied at Calvin Seminary. After examination at the first fully constituted meeting of Classis Red Mesa, he was ordained in 1983. In 1990 he accepted a call to Crownpoint CRC, retiring three years later to Ocheyedan, Iowa. He lived his final years in Apache Junction, Ariz., where he was closer to his children.

Predeceased by his wife, Jacoba (Cubby), in 1998 and daughter Michelle in 2017, Harberts is survived by his son and four daughters and their spouses; 16 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

—Janet A. Greidanus

READ MORE ONLINE



**Reframing, Restoring,
and Renewing Marriages**

by Cassie Westrate and Brian Clark

“We live in a culture that promotes a Hollywood fantasy that if you’re with your soulmate, everything will be hunkydory—you’ll live happily ever after—and there will be no issues,” said Rev. Deb Koster, producer of *Family Fire*. “The reality is that we’re all broken, and we’re trying to find ways to live together in fellowship, sharp edges and all.”

Produced by ReFrame Media, the English-language outreach of Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI), the *Family Fire* ministry focuses on family and marriage relationships.

Marriage is a portrait of God’s love for the church, Koster noted, and healthy marriages characterized by mutual forgiveness reflect God’s sacrificial love for the church. Marriages affect not only the two spouses, but also children, families, church congregations, and whole communities. The mutual sacrifices required in healthy marriages bear witness to God’s loving-kindness. But people around the world struggle with ideals, habits, and cultural norms that hinder God’s purposes for marriage.

Through its agencies, ministries, and congregations, the Christian Reformed Church strives to help partners throughout North America and the world reframe, renew, and restore their marriages so they reflect God’s heart for redemption.

Reframing Marriages in North America

In a May 2017 *Banner* article, Koster shared the story of Carletta and Lyndon, who started using *Family Fire* resources to restore their crumbling marriage.

“We fought, but not fairly. Then I found *Family Fire*,” said Carletta in the 2017 article.

Two years later, Koster calls Carletta a *Family Fire* “super-fan,” referring to the number of ways she tries to help others reframe their marriages.

Carletta and her husband started bringing *Family Fire* resources to their church. She and her husband are also planning to lead their own marriage retreat using *Family Fire* resources later this year.

Pastor Israel and his wife, Elizabeth, renewed their vows when they attended a marriage conference hosted by Resonate Global Mission missionaries Abe and Elaine Lee in Mexico.

Carletta is particularly passionate about walking alongside women whose marriages are stressed or in crisis. She’s also an active member in *Family Fire*’s closed Facebook group “Women Praying for Their Marriage.” With about 500 members, the group uses media to provide support and a safe place for women to share their challenges in marriage and to encourage and pray for one another.

The mutual sacrifices

required in healthy

marriages bear witness

to God’s lovingkindness

to us all.

“I think the biggest thing for people in hurting relationships is they don’t have great support networks,” said Koster. “[Maybe] they’re not wanting to tell their church friends their marriage is a mess, or they’re not wanting their family or friends to know how bad things have gotten.”

Because shame often prevents people from seeking help or confiding in family and friends, *Family Fire* provides support and resources to strengthen marriages in North America that people can easily access through social media.

But people in North America aren’t the only ones who grapple with how to live in marriages. People struggle in marriage relationships throughout the world.

Restoring Marriages in Burkina Faso

After 26 years of marriage, Samira had had enough.

Most people knew Samira’s husband for his leadership roles in their church, but behind closed doors he was abusive. As a wife and mother living in Burkina Faso, Samira felt helpless. While programs exist in many parts of the world to support women in Samira’s situation, there are next to none in her community.

“Often when a woman in Burkina Faso has children with a man, she doesn’t want to leave him no matter what,” said Rev. Marc Nabie, BTGMI’s French-language ministry coordinator in Burkina Faso. “Socially, divorce is not well-taken, and most women depend on their husbands financially. So where would they go if they leave?”

Samira’s feelings of helplessness are all too common in the country. In response, Nabie and BTGMI’s French-language ministry team created an entire radio series, *From Harm to Blessing*, dedicated to marriage issues. In these programs, Nabie and volunteers such as Mrs. Nacro discuss God’s

vision for marriage and help couples build a biblical foundation for their relationships.

Samira first heard Nacro's voice on the air during a radio message about wounds and healing. From the message, Samira realized that how her husband treated her was not OK. She also realized that even if her husband did change his behavior, she would never be able to forgive him without God's help. She reached out to Nacro for help in taking the next step.

Nacro invited Samira into her home, where Samira quickly broke down. Soon, both women were crying.

"The two spent almost seven hours together that day," said Nabie. "They prayed with all their heart for the salvation of her husband, that Samira would have courage to speak up for herself, that her husband would be able to change his behavior, and that God would help Samira forgive him."

The day of prayer didn't change Samira's husband in an instant, but God began working in his life. After weeks of more counseling and prayer with Nacro, Samira reported something amazing.

"Her husband went down on his knees in front of her and their children," said Nabie. "He begged for their pardon, crying."

Because she had already prayed about this and told her husband how she deserved to be treated, Samira was able to reach out in forgiveness.

Stories of transformation like Samira's and her husband's don't happen in every marriage. For every couple like this, the ministry team meets several others who aren't in a position to reconcile and restore their marriages.

"Not every relationship is healthy enough to find a place of restoration," said Koster, speaking from her *Family Fire* experiences. She pointed out that often in an abusive situation it may be necessary for one partner to leave a marriage.

"Restoration is the ideal, and it's what we're called to strive for, but the reality on this broken side of heaven is: it's not always possible when you have people enmeshed in addictions and abusive habits and behaviors," she said.

BTGMI's French-language ministry team has been overwhelmed with listeners who want to follow up with them for support. For many people, the ministry team is the only place to turn.

Renewing Marriages in Mexico

Sometimes marriage struggles are not evident in daily life. Pastor Israel and his wife, Elizabeth, thought their marriage was healthy, but they weren't always honest with each other.

They acted differently as a married couple at church than they did at home. Church was a stage where they were polite



Mrs. Nacro, a BTGMI ministry leader, provided support for Samira when she had nowhere else to turn.

and respectful, but at home, behind the scenes, they were blunt and would often bicker. Their children noticed.

When Resonate Global Mission missionaries Abe and Elaine Lee invited Israel and Elizabeth to participate in a marriage seminar, they opened up.

"They brought up a lot of issues they were having," said Elaine. "[But] when they communicated with each other, they were able to share what was hurting them and what was making them happy."

Recognizing that they were having trouble communicating with one another, Israel and Elizabeth asked for advice. In the months after the seminar, they worked on being honest with one another both in and out of the home.

"Now they talk more, talk to each other," said Elaine. "As they're getting better, their children are responding to that."

Not only do Israel and Elizabeth's children notice the difference in the couple's interactions, but the church notices too. As a pastor couple, Israel and Elizabeth often provide marriage counseling to married couples in their church and are now more authentic and vulnerable when sharing about marriage challenges.

"Marriage ministry is so important," said Abe—"first of all to our pastors, and, through them, their churches."

Marriages are intimate bonds that take a lot of work to maintain and strengthen, and the challenges cross all ages, socioeconomic sectors, and national boundaries. But marriage is an important covenant designed by God—a portrait of God's own love for his church. That's why CRC ministry leaders work so hard with people from every country and every walk of life.

"The church has so much to say to a broken, hurting world that's struggling to make sense of living relationally," said Koster. "It's part of our work because it's part of God's heart." **B**

Cassie Westrate, Resonate Global Mission

Brian Clark, Back to God Ministries International

Responding to Abuse

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, stories of inappropriately addressed misconduct have left a tumultuous wake in many major churches and denominations, from Willow Creek to the Southern Baptist Convention to Sovereign Grace Ministries and more. Every disclosure or allegation of abuse is different, yet all of them require thorough consideration, discernment, and proper care for those involved.

It's common for people to believe abuse can't happen in their congregation. As we've seen, though, it can and indeed does happen even in "our" churches. Here are a few key things to keep in mind if your congregation finds itself navigating similar situations. (Material adapted from Safe Church Ministry's *Responding to Abuse—A Toolkit for Churches*, Faith Alive Christian Resources.)

First, listen and pray. Carefully and without judgment, listen to any disclosure or allegation of abuse. To be heard with empathy is one of the greatest needs of someone who has suffered abuse. Simply by listening you are already offering something more valuable than you might imagine. Remember to pray, take a deep breath, and avoid a fast, easy, or flip-pant answer. These situations can be very complicated; remember that you are only hearing one perspective.

If a minor is involved:

- » Determine whether this is a reportable offense. In some states and provinces, failure to report can lead to criminal liability. When in doubt, report the incident to the proper authorities.
- » Know whom in your church to contact as a next step to properly deal with the situation.

- » Affirm the child. If you are hearing a disclosure directly from a child, affirm that he or she is doing the right thing in telling you what happened. Stay calm. Offer reassurance that the abuse was not his or her fault.
- » Support those involved. The role of the church is to provide pastoral care to all who are directly involved. Confidentiality is especially important when a minor is involved, but it is also important to recognize that the situation may be too heavy for family members and those directly involved to carry alone. Community resources may be available to offer various kinds of support.

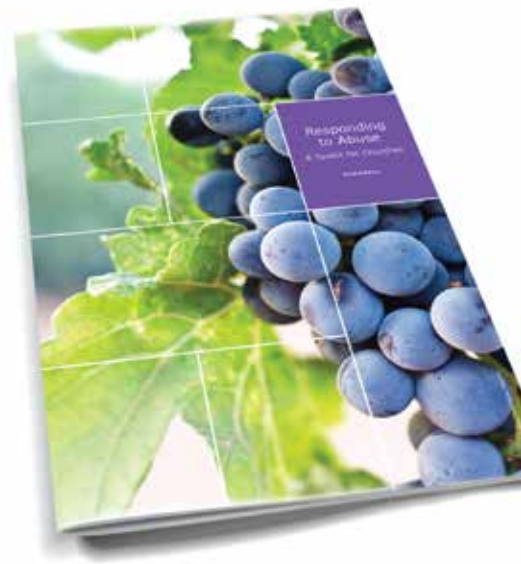
When a church leader is involved:

- » Take a deep breath and a step back. It is shocking to hear allegations of abuse against a church leader, especially if it is someone you know and trust. Listen to the allegation completely before making any judgment.
- » Thank those who spoke up for their courage in sharing their story. Assure them that you care about them. Ask them what they want to happen, and take your cues from them. This will help them feel empowered again after the extreme powerlessness they experienced in the abusive situation.
- » Know whom to contact. Connecting with a safe-church team member can be especially helpful. They will be able to offer perspective, consultation, and an understanding of the advisory panel process approved by synod for use in situations of alleged abuse against a church leader. To learn more about the safe church team in your area, visit crcna.org/safechurch.

Last, a note about abuse: When a church leader is involved in any sort of sexual misconduct, the relationship is an abuse of office, position, and authority due to the power differential in the ministry relationship. Synod 2016 adopted a new supplement to Church Order Article 83 that states: "One of the key dynamics in considering abuse of office is the imbalance and misuse of power. The power inherent in the role of office bearer represents a sacred trust and must not be misused" (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 865).

For more information, visit crcna.org/safechurch.

—Eric Kas, *Safe Church Ministry*



The View from Here

Embracing Change

“PERHAPS NOTHING in North American culture has changed more rapidly and dramatically than sexual mores.” This sentence is from the interim report the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-Laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality is providing to synod this month.

Synod 2016 thought it best to zero in on the core issue of human sexuality by calling for a report that would be “foundation-laying.” Yet this observation about changes in society’s norms can also help us think about a variety of items coming to synod this year.

In addition to human sexuality, Synod 2019 will also be looking at a report on the abuse of power in the church and discussing overtures on topics such as climate change, Israel-Palestine matters, immigration, and kinism.

As the volume and variety of these topics indicate, we live in an often-confusing, ever-shifting, and broken world. We see changes happening dramatically in seemingly accelerated ways. How ought the church to respond?

Change in and of itself isn’t something a synod study committee can address, nor is it something that necessarily requires an overture. Nevertheless, I think it is important to pause and note at least two things about change.

First, individually and among families and friends, we grow weary. Our Judeo-Christian heritage once felt like solid ground but now seems to have

God has
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gone missing. This feels even more significant than the generation gap of a few decades past. It’s not only that we are struggling to understand the new ideas of our youth; rather, new perspectives from young and old alike are winging in fast and furiously.

Just what is kinism? What does science really say about climate change? What is the #MeToo movement and how does it relate to the abuse of power? What’s more, some of the perspectives on these ideas drastically contradict others. In the face of so many issues and so many perspectives, we grow weary.

The second thing I’d like to point out is that in the face of this weariness, we have a solution. We must turn to our faith as expressed in Scripture, as reflected in our creeds and confessions, as explained in our contemporary testimonies, and as proclaimed every Sunday. God has provided us with the Holy Spirit to guide us in the midst of the changes we face. We are tasked with being faithful about listening for the Spirit and seeking to discern God’s will.

In this, I am reminded of a seminar presentation given by John Kromminga back in 1971 at the Seminary in the Rockies. This seminar came during another era of dramatic change, and as Kromminga considered how the church ought to react, he stressed the work of the Holy Spirit:

“The presence of the Holy Spirit is to be presumed. It is to be expected. It is to be sought. It is to be discovered. And we have to do this together. The Christian preacher, the Christian teacher, the Christian professional, and every Christian member have to be working at this, teaching one another and listening to one another. If this can be done, we can cope with change and yet not lose community. If this can be done, we can change and yet not change. We can serve the whole world and not lose our own soul. Who is going to say that it cannot be done?”



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

Spanish and Korean translations of this article are available at TheBanner.org.

이 기사의 한글번역은 TheBanner.org/korean에서 보실 수 있습니다.

Este artículo está disponible en español en TheBanner.org/spanish.

Expect Inspiration at August Event

Set for Aug. 1-3 in Windsor, Ont., at the St. Clair Centre for the Arts, Inspire 2019 will be a great time of worship and fellowship as well as a chance to learn about ways in which the Christian Reformed Church is offering the gospel message to people around the world.

I'm sure of this because I got to attend Inspire 2017 in my hometown, Detroit. While it was great to see family and to visit a few old stomping grounds, Inspire was by far the highlight of that trip.

As a writer for Christian Reformed Church Communications, I've covered many events and conferences. Going into downtown Detroit's Renaissance Center for Inspire 2017, I wondered if this would be another one of those interesting, but not necessarily . . . well, *inspiring* gatherings to write about. I was wrong.

Almost as soon as I arrived, I sensed an eagerness and attitude of expectation among those attending from all over North America and beyond. There was an indescribable energy and spirit that would show itself in rousing times of worship, compelling plenary speakers, insightful workshops, and times to hang out with one another.

Inspire 2019 promises to be just as enjoyable, challenging, and valuable for those who are leaders or volunteers in their churches. Bestselling author Ann Voskamp, who had to cancel her appearance at Inspire 2017 because of sickness, will speak on Friday evening. Voskamp's books include *The Broken Way: A Daring Path into the Abundant Life* and *Unwrapping the Greatest Gift*.

Ed Stetzer, an author, seminary professor, and internationally known church planter, will speak earlier in the day.



Both Stetzer and Voskamp will be part of worship times led by Gail De Young, worship leader at Rehoboth CRC in Gallup, N. Mex., and Jeremy Simpson, associate pastor of community life and worship at Southridge Church, a Reformed Church in America congregation in Kalamazoo, Mich. Each day a praise team will invite participants to worship with music and songs spanning many styles and traditions.

Thursday's keynote speaker will be Calvin College Chaplain Mary Hulst, who will talk about what it means for all generations and cultures to seek faith and "to be church together in the 21st century."

Soong-Chan Rah, the Milton B. Engebretson Professor of Church Growth and Evangelism at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, Ill., will speak about "The Necessity of Lament in Our Broken World."

Dozens of workshops will explore topics such as racism in the church, the latest trends in and resources for

worship, help for deacons and elders with their congregational ministries, disability concerns, ministry in an interfaith world, and leadership development.

Looking ahead to the engaging speakers, powerful worship, and fascinating workshops, I expect that the same excitement and energy—inspired by the same Spirit—will be evident at Inspire 2019 as it was two years ago in Detroit.

—Chris Meehan,
CRC Communications

To learn more or to register, visit crcna.org/Inspire.

Making an Impact on Students and the World

JUL MEDENBLIK, PRESIDENT of Calvin Theological Seminary, recalls praying in January 2018 with a graduate who was returning to China to work at an unregistered seminary. This seminary had been vandalized, and the government ultimately ended worship services at the church affiliated with the seminary. It would be a tough job, and Medenblik prayed that God would be with the graduate.

“Week by week the church continues to meet in small groups, furthering the work leaders have been trained to do,” wrote Medenblik in the seminary’s 2018 Impact Report.

The Impact Report, issued in March 2019, offers a glimpse of work the seminary accomplished in the 2018 academic year.

Medenblik also wrote about the privilege of congratulating a specific group of students who have completed their certificate coursework: “What’s unique about this group of students is that they are all serving a prison sentence; they are part of the Calvin Prison Initiative at the Handlon Correctional Facility ‘campus’ in Ionia, Mich.”

The Impact Report also offers a look at the seminary’s Mosaic Program.

Supported by the Faculty Heritage Fund, the pilot was launched during the spring semester of 2018 and followed by a second program in fall 2018. The Mosaic Program seeks to promote a more hospitable learning environment by helping faculty, staff, and students see matters from points of view and cultural contexts other than their own; to build a community of faculty, staff, and students who join together to learn about and be shaped by significant issues in the Calvin Seminary community and the larger society; and ultimately to develop community.

Throughout the spring 2018 semester, the program focused on acknowledging the value in diversity and offered the following activities:

- » reading together the “Book of the Semester”: *Beyond Colorblind: Redeeming Our Ethnic Journey* by Sarah Shin;
- » a Mosaic discussion group and small-group discussion on the book based on questions prepared by the presenters;
- » a town hall video interview with the author; and
- » two chapel services in April organized and led by the Mosaic discussion group.

In Fall 2018, the program focused on the history of racial discrimination in the United States and included the following activities:

- » reading together Frederick Douglass’s first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*;

- » a trip to the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia in Big Rapids, Mich.;
- » a Mosaic discussion group and small-group discussion based on questions prepared by the presenters;
- » a town hall discussion on Frederick Douglass led by seminary professor Danjuma Gibson; and
- » a December chapel service led by the Mosaic discussion group participants.

Each year, the seminary takes about 25 students either to Israel/Palestine or Turkey/Greece in order to visit places such as Jerusalem, Nazareth, Galilee, Ephesus, or Corinth. Students report that the trips affect how they read the Bible and how they imagine the contexts of the lives of Jesus, Paul, David, or Moses. They understand “wilderness,” perhaps for the first time; they take a boat on the Sea of Galilee and read the account of Jesus stilling the storm. They visit the 1,700-year-old church in Jerusalem that has commemorated and protected the presumed places of Jesus’ death and resurrection. They walk in the desert where Jesus was tested and see the Jordan River, where he was baptized. These memories then become an archive of images that will remain with the students and inform their preaching and teaching.

—Chris Meehan,
for Calvin Theological Seminary

Renewed Minds, Changed Marriages



SOLOMON AND IMMACULATE

EMYEDU live with their 11 children in the small fishing village of Apai in northern Uganda. World Renew works with a long-time partner, Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) Church of Kaberamaido, to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS in the area.

The Emyedus are one of the local couples who have turned their relationship around through World Renew's Stepping Stones program. As part of a small neighborhood group organized by the PAG Church, Solomon and Immaculate met weekly for several months to talk with other couples about healthy family life, marital faithfulness, and loving relationships.

Their group was part of a PAG outreach effort among 200 families in three fishing communities along Lake Kyoga, Uganda. These groups are led by community health champions and church leaders trained by World Renew.

The groups are facilitated using one of the participatory approaches that World Renew employs in group settings: members explore their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors with the goal of analyzing and practicing new options that will result in more positive outcomes.

Before joining Stepping Stones, Solomon was a chronic alcohol abuser. At times, he was so drunk that he did not make it home at night. Other times he was unfaithful to his wife and slept with other women in the village. Immaculate also began to drink heavily and had an illicit relationship outside of marriage.

"I wasted all the money I made from my fishing business on drinking and reckless living," Solomon said. "As husband and wife, we fought a lot."

Solomon is now a church group leader, and Immaculate became the chairperson of the local mothers' union, mentoring other women about healthy family life.

Solomon and Immaculate Emyedu got help for their marriage through World Renew's Stepping Stones program.

"Participating in a community group has strengthened our faith in God," Immaculate said. "Through it, I have learned to put God first and to be faithful to my husband."

In addition to having leadership positions in the church, Solomon and his wife also serve as role models for other families in Apai. They are now counseling three couples who are experiencing dissension and unfaithfulness in marriage. Their influence is inspiring others to change their minds and behavior as well.

"I realized that I put off joining a community group at first because I didn't want to change," Solomon said. "But now I know that I would have been a better man, husband, and father long ago if I had."

—Beth DeGraff, World Renew



Theology Matters. Whether You're 8 or 88.

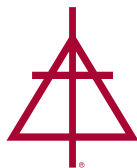
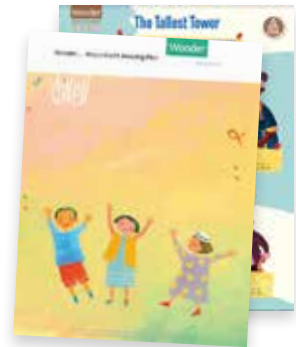
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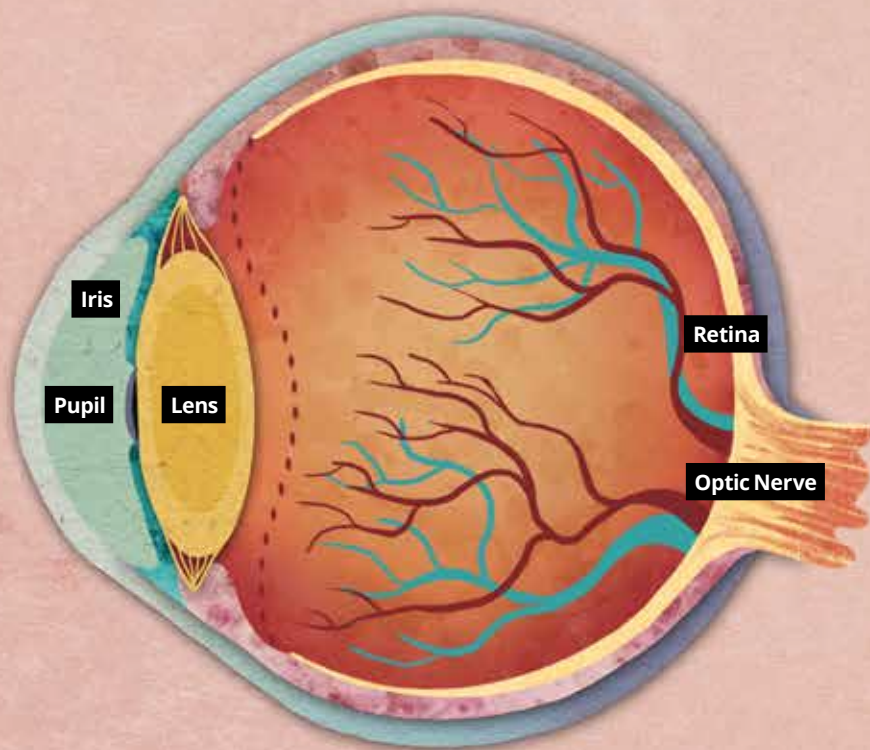


**Christian
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Candidacy Committee / Chaplaincy and Care Ministry / Pastor Church Resources

Look and See!

WE CAN'T SEE GOD with our eyes. But God has made amazing things we *can* see that show us something about our awesome God. God created towering mountains and blazing stars and all sorts of wild and wonderful animals, and God gave us incredible eyes to see it all!



Rachel Lancashire is a freelance writer with an educational background in wildlife. She grew up in the Christian Reformed Church and currently attends Gilmour Memorial Baptist Church in Selwyn, Ont.

How Do Eyes Work?

Have you ever looked in the mirror and watched your pupils get bigger or smaller? Your eyes do this in order to change the amount of light being let in. The light is focused on the retina, and then information about the light travels along the optic nerve to the brain. The picture on the retina is upside down, but the brain turns it right-side up.

People see objects with both eyes because our eyes are located on the front of our face. This helps us to know how far away something is.

Cats and dogs also have this kind of vision. Other animals such as deer and rabbits only see objects with one eye at a time because their eyes are on each side of their head. This allows them to see a wider area around them and watch out for predators.

To see the difference seeing with one eye or two eyes makes in how far away an object looks, try this. Hold a pencil in each hand, and hold your arms out in front of you. Now close one eye and move the pencils toward each other, trying to get the ends to touch. Then try it again with both eyes open.

Extreme Eyes

Chameleons can move each of their eyes in different directions at the same time, letting them see all around and look at objects with just one eye or with both. Check out this YouTube video to watch a chameleon move its eyes: bit.ly/2Z54j0W.

Eagles have such powerful eyesight that they are able to see a rabbit as far away as three kilometers (almost two miles)!

Giant squids have the biggest eyes—about the size of a dinner plate!

Giant clams have the most eyes, with hundreds of tiny “pinhole eyes” that help them detect predators.

God's Eyes

Did you know that the Bible talks a lot about God's eyes? Look up these verses to find out what God sees and looks at.

- » Psalm 34:15
- » Psalm 139:16
- » 2 Chronicles 16:9





A Reluctant Missionary

Ruth Moblard DeYoung

Ken Lee's journey to fulfill his calling as a missionary in Japan was unusual and challenging. Born in 1959 as Ha-Jin, Lee was the fourth son of a struggling atheistic family in South Korea, a country still recovering from the Korean War. With Ha-Jin's birth, nine people lived in their small house.

Ken's Korean name, Ha-Jin, means "peaceful river," but four times he almost drowned. Once, accompanying his grandmother to a river to wash clothes, Ha-Jin slipped into the river and was swept downstream, the air in his loose shirt barely keeping him afloat. His grandmother sprinted along the shore and pulled him out, sobbing as she held him close.

Ha-Jin looked up at his grandmother and asked, "Why are you crying? I'm all right."

"I'm crying for happiness, my little peaceful river," she replied. "You could have drowned!"

Ha-Jin and his brothers helped supply protein for the family's diet by catching grasshoppers for snacks and frogs for supper.

At school Ha-Jin and his brothers learned about the atrocities Koreans had suffered during the Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910 until the end of World War II in 1945. During those 35 years, about 6 million Koreans were killed for refusing to worship the emperor of Japan—or for no reason at all. Ha-Jin's grandfather fled to Manchuria to avoid death. During the occupation, the Japanese tried to make Korea a part of Japan. They banned Korean-language newspapers, and schools taught only Japanese. Koreans were not allowed to celebrate their traditional festivals.

As a result, Ha-Jin grew to hate the Japanese. "They are my enemies!" he said. "They are bad people. I will never forgive them for what they did!"

Ha-Jin's life changed dramatically in July 1971 when he flew to the United States with his mother and one of his brothers. His father and two older

brothers had gone ahead in 1970. After a long journey, they arrived in California. There Ha-Jin met aunts, uncles, and cousins and discovered that his new American name was Kenny. Ken enjoyed living in America. For the first time, he had enough food, even though it took a while to acquire a taste for new foods like hamburgers. Ken was ready for sixth grade, but entered fifth grade to improve his English.

Christian influences entered Ken's life. Spending time at his friend Jimmy Lucas's home, Ken observed a Christian family stopping before meals to thank God. When Ken was 16, his oldest brother married a Korean Christian, and Ken started attending church with them on Sundays. Ken was baptized there without fully understanding the meaning of baptism.

Ken's friend John Yang invited Ken to play on the soccer team of Orange Korean Christian Reformed Church, which met at Fountain Valley Christian Reformed Church. Ken loved

soccer and gladly joined the team. At the end of the season, the soccer team was recognized at a church service, leading Ken to attend services and Bible studies there.

At the church, Ken grew to understand what being a Christian means. There he also met Jeannie, who had recently arrived from Korea. Jeannie, who grew up in a Christian home, helped Ken grow in his faith and commitment. By that time, Ken had been in the U.S. for 10 years and was able to help Jeannie adjust to life in the U.S. Ken and Jeannie fell in love. Eventually they were married and had three daughters.

Ken developed a strong interest in missions and prayed for his parents to become Christians. When Christy Wilson, a former missionary and a professor at Fuller Seminary, spoke at his church, Ken told him, "I feel that God wants me to be a missionary, but I don't have a college degree." Wilson told Ken that Fuller accepted students 35 years or older provisionally, so he could earn his divinity degree and be ordained. In 1990, Ken began his studies while he and Jeannie ran a deli. Though struggling financially, Ken refused help from his parents, wanting them to see God providing for his family's needs.

Ken knew God wanted him to be a missionary, but didn't know where. He led summer mission trips to Tijuana, Mexico, in 1994 and to a remote area of Thailand in 1995. On these trips the volunteers built churches, led vacation Bible school, and interacted with the people. In Thailand, volunteers' white shirts turned brown from washing them in the muddy river water. They endured flea and mosquito bites without complaining. That was Ken's rule.

In 1996, Ken was preparing to lead a team either to Nepal or to South America. His pastor asked him to lead a group to Japan instead.

"No, I can't take the gospel to Japan!" Ken blurted out. "I think you know the reason. My heart is filled with hatred for the Japanese people!"

During the occupation, the Japanese attempted to make Korea a part of Japan. They banned Korean-language newspapers, and schools taught only Japanese.

"Do one thing, Ken," his pastor responded. "Please pray about this decision before I tell the mission board that you're unwilling."

Ken prayed and decided that God did want him to go. But like Jonah, who went only reluctantly to Nineveh, Ken was an unwilling missionary preparing to lead eight volunteers. In Japan, the group taught English and visited mental hospitals, a rehabilitation center, kindergarten classes, and a community center. Meanwhile, Ken still hated the Japanese. In his mind he cursed them for what they had done to the Korean people. When he saw elderly people suffering, Ken thought, "Look at you! This is what you get for doing bad things to my ancestors." Ken complained to God: "Why did you bring me to this place? It's so hot and humid, and I hate it!"

But God had brought Ken to Japan, unwilling missionary though he was. At a young adult retreat, Chigiri Arai approached Ken with tears in her eyes, asking to speak with him privately. "Pastor Ken," she said, "I am sorry."

"Sorry?" he responded. "Why?"


"I want to apologize for what my people did to your people. As a history teacher,

I know about the suffering we inflicted on the people of Korea, but Pastor Ken, please come back to Japan. I am a Christian, and I know that Japan needs to learn about Jesus. We need you!"

Ken was moved by her heartfelt apology and request. He ran outside and started to cry, repenting before God for his prejudice and animosity toward the Japanese people.

Back in California, Ken prayed about where to serve. God reminded him of Arai's request, changing the heart of an unwilling missionary to a willing one. On August 15, 1999, Ken was ordained as a minister, and he and Jeannie were commissioned as full-time missionaries with Christian Reformed World Missions.

Ken had prayed for 19 years that his parents would attend church. On their first Thanksgiving in Japan, Ken called his parents, who told him they had attended church to worship God. Five years later, on Easter Day, 2004, Ken's mother and father were baptized. Eventually all of Ken's relatives became Christians.

Ken and Jeannie continue to share the news of God's love in Japan with the people he once hated as missionaries with Resonate Global Missions. God is using Ken to train young leaders to spread the Christian faith in Japan. 



Ruth Moblard DeYoung, a former *Banner* news correspondent and teacher, writes children's books. She is a member of Hope Christian Reformed Church in Oak Forest, Ill.

Clutching for Solid Ground

Before, the future felt like hiking the crest of a mountainous trail with a clear view of the many possibilities ahead. After, it's like being thrown into a pit without a view.



Glen Vanderkooi, his wife, Kori, and their children live in Byron Center, Mich., and are members of Heritage CRC.

YEARS AGO, DURING A CANOE TRIP

on a Michigan river, I stepped into what appeared to be shallow water to pull the canoe to shore. But the water was over my head. Instantly I was disoriented, grasping for anything to provide stability. I finally reached the shore, but not without a major scare.

At age 44, another experience changed me in an instant. Years later, I am still clutching for solid ground. On that warm summer day, I finished my work at a large corporation where I oversaw the real estate area of the legal department while also working on 20-plus transactions. Often while driving, I would recite Romans 1-8, but that day a personnel issue at work distracted me.

After supper, my wife, Kori, and I took our dogs for a walk. We decided to postpone a family camping trip because we were too busy. Back home I joined our three sons for a video and ice cream. While seated, I fell to my side. Disoriented, I tried to get up but crashed into furniture and fell to the floor, ice cream dripping from my face. As Kori rushed into the room and helped me up from the floor I thought, *I'm going to die.*

Things calmed down before an ambulance arrived. Although I could answer questions and follow commands, I was taken to the hospital as a precaution. Some of the symptoms returned, but the doctor assured us it was not a stroke and encouraged Kori to go home. I emailed my employer to let them know what had happened and then rested. A few hours later, a nurse called out, "He's having a stroke!"

I spent 15 days in the intensive care unit and underwent two surgeries, including the removal of half of my



Photo by Alexander Lam on Unsplash

skull when my brain swelled dangerously fast. After the craniectomy, the physician's assistant told Kori that if I survived the massive stroke, I would not be on the "weeks or months recovery plan" but on the "years plan," suggesting a long road ahead.

The physician's assistant was right. The changes caused by my stroke were instantaneous and difficult for me, for Kori, and for our four children, then ages 9 through 14. Our family would never be the same.

Before, I was strong. After, I was weak. Before, I'd negotiated a 30-page contract on the phone while driving home. Since my stroke, I've struggled with simple cognitive tasks and have not yet been cleared to drive. Before, I ran three or four miles and biked 20 miles on a whim. Learning to walk with a cane and ride an adaptive bike have been slow processes.


Before, I was able to help others financially. Now I receive help from others. Before, the future felt like hiking the crest of a mountain trail with a clear view of the many possibilities ahead. After, it's like being thrown into a pit without a view.

Before, I knew God's promise in Romans 8:28 to work all things for "the



good of those who love him.” Now my focus is that the promise is for those “who have been called according to his purpose.” Since God’s purpose is his glory (Isa. 42:8), terrible circumstances work for good if God is glorified through them. I’d rather glorify God in strength, good health, exceptional abilities, and financial stability, but through my struggles, I’m beginning to learn that this is not always God’s way.

I’m learning that God is glorified through my weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). God is glorified when our church family surrounds our family with encouragement, love, and prayers (Gal. 6:10) and when others see their good works and praise God (Matt. 5:16). God is glorified when I praise God for pulling me out of the pit (Ps. 40:2).

I’m struggling to try to grasp these truths daily while still living with grief. It is not how I wanted to learn. I’m beginning to understand that Romans 8:28 is not a promise of a “happily ever after” in this life. But it assures us that even in the worst circumstances, God provides opportunities to glorify him. 

We Are Not Alone

July 17, 2014, was the last day Glen went to work; the last day he drove a car; the last day we were able to walk hand in hand; the last day our four kids had a “normal” family life with a dad who could run around and play with them, drive them places, and engage with them at their level. It was the last day of true independence for Glen—and in some ways, for all of us.

As a family, we are no longer free to do all of the things that we used to love to do together—Sunday hikes at Saugatuck State Park, backpacking in the mountains, Ultimate Frisbee and baseball in the park, trips to Indiana or wherever we wanted to go, whenever we wanted to go. I keep thinking that this date won’t bother me so much as the years go on, but it does. I miss what we once had every single day. I know Glen and the kids do too.

But I can honestly say, as we reflect on these past four years, I have taken much comfort in understanding that God is sovereign and ever-present. God wasn’t absent when we were in the emergency room on July 17, 2014; he went there ahead of us. God wasn’t absent when Glen was fighting for his life; he was fighting for him. God wasn’t absent when the kids cried themselves to sleep for over a year straight; God wept with us. Every single night that year, our son Caleb’s prayer was the same: “Thank you that you are always with us.” That simple prayer was my comfort for that first year, and it still is. We are not alone.

Besides being with us, God has continued to place people in our lives to encourage us, to help us when we have needed it and sometimes to cry with us. God has provided moments of laughter that we could never have imagined—when a person is missing 40 percent of his brain, sometimes strange things happen. Our church, part of *the* church, continues to uphold us, and for that we are grateful.

During this whole process, Glen never gives up. He still keeps doing occupational therapy and physical therapy. He still keeps doing cognitive exercises and continues to try to relearn things that he hasn’t done since before his stroke—such as riding an adaptive bike purchased with funds raised by two South Christian High students.

We thank the Lord for the prayers, love, and care of so many special people along this emotional journey. I encourage you to uphold in prayer and support the many people in the community where you live who have had a stroke or a traumatic brain injury.

Note: This sidebar is adapted from a CaringBridge post written by Kori VanderKooi.

Enough Trouble

Eliminating every shred of anxiety from our lives is more than most of us can hope for on this side of the Jordan River. We have not arrived yet.



Syd Hielema is team leader of Faith Formation Ministries of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

WE HAD JUST CROSSED the border from Michigan into Ontario. I was driving a van filled with seven college student worship leaders, and one of the guys piped up, “It’s two hours till we’re back on campus. I’d like everyone to name their favorite Bible verse and explain why it matters to you.”

The sharing took the entire two hours. After the last person was done, I was struck that four of the eight Scripture testimonies focused on how the Lord ministers to us in our anxiety. We heard these three passages reflected upon (with two people naming the same Scripture):

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own (Matt. 6:33-34).

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:6-7).

Cast all your anxiety upon him because he cares for you. (1 Pet. 5:7).

As I reflected on those rich two hours, I realized I was not surprised that half the group chose passages that speak to our anxiety. I am quite an anxious person myself, so I’ve pondered anxiety’s dynamics a great deal. It strikes me that anxiety is simply woven within the human condition. One of the first instructions in Scripture is to rule over the creation (Gen. 1:28), and ruling involves taking intentional actions towards a desired outcome. At the same time, two other factors

undermine our ability to rule. First, we can’t control the outcome of our actions. As the preacher declares, “Sow your seed in the morning, and in the evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well” (Eccles. 11:6). Second, this lack of control is compounded by the many unexpected curveballs life sends our way—curveballs we have learned to see through the lens of the Lord’s providential care. To put it starkly: ruling is a form of control, but we are not in control. Anxiety lives inside that paradox.

My *mind* understands that this biblical paradox puts us in a place of trusting surrender. I love the Heidelberg Catechism’s declaration that “We can be patient when things go against us, thankful when things go well, and for the future we can have good confidence in our faithful God and Father that nothing in creation will separate us from his love” (Q&A 28). But it’s usually more difficult for my heart and emotions to operate in sync with my mind. My mind celebrates biblical declarations; my heart whispers *But...?* and is not so easily convinced.

My lifelong struggle to reconcile mind, heart, and emotions concerning anxiety has led to these two reflections in an attempt to place anxiety in perspective:

First, *experiencing anxiety is part of the human condition*. In Philippians 4, Paul instructs us not to be anxious, but in chapter 2, while telling us about his co-worker Epaphroditus being near death before he finally recovered, he writes, “Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and *I may have less anxiety*” (v. 28). Paul is



eager to have less anxiety, but he tells us to have no anxiety. How does that make any sense?

Second, *appropriate anxiety serves a kingdom purpose*. Studies have shown that teams working on projects function best when they include one or two anxious people. The reason is simple: The anxious folks imagine worst-case scenarios and challenge the team to build in plan-B protections to diminish the likelihood of these scenarios taking place. Inappropriate anxiety paralyzes a team; a lack of anxiety creates an overconfident, error-prone team; appropriate anxiety pushes a team toward prudently bold action.

How might these two ideas help frame a biblically healthy approach to anxiety? Here are my tentative conclusions:

- » Feeling anxious in itself is not a sin. It just is. Paul was anxious about Epaphroditus's health; that was just the way it was.
- » The anxiety within us has to go somewhere. We can turn it in on ourselves, we can project it onto others (which usually leads to conflict), or we can surrender it to the Lord. Paul's naming of anxiety in

Philippians 4 follows directly after an exhortation to deal quickly with a conflict: "I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord" (v. 2). Paul continues, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (v. 6). In other words, don't turn your anxiety on each other, but bring it to the Lord. Feeling anxious is not a sin, but carrying it to the wrong place and giving it the power to cause harm is a sin.

- » Avoiding the wrong places and going to the right place (the Lord's throne room) is part of the central dynamic of the Christ-following life: dying to sin and being made alive in Christ. It is a specific manifestation of "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).
- » Paul promises that the prayer of the anxious person will lead to peace: "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). Eliminating every shred of anxiety from our lives is more than most of us can hope for

on this side of the Jordan River. We have not arrived yet. I wonder if the marvelous peace of the Lord "transcends all understanding" because in a miraculous way it coexists with the anxiety that I will not be rid of completely until I see my Lord and Savior face to face.

As I'm completing this article, I can feel anxiety about its reception welling up in me. Who am I to think that the words written here might have blessings to share? But I catch myself just in time; it's not my calling to fret over that question. I'm simply called to risk tiny steps of faithfulness and leave the rest in the Lord's hands. Such surrender does not eliminate my anxiety, but it does draw me toward the peace that passes understanding. **B**

1. What is your favorite Bible verse, and why is it meaningful to you?
2. How does lack of control affect your anxiety and your life?
3. How might you identify whether you are having appropriate. . .

[READ MORE](#) [ONLINE](#)

Summer Reading for Days of Fireflies and Freshly Mown Grass



When I Pray for You

by Matthew
Paul Turner

Illustrated by
Kimberley Barnes

reviewed by Sonya Vanderveen
Feddema

In this cheerful rhyming children's picture book, author Matthew Paul Turner shares a parent's prayer for a child to grow up in the love and light of God: "I pray you love well. / That the light in you swells. / That the story God writes is the one that you tell."

The parent prays for the child's joys, achievements, fears, and dreams, reminding the child "when I pray for you, I imagine God's view / And pray all that God sees comes alive inside you."

Kimberley Barnes's pictures of vivacious, diverse characters and bright settings of home, playground, and nature enhance the book. An excellent baptism gift. (WaterBrook)



We Are Gardeners

by Joanna
Gaines and Kids

Illustrated by
Julianna Swaney

reviewed by Jenny deGroot

HGTV's Joanna Gaines and her family share their experience of gardening, beginning with a gifted potted fern and a hopeful dream. From their dining room table to the backyard they draft their horticultural plans, then slowly put them into action. From over-hydration to aphid attacks and uninvited trespassing goats, the family discovers, there are many challenges to and life lessons in growing a good garden.

Julianna Swaney's illustrations are gentle in tone and detail as we see both the garden and the family grow. Recommended for ages 4 to 12, this picture book is a gardening inspiration for any dreaming family. (Thomas Nelson)



A Woman Is No Man

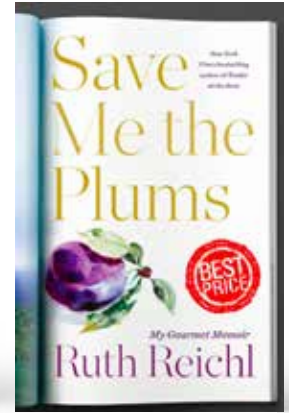
by Etaf Rum

reviewed by Lorilee Craker

First-time novelist Etaf Rum artfully braids the stories of three Palestinian immigrant women: the vulnerable Isra, fresh from the West Bank; her domineering mother-in-law, Fareeda; and Deya, Isra's daughter, who chafes at the constraints of her harsh cultural confines in modern-day Brooklyn.

As a Christian, I found it valuable to learn about conservative Muslims. Through my reading, Isra, Deya, and the rest became not just "other" and "them," but imagebearers of their Creator.

Essentially, this intense novel ponders a woman's worth. What will it mean for these characters to realize their intrinsic value? The answers kept me turning pages far into the night. (Harper)

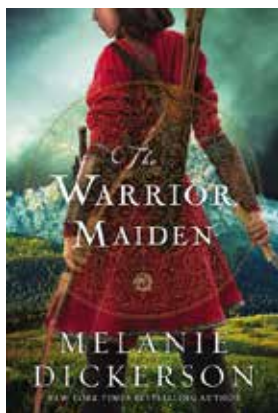


Save Me the Plums

by Ruth Reichl

reviewed by Kristy Quist

As a child, Ruth Reichl discovered her love for food as she poured over old *Gourmet* magazines. Later, after years as a food writer, she became its editor in chief. This book, rich in description of the editorial world, fine food, and even travel, is a fun read for publishing nerds and foodies. During her time with *Gourmet*, Reichl learns more about who she is, with or without the trappings of success. And while she does not hint at a religious life, she offers all of us food for thought as we consider the very spiritual question of what defines us. (Random House)

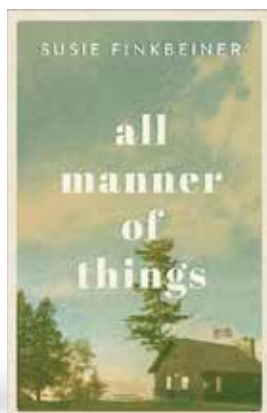


The Warrior Maiden

by *Melanie Dickerson*

reviewed by Sonya Vanderveen Feddema

In 1423, 18-year-old Mulan longs to travel from her village in Lithuania to distant lands and fight against the ruthless Teutonic Knights. When Mulan's father unexpectedly dies, she makes a decision that will change her life: She disguises herself as a young male soldier and volunteers to fight in her father's stead. Billed as a "a fresh reimagining of the classic Mulan tale," Dickerson sets the story, based on the legendary Chinese warrior Hua Mulan, in 15th century Lithuania. This novel for young adults portrays a time when armies on both sides of a conflict fought in the name of God. Melanie Dickerson adeptly weaves biblical truths about justice, righteousness, and the power of prayer throughout this swashbuckling adventure, which even includes a blooming romance. (Thomas Nelson)



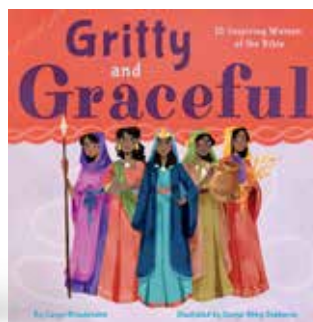
All Manner of Things

by *Susie Finkbeiner*

reviewed by Ann Byle

Susie Finkbeiner's new novel captures the Vietnam War era's fraught time with beauty and gentleness. Narrator Annie Jacobson and her family live in tiny Fort Colson in northern Michigan and have already experienced the aftereffects of war. Annie's father, Frank, left her, her mother, and two brothers long ago after his stint in the Korean War. What we would today call post-traumatic stress disorder was just "tremors" then, and the need to escape to cope.

Finkbeiner speaks to issues of war, race, family drama, tragedy, and ultimately the many faces of love as Annie comes to terms with her life and heart and as one family faces life's tragedies with fortitude and God's grace. (Revell)



Gritty and Graceful

by *Caryn Rivadeneira and Abby Soekarno*

reviewed by Alison Hodgson

"It wasn't easy to be a girl in Bible times. Girls lived hard lives." And yet, "God used girls . . . to do great things for God. And God did great things for girls!" Caryn Rivadeneira's exciting first-person accounts and Sonya Abby Soekarno's vivid illustrations make it clear that from the very beginning, God looked to girls and women to teach, lead, love, and change the world. From Eve to the woman at the well, from Miriam to Martha, this hopeful and inspiring new juvenile nonfiction book will encourage gritty and graceful girls of today to imagine how they can make a difference in the world and do great things for God. (Beaming Books)



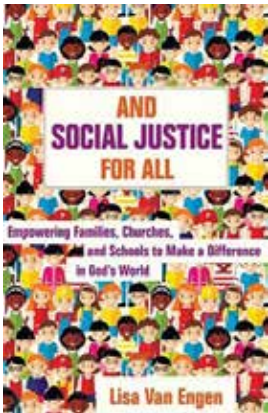
Rayne and Delilah's Midnite Matinee

by *Jeff Zentner*

reviewed by Natalie Hart

Rayne and Delilah are screen names for Josie and Delia, respectively. They've been hosting a syndicated weekly horror movie show on cable-access TV for a year and a half. Josie wants to go into TV as a career, and Delia loves cheesy horror movies and the equally cheesy hosts who introduce them. Those movies are her remaining connection to her father, who left when Delia was 7.

The future brings complications to the show and to the friendship. This absorbing read for teens and adults reminded me how complicated even the seemingly simplest decisions about the future are. It increased my compassion for anyone making a life-level leap—all while making me laugh. (Penguin Random House)



And Social Justice for All: Empowering Families, Churches, and Schools to Make a Difference in God's World

by Lisa Van Engen

reviewed by Sonya Vanderveen Feddema

As a child growing up in one of Michigan's ten poorest counties, author Lisa Van Engen became familiar with the challenges people faced. Van Engen's passion for justice shines throughout this informative, inspirational, and hope-filled book. Each of 14 chapters deals with a social justice issue such as clean water and sanitation, health care, poverty, or human trafficking.

Each chapter includes innovative solutions, discussion questions, a brief devotional, book lists and activities, and ways to extend awareness about each issue, making this a valuable resource for parents, educators, church leaders, and anyone who wants to guide children in the ways of justice. (Kregel Publications)

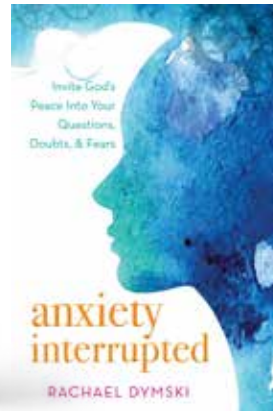


It's Okay Not to Be Okay

by Sheila Walsh

reviewed by Paul Delger

Bestselling author and popular communicator Sheila Walsh offers practical, nonthreatening advice for battling challenges of all kinds. Walsh, who lives with depression, provides examples from her own life in overcoming and accepting hard things. She says the book is "not self-help, (but) God-help." Walsh writes: "You don't need to be okay because Jesus has made you all right. He's paid the bill in full. He's covered our 'not okay-ness.'" Walsh suggests various action steps at the end of each chapter and cautions how hard it can be to change, encouraging readers to start again and again if necessary. (Baker Books)



Anxiety Interrupted: Invite God's Peace into Your Questions, Doubts, and Fears

by Rachael Dymski

reviewed by Lorilee Craker

What if anxiety isn't useless pain? What if it can lead us somewhere happier and more peaceful?

In this slim yet mighty volume, Rachael Dymski writes gorgeously of her lifelong struggle with anxiety. Through stories of visiting her British grandparents on the Channel Islands, marrying an old soul, and becoming a mother, Dymski walks her readers through 10 different kinds of anxiety, including worries about God, marriage, motherhood, one's calling, friendship, and social media. She is a wise and companionable guide, offering the gentle and welcome message that peace is not nearly as far away as we think. A timely book for an anxious age. (New Hope Publishers)



Can I Get a Witness? Thirteen Peacemakers, Community Builders, and Agitators for Faith & Justice

by Charles Marsh, Shea Tuttle, and Daniel Rhodes

reviewed by Chris Meehan

A wide-ranging assortment of men and women—some Protestant ministers, two Catholic priests, a nun, a lawyer, and others—are featured in essays about well-known activists.

Many served as the backbone of Christian activism in 20th-century America, such as Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, and Jesuit priest Daniel Berrigan. The subjects of the book illustrate how, motivated by their faith, they faced down the principalities and powers that maintained—and still maintain—a tight grip on the economic life of a nation.

This book compels people of faith to fight to bring God's justice into our world. (Eerdmans)

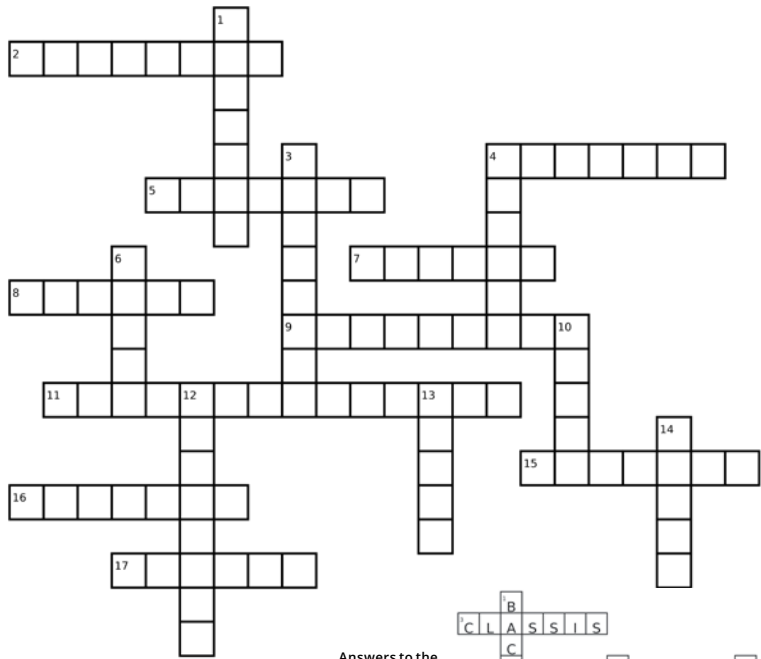
Find clues to this crossword puzzle in this issue of *The Banner*. See the answers next month!

Down:

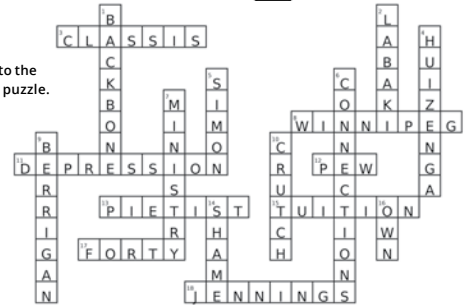
- 1. A gift giving occasion for this children's book
- 3. Andrew Kuyvenhoven's devotional book
- 4. What we need to embrace
- 6. First name of the author of "Gritty and Graceful"
- 10. This helped a student stay in band
- 12. The ruthless Knights Mulan fought in 1423
- 13. The complete anti-God state of mind
- 14. Where Ken Lee shares the gospel

Across:

- 2. _____ Code Committee
- 4. _____ of the Cross
- 5. A keynote speaker at Inspire 2019
- 7. Part of the eye where light is focused
- 8. Won bronze in Special Olympics World Games
- 9. Not all of us are made for _____
- 11. Sacked by Crusaders in 1204
- 15. The English-language outreach of BTGMI
- 16. Part of the human condition
- 17. _____ of Dordt



Answers to the May 2019 puzzle.



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Denominational Announcements

CALL TO SYNOD 2019

The council of Faith Community CRC, Wyoming, Michigan, calls all delegates to Synod 2019, elected by their respective classes, to meet in the Covenant Fine Arts Center on the campus of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Friday, June 14, at 8:30 a.m. All area CRC members are invited to join the delegates in worship at the synodical Service of Prayer and Praise on Sunday evening, June 16, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. in the College Chapel, Calvin College, 1835 Knollcrest Circle SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Rev. Roger B. Groenboom, pastor at Faith Community CRC, will deliver the message. All CRC churches across the continent are requested to remember the deliberations of synod in their intercessory prayers on Sunday, June 9, and Sunday, June 16.

Council of Faith Community
CRC, Wyoming, Michigan

Congregational Announcements

CHURCH'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

PEORIA CRC in rural Pella, Iowa is celebrating 125 years of God's faithfulness on Sunday, June 2. We invite all former members and other interested parties to attend our special morning and evening services.

CHURCH'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

ORLAND PARK CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH, originally 4th. Roseland C. R. C. Invites you to join them in celebrating 100 years of God's Faithfulness on Sunday, JUNE 23, 2019 Our services are at 8:30 A, M, and 10:45 A. M. Former Pastor Arthur Schoonveld will bring the message on this joy filled day!

Church Positions Available

PASTOR Hillcrest CRC in Hudsonville Michigan is seeking a full-time pastor to lead our 450+ members in worship and pastoral care. We seek a pastor with a sincere personal commitment to Christ and a dedication to advance the kingdom of God. The pastor will be devoted to the preaching of the Word, engaged in visioning and setting direction, and build teamwork and trust with staff and lay leaders. Believers will be equipped as lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ, maturing and touching more lives with the love of Christ. A job description and church profile are posted on www.hillcrestcra.org/search-pastor. If interested, contact chadschreur@gmail.com. 616-405-7038

PASTOR Terra Ceia CRC in Pantego, NC is seeking a dynamic, personable, full time pastor committed to help us grow in God's word and make a difference in our community. We are committed Christians seeking a strong leader. For more information please contact the search committee at bkelder23@gmail.com, please visit terraceiacrc.org. Address: 3298 Terra Ceia Rd. Pantego, NC 27860

LEAD PASTOR Long Beach CRC in Long Beach, California is seeking an Ordained Minister of the Word to be our Lead Pastor. We are a congregation of 250+ members that desires to make new and better disciples of Jesus, for God's glory. The people of LBCRC seek to engage with God, God's family and God's world for God's glory. We are praying for God's guidance as we discern His will in finding our next pastor. If you are interested in learning more about the Lead Pastor position and our congregation, please contact us at searchcommittee@LBCRC.org.

PASTOR Rimbey CRC, located in Central Alberta is seeking a full time pastor to lead us in our current vision of making more and better disciples and equipping them for service in Jesus Christ. Contact: Will Weenink 403.843.6867 or gutterguy3784@gmail.com.

THRIVE MINISTRIES is seeking an Associate Pastor who is a spirit equipped servant leader, committed to the Reformed Faith, who will serve primarily as Pastor of our First CRC campus in Fulton, IL. For more information, please email Bruce Bielema at bjbielema@gmail.com or call 563-321-1147

PASTOR First CRC in Zeeland Michigan is seeking a full time pastor to lead our congregation in biblically relevant teaching and worship. If interested, please email resume to office@firstzeeland.org

TEACHING PASTOR Rosewood CRC in Bellflower, CA, is seeking a fulltime Teaching Pastor who will preach, plan worship, provide pastoral care, and partner with a staff team. Essential: Cross-cultural experience and passion for outreach. Co-pastor position. Send resume to Governingboard@rosewood-church.com.

WORSHIP DIRECTOR Fellowship CRC in Brighton Ontario, Canada is seeking a Worship Director: The Worship Director will help to cultivate a worship environment of curious creativity, inviting us to encounter the Triune God in diverse and meaningful ways. In this role, you will be responsible to plan and ad-

minister worship - Guide & mentor worship leaders - Be involved in the organization of sound, as well as projection - We are searching for someone to strategically plan for our future as it relates to worship; understanding how worship will grow and expand in this next generation of worshippers. We are looking for someone who loves our Saviour and gets excited about leading His people into a deeper relationship with Christ. Go to www.brightoncra.org for more info

WORSHIP DIRECTOR: Bethel Community Christian Reformed Church, Newmarket is searching for a permanent part-time Worship Director to coordinate and lead the worship at its two Sunday services. One is more traditional, focusing on hymns and contemporary worship music geared to an older established demographic while the other is focused on contemporary and emerging worship music geared to an unchurched younger demographic. Contact Derek Tensen 905-642-3811 datensen@hotmail.com

Birthdays

97TH BIRTHDAY



JEANETTE MAE DYK of 725 Baldwin St. Room 159, Jenison, Michigan 49428 will celebrate her 97th Birthday on July 5, 2019. Her children, Ken and Barbara Dyk, Gloria and Ronald Kragt, Judi and Ken Woodwyk and Yvonne

and Don VanderHeide as well as 12 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren give thanks for her obvious devotion to her Lord and the wonderful example she has been to us all.

90TH BIRTHDAY

MAXINE (KUNNEN) LUCHIES will celebrate her 90th birthday on June 16, 2019. Her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren praise God for her life of faith and prayer, devotion to the gospel, and love for her family. Maxine is a member of First CRC, Fremont, MI.

HAROLD WALTERS of 4618 New Holland Rd., Hudsonville, MI 49426 will be celebrating his 90th birthday with an open house on July 7, 2019 from 2-4pm at The District 5 Schoolhouse, 9354 Port Sheldon St., Zeeland, MI. Family and friends are invited to celebrate! Thankful to God for His abundant blessings!

Anniversaries

70TH ANNIVERSARY

HUYSER William & Alvina, June 3. Five sons: Mark (Sally), Tom (Paula), David (Betsy), Steve (Linda, friend), Richard (Faith) 9 grandchildren & 14 great grandchildren. Thankful to God for his blessings. 250 Breton Woods Dr, Apt #3064, Kentwood, MI 49512.

OORDT Herm & Jackie celebrate 70 years of marriage on June 23 (which is also Jackie's 90th birthday), along with their children: Ellen & Jerry Gabrielse, Colleen, Ken & Joan, Gary & Lisa, 4 grandchildren and spouses, and 7 great-grandchildren. We thank the Lord for His covenant blessings. 915 Heather Circle #5, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

65TH ANNIVERSARY

LOS, Rev. Eugene and Shirley (Deur) of 196 Park Lane, Zeeland, MI 49464 will celebrate 65 years of marriage on June 2, 2019. We give thanks for their love for God, family, and friends. Together Gene and Shirley served Christian Reformed congregations in Morrison, IL, Denver, CO, Zeeland, Grand Haven, Jamestown and Holland, MI. Celebrating with them are children Bruce and Deb Los, Jill and Rod Unema, Mark and Linda Los, Scott and Wendi Los, 13 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.



HARINGA, Ted and Marie celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on April 13th, 2019. They were married on April 13th, 1954. Their children Barbara Knapper, Steve and Ruth Haringa, Dave and Jane Buteyn, Tim and Lorraine Haringa, along with 13 grandchildren and their spouses/friends, and 19 great-grandchildren, thank God for the Godly example they have been in living out their Christianity and commitment to each other. We are truly blessed!

Obituaries



ALDERDEN Jessie F., nee Sluis, 99 years, beloved wife of the late Martin Alderden (1971). Loving mother of James (Judith) Alderden, Lynnay Kallemeyn, Leona (Gladys) VandeVusse and John (Joan) Alderden.

Cherished grandmother of 12 grandchildren, 31 great grandchildren and 4 great-great grandchildren!! Preceded in death by her siblings Norm (late Cele) Sluis, Marie (late Fred) Iwema, Charlotte (late Don) Siegers, and Art (late Eleanor) Sluis. Also preceded in death by her sister-in-law Jeanette (late Rich) Schurman and brother-in-law Peter (late Effie) Alderden. Dearest aunt of many nieces and nephews. Jessie was on this earth for nearly 100 years, and very happy to be with the Lord for all eternity.

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Sep 19 – Oct 1 | *Pr. Bill & Lyn Vanden Bosch*

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Oct 5 – 11 | *Craig Fields*

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DAVIES, Judith (Judy), 74, of Penney Farms, FL, died peacefully at her home on April 10, 2019. She is survived by her husband Rev. Mark A. Davies, her 3 daughters, Sarah (Alex) Costa, Monica (Justin) Lewis and Laura (Joe) Newhouse, and her eight grandchildren. With music and hospitality, she served with Mark in 7 CRC's. "Those who look to the Lord are radiant." Ps. 34:4

is and Laura (Joe) Newhouse, and her eight grandchildren. With music and hospitality, she served with Mark in 7 CRC's. "Those who look to the Lord are radiant." Ps. 34:4

GELDOF, Gordon C., 81, passed away Saturday, April 27, 2019 in Grand Rapids, MI. He is survived by wife, Ginny; brother and sis-

ter, Richard Geldof and Milly Feddema; and sisters-in-law and brother-in-law, Frances Hackney and Lucy and Baldwin Verstraete.

HAAGEN Nell, of Abbotsford, BC, went to be with her Lord at the age of 107 on April 16, 2019 Predeceased by her husband Jack, 2 sons Peter and Ed, son-in-law Ben and grandson Jack. Survived by Janny (John), Lex (Dorothy), Nita (John), daughters-in-law Betty and Jo. 17 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandsons.

KIMM, Irene (Van Egmond), age 96, of Churchill, MT passed away peacefully and went to be with her Lord and Savior on April 3, 2019. She

was preceded in death by her beloved husband Wilbur in 1995. She was an active member of Bethel Christian Reformed Church and her community until the day of her death. She did a lot of embroidery and crewel, still loved playing her piano, and was a faithful prayer warrior. She will be missed by her children: Bill (Marian) Kimm, Gwen Leenstra, Lee Kimm and Ginette, Miriam VanEps, Scott (Denise) Kimm; 13 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; and 1 great-great grandchild.

WOBBEMA, Frances Jennie (Lautenbach), 95 years old of Grand Rapids, MI, passed away Apr. 12, 2019. She is survived by her husband Peter G. Wobbema; her children Judy (Bruce) Buursma, Cathy Carlson, and David Wobbema; seven grandchildren; five great grandchildren; and her sole surviving sibling, Bob (Hazel) Lautenbach.

WOLDMAN Geraldine M. Woldman, nee Swierenga, went to be with our Lord April 9, 2019. 971 Chatham Ave, Elmhurst, IL, 60126. Beloved wife of the late Peter; loving mother of James (Annette), Gary (Cindy), David (Kim), Phil (Kim), Tom (Judy) Woldman; devoted grandmother of 16; great-grandmother of 10; fond sister of the late Roger "Buck" Swierenga; aunt of many nieces and nephews. Memorials to Providence Life Services or Timothy Christian Schools



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Employment

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Beautiful Colors

When we come together as a community, as a body of believers in all our shapes and colors, we become a beautiful picture in God's sight and to the world.



Nicolaas Hogeveen attends Covenant Christian Reformed Church in Winnipeg, Man. He is a retired marketing and advertising consultant, a retired elder, and past president and founder of Hope Centre.

SOME MEMBERS of my congregation got together one Saturday morning to do some "visioning" for the church, asking questions like these: What does the future hold for our church? How can we be more effective in our outreach? How can we help each other grow? Heavy stuff indeed.

As I walked into church that morning, George, our resident artist, was busy painting a scene of children at play on one of the doors in our Kid Zone.

He had a whole tray full of small bottles, each with a different color of paint. Each shape, each area, each color he applied was different. Some colors got a big splash; others covered just a tiny area. Most made no sense on their own, but the picture began taking shape as more colors and shapes emerged from the painter's brush. The result was a beautiful, colorful illustration—a scene worth showing. It told a story.

People in a community or church are a lot like those colors. Not all of us are made for greatness; as individuals, we may not even be noticed. But when we come together as a community, as a body of believers in all our shapes and colors, we become a beautiful picture in God's sight and to the world. We become one family, united in one purpose. Our church mission statement is "Sharing Christ until everyone fully reflects him." It reflects our understanding that together, as one



body, we can do much more than we could accomplish on our own.

Jesus prays this prayer for his disciples and for all believers: "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one" (John 17:18-22).

Together we may be noticed; together we may reach out. Together we can be the temple God wants us to be so that we can be as one as Jesus is one with the Father. **B**

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