

# BANNER

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Reformed Merger

<sup>36</sup> **Synod  
2010  
Yes to  
Youths**



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# all. things



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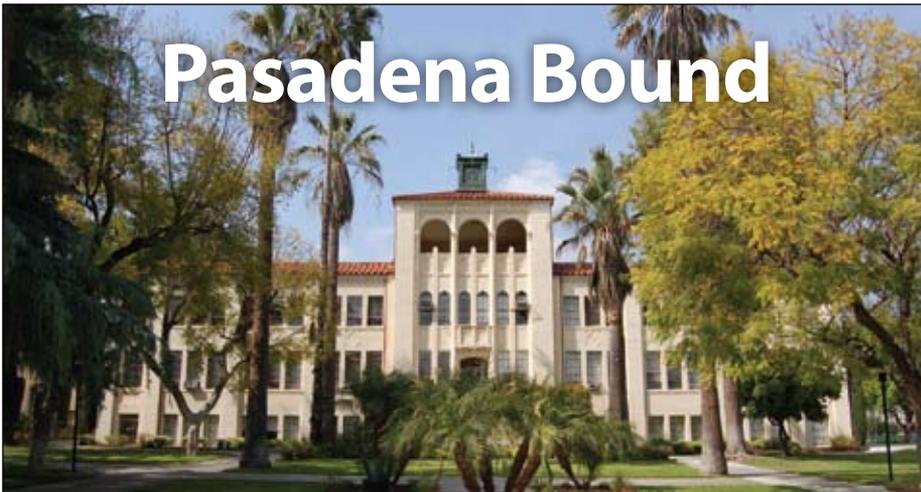
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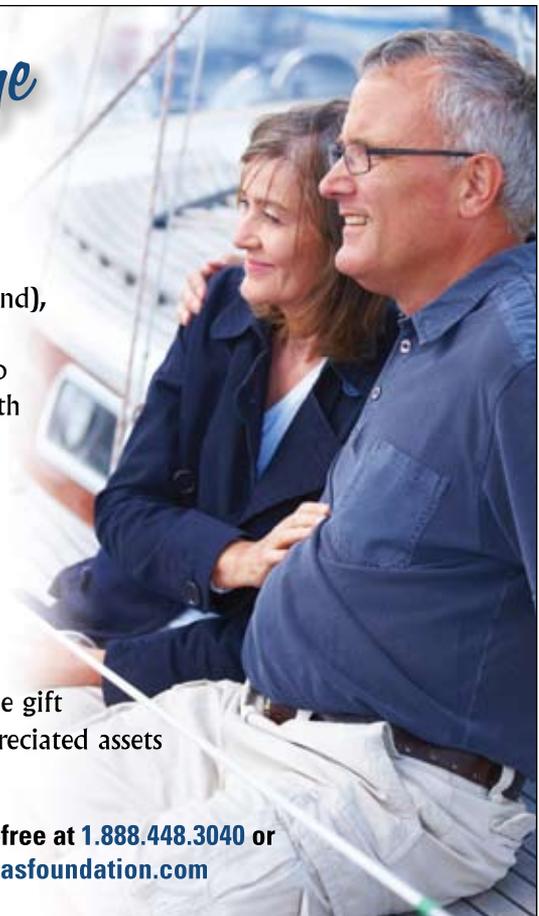
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# Breaking Barriers

everybody belongs everybody serves

ISSUE #86 SUMMER 2010

A Ministry of Christian Reformed Church and Reformed Church in America Disability Concerns

## Welcome to First Church, Everyone!

Mark Stephenson, Director of Disability Concerns

The expression on her father-in-law's face one Sunday morning haunted Mary Kalmink for years afterward. The Kalminks' daughter, Katie, made profession of faith in 1993 at First Christian Reformed Church of Detroit, and Grandpa and Grandma Kalmink came to celebrate. Mary explains, "Dad was in a wheelchair, so he had to be carried up the stairs. I will never forget the look in his eyes; he was terrified of falling and humiliated at being so helpless."

That event, and others like it, motivated First Church to make their beautiful old facility accessible. They needed much



Worshippers at First Church celebrate God's faithfulness as they dedicate their newly accessible facility.

more than a ramp. An audit done by an architect found that the church, classrooms, and attached school had twelve different levels.

After a great deal of work planning, soliciting bids, voting, pledging, and fulfilling pledges, construction began. It stretched out much longer than anticipated—nearly two years. But it was worth it.

The congregation undertook this work because faithful members of the congregation could not come to worship or fellowship events. They could not enter or move about the building, nor could they use the bathrooms. That all changed with the renovation. People who had not come to First Church in years worshipped there again.

The new accessibility helped others too. Shortly after the elevator was operational, several younger members needed it. Two of them, both choir members, broke their legs at about the

same time. They would have been sorely missed in this small congregation, but an elevator ride made it possible for them to sing with the rest of the choir.

The congregation received added benefits. The former fellowship room became a new hub for ministry as the children's annex. The space in the attached school, now used during the week as a day care/early learning center, became accessible as well. This change allowed a brand-new, much more hospitable building entrance than the old one, with new accessible bathrooms close by.

The day after members of First Church voted in favor of proceeding with the renovation, First's former pastor, Mark Van't Hof, encouraged the congregation with an email message: "This is good work that we are undertaking. **Pretty soon we will be able to say, even to those in wheelchairs, 'Welcome**



## invitation

Online at [www.crcna.org/disability](http://www.crcna.org/disability)

- Read more about the church and accessibility
- Subscribe to the electronic edition of **Breaking Barriers**
- Por favor, lea **Rompiendo Barreras** en Español
- Follow us on Facebook
- Join a conversation about ministry on the Network
- Get involved as a disability advocate

Christian Reformed churches may sign up for a *free* bulk subscription to **Breaking Barriers**. Contact us at [disabilityconcerns@crcna.org](mailto:disabilityconcerns@crcna.org).



## theme

In this issue of *Breaking Barriers* we celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which opened many doors for people with disabilities. In addition, seventeen years ago the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church went on record to "heartily recommend full compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act . . . and its accompanying regulations in all portions of the CRC located in the U.S. and Canada."

to First Church!" Sadly, Van't Hof did not get to see the beautiful finished product because he passed away suddenly in 2008, but his prediction came true. First dedicated their newly accessible facility to God in May. Now they can indeed say to everyone, including people who use wheelchairs and walkers, "Welcome to First Church!"

Special Edition  
for *The Banner*

# BANNER

Volume 145 | Number 7 | 2010



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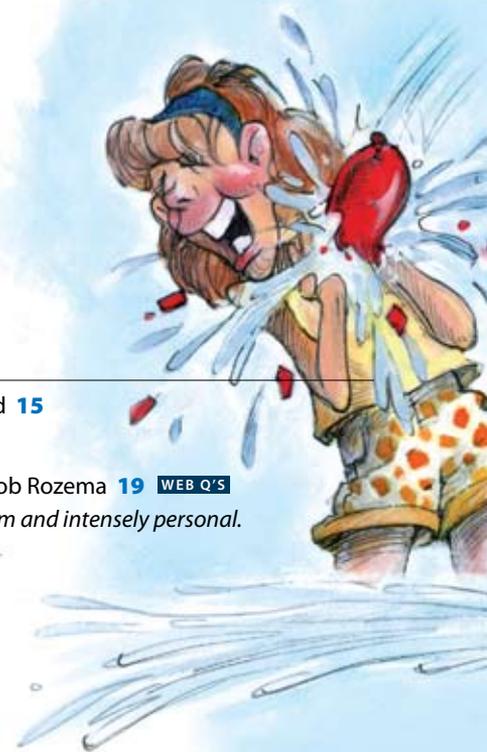
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**Cover:** Synod 2010 met June 12-17 on the campus of Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Ill. This year's youth observers at the annual leadership meeting of the Christian Reformed Church got to witness firsthand synod's promotion of their role to that of young adult advisers (p. 36). They were (front row, l-r): Mark Eekhoff, Amy Vander Vliet, Violet Mutoigo, Robert Van Lonkhuyzen; (back row) Elizabeth Jennings, Peter Keep, and Paul DeWeerd.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KAREN HUTTENGA



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– Tim Soerens, pastor of *Dust*, a new urban church in Seattle

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Published monthly (12 issues per year).  
Periodicals postage paid at Grand Rapids,  
Mich. Postmaster, send address changes  
to: The Banner, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE,  
Grand Rapids, MI 49560. 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 2010, Faith Alive Christian  
Resources, a ministry of the Christian  
Reformed Church. Printed in U.S.A.  
The Banner (ISSN0005-5557). Vol. 145,  
No. 7, 2010.

Member of Associated Church Press and  
Evangelical Press Association.

# Your Sons and Daughters Shall Prophecy

## LOST IT AT SYNOD THIS YEAR.

No, it's not what you think. I wasn't mad. I was overjoyed. But it showed too much. "The press" should stay objective and professional. We should keep our heads down, stay out of the way, and blend in with the furniture during debate.

But when Synod 2010 adopted the recommendation to upgrade the status of youth *observers* to young adult *advisers* at future synods (see p. 36), I hooted and jumped clear out of my chair. Thankfully I was holed up in the newsroom at the time, so I embarrassed myself only before my colleagues.

In the machinery of synod, adviser status is a significant step up from that of observer. Observers speak only in synod's advisory committees. In the large group gatherings where the decisions get made, they have no voice. All the youth observers could do was watch older folks debating and deciding issues.

Although advisers may not vote, they may address the body and so contribute their perspective, wisdom, and insight. Since our youths have the same Holy Spirit the synodical delegates do, theirs is an important voice—one that synod should hear before making decisions that affect all of us. This latest development is one more important step on a journey that began just last year, when the first panel of young adults joined synod as observers.

This issue is close to my heart. In an editorial four years ago ("Youth Leaders," May 2006), I shared with you my dream for inviting youths to exercise their gifts of leadership in our churches and denomination:

We could appoint [youths] as advisers. They could be "extended the privilege of the floor" (church-speak) without necessarily being given full voting privileges. . . . Maybe they could also form a caucus that would give advice and recommendations to the assembly.

About that caucus I was hoping for: this year's youth observers dreamed up the idea of a biennial CRC youth summit held before synod the same way the Multiethnic Conference is held in conjunction with synod every other year. The summit would draw young adults from across the denomination. It would deliberate in the same way that synod deliberates. It could even send communications and, possibly, recommendations to synod itself. The young adults hope to hold the first summit in 2012. I wish them Godspeed.

Listening to our younger members is long overdue. However, unless similar initiatives happen on the regional and local levels, the steps already taken will be mere tokenism.

Unless classes and church councils step to the plate and follow synod's lead, younger members will remain disenfranchised and marginalized. Worse, we'll stay deaf to voices and wisdom that the Spirit has granted for our edification, growth, and well-being.

Granted, some churches already salt their committees and ministries with youth reps. That's a good step. But having a young adult or two in the room keeps their voices scattered. Best to add a process like the summit, where they can confer with each other, then address our governing bodies with a common voice. That will help us discern much more clearly what the Spirit is telling our church(es) through them.

As the old warhorse Paul told the young buck Timothy, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young" (1 Tim. 4:12).

God has poured out his Spirit on our young people. Let's pay attention to what they have to say. ■

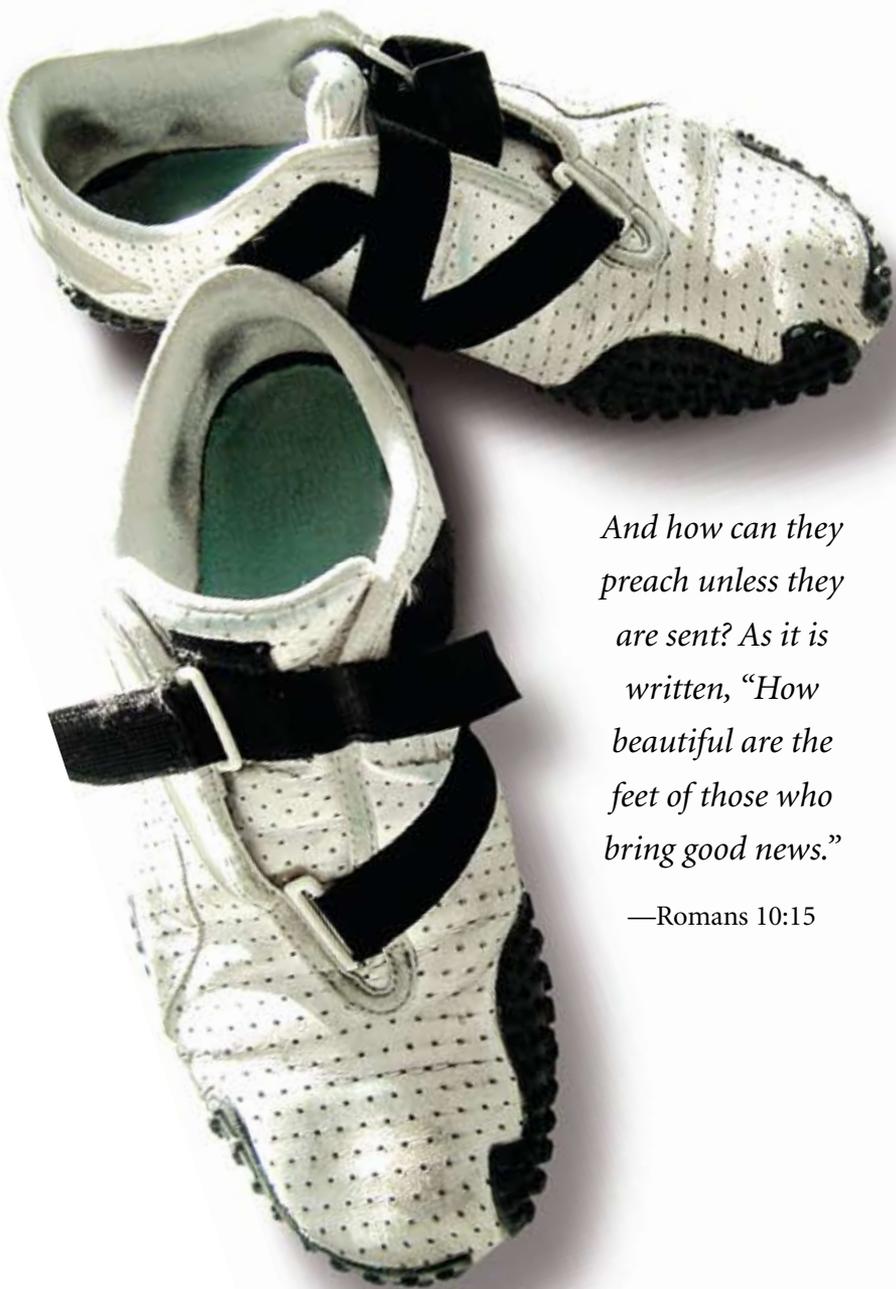
Our youths  
have the  
same Holy  
Spirit the  
synodical  
delegates do.



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

# Candidates for the Ministry

# 2010



*And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.”*

—Romans 10:15

**O****N THE NEXT FEW PAGES** you will find the annual presentation of candidates for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. The people pictured here have completed a significant lap in the race of discipleship (consider the biblical image of Heb. 12:1; 1 Cor. 9:24-26; and Phil. 2:16). They are keenly aware that this is not the end but just the beginning of the race before them. By God’s grace, they will complete many more laps for the glory of the King.

We, of course, are more than spectators cheering them on. We appropriately encourage them and celebrate with them at this point. Yet we also run with them, and we’ll be privileged by God to serve with them in the coming years, each in our respective roles as members of Christ’s church. Pray with them as they seek discernment as to the specific ministry assignment God has waiting for them next.

As a church we’re grateful for the preparation tool known as a seminary education. We’re grateful also for the dedication of these graduates, and of the faculty that has helped train them. Most of the people pictured here have earned a master of divinity degree from Calvin Seminary, the CRC’s official theological school. Some earned their degrees elsewhere and completed the CRC’s Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy, administered by the seminary. For more detailed information on these candidates, see [www.crcna.org/pages/candidates10.cfm](http://www.crcna.org/pages/candidates10.cfm).

Together, as candidates and church members, let us “run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:1-2). To him be the glory! ■

—Rev. David Koll  
Director of Candidacy

*\*Asterisks indicate candidates who are not eligible for call until they have completed all requirements.*



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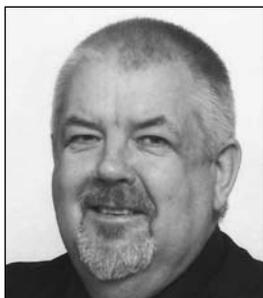
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## Being Flock-worthy

“**S** O WHEN ARE YOU ‘flock-worthy?’” a friend asked me. She wanted to know when I would be ready to lead a congregation. It’s a good question.

A few years ago each one of this year’s potential candidates for ministry entered seminary. We weren’t sure what was going to happen. We knew we’d be expected to learn Greek, Hebrew, theology, history, apologetics, pastoral care, preaching, and more. We knew that seminary would be challenging, frustrating, and difficult. Well-meaning people had told us so.

We also knew that we were experts already—that seminary was just a hoop standing between us and our calling. Seminary was a three- or four-year detour on the way to doing God’s will. We knew what the seminary was supposed to teach us and wasn’t teaching us. We knew how the seminary could do a better job.

In other words, we had a lot to learn.

The Calvin Theological Seminary Candidacy Committee watched us from our first year to our last. Most of the time they observed silently. Sometimes they prodded. Occasionally, they made unex-

pected recommendations. We tried to ignore those recommendations. Sometimes we fought them. Eventually all of us found a way to fulfill them. All the while, the flock-worthy determination crew, that is, the Candidacy Committee, watched and waited.

They heard about our disastrous first attempts at sermon writing. They watched our videotaped pastoral care sessions with thinly veiled grimaces. They heard our protests and listened to our suggestions. They watched and they waited.

The unexpected began to happen. We began to see our faith differently, our calling differently, our actions differently, and the seminary differently. Somehow, through the coursework, through the internships, through the many meetings in professors’ offices and pastors’ studies, God began a good work in us. Our rough edges got a little smoother. Our first feeble attempts at preaching were replaced with ever more confident and competent deliveries. We learned to listen a bit more in our pastoral care sessions. We began to look more and more like pastors-to-be.

And still the Candidacy Committee watched and waited. Somehow they knew

something bigger had to happen—a transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit. When the time was right, when they saw the changes they expected to see, they recommended us to synod. We were interviewed by the Synodical Candidacy Committee.

For the first time, we appeared before representatives of the Christian Reformed Church. Those representatives, speaking for the church upon completion of our interviews, looked us in the eyes and said, “Yes. We have seen the work God has begun in your life. We will recommend you as a candidate.” In that closed room we heard the church affirm our calling.

So am I flock-worthy? To be sure, the local congregation will ultimately make that decision. I do know this: I will now expect the unexpected changes that come through being faithful. ■



**Nathaniel Van Denend** is a candidate for the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church and a 2010 graduate of Calvin Theological Seminary.



The years that lie behind you . . .  
will in time be remembered  
only as the way that led to your  
new life. [They] can be remembered  
as God’s way of making you  
more compassionate  
and understanding toward others.

— HENRI NOUWEN

BY RICHARD MOUW **WEB Q'S**

# HOW TO BE CATHOLIC

HELPING CALVINISTS RECOVER FROM THE NOTION  
THAT WE'RE "THE ONE TRUE CHURCH"

**I** **T WAS AN AFTERNOON** in the late 1970s, and I was attending a meeting of the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches.

The Christian Reformed Church was not a member of the National Council, but I was representing the denomination in one of the slots that the commission reserved for non-member churches.

The afternoon session was about to begin. As I walked into the meeting room I saw an empty seat next to a friend who was a Greek Orthodox priest. There were two other people in the row, both of them, like myself, in the “non-member” category: a Missouri Synod Lutheran and a Catholic. My Orthodox friend leaned over and whispered to me, “You picked the right row, Richard. Here we are, the four people in the room who think they represent ‘the one true church.’ Maybe we should just leave the meeting and fight it out among ourselves!”

He was joking, but there was more than a grain of truth in what he said. Each of us did come from a denomination in which many members have thought of themselves as belonging to the only “real” or “pure” church.

### **The One True Church**

This notion of being “the one true church” has certainly had some currency in our Dutch Reformed past. The Belgic Confession, in Article 28, makes much of the distinction between the “true church” and the “false church,” insisting that every Christian must be united with the former while staying separate from the latter at all costs.

This “true church/false church” distinction played an important role in the

CRC’s past, especially in some major church splits that took place in both the Netherlands and North America.

Let me say right off that I see an important spiritual and theological impulse at work in insisting on “true church” versus “false church.” It is a good thing that we pay careful attention to what the Belgic Confession singles out as “the marks of the true church”: preaching the Word, observing the sacraments, and practicing church discipline. Those are important matters—especially so in a church culture like ours today, in which an “anything goes” spirit seems to dominate.

As a Calvinist, I want to be guided by the idea that it is important to strive to be a “true church.” But I also know that I cannot draw the boundaries along strictly denominational—or even theological—lines.

I am the president of a seminary, the largest in the world, and our student body includes people from more than 100 denominations and “non-denominations”—everything from Anglicans to Presbyterians to Pentecostals to folks from “no brand” congregations with names like “Living Waters” and “Lighthouse.” And, in recent years, our ranks have included more than a few Catholic and Orthodox believers. I have many occasions to sit in worship services in which, surrounded by that kind of diversity, I join others in affirming my belief in “the holy catholic church” (that is, the true Christian church of all times and all places).

When I say those words in that kind of setting, I am not privately restricting my meaning to the folks around the world who share my Calvinist convictions.

That does not mean I am downplaying those convictions. I’ll argue for my under-

standing of Reformed orthodoxy whenever I get a chance. But I do so with the profound sense that I am part of a much larger body of genuine disciples of Jesus—the majority of whom would not agree with most of the distinctive Reformed doctrines that I take seriously.

And here is the comforting thing: in my openness to people of other traditions, I am in good company as a Calvinist. For one thing, I can claim John Calvin himself as a supporter. To put it mildly, the Reformer did not have kind feelings toward the Catholic Church of his day. But, with all the harsh things he could say about Catholicism, he taught in his *Institutes* that “the Lord wonderfully preserves” within that church “a remnant of his people, however woefully dispersed and scattered,” who possess “those marks whose effectiveness neither the devil’s wiles nor human depravity can destroy.”

Another Calvinist hero of mine who gives me much encouragement on this subject is the great 19th-century Dutch statesman-theologian Abraham Kuyper.

Kuyper was never reluctant to get into theological battles—he even led a group of congregations out of the major Reformed denomination of his day because of the inroads of theological liberalism. For all of that, though, Kuyper was deeply troubled by the Belgic Confession’s “true church/false church” dichotomy—so much so that he became convinced that the confession had it wrong.

“The one true church” notion fostered an unhealthy sense, he argued, that our “own Church was held to be the purest, not merely by way of comparison, but so as to be actually looked upon as the only lawful continuance of *the* Church of the apostles.” »



## Multiformity

As an alternative, Kuyper proposed the idea of the “multiformity” of the church. We have different kinds of churches, with different theological systems, he argued. And much of this multiformity is due to legitimate “differences of climate and of nation, of historical past, and of disposition of mind.”

To be sure, this means there will inevitably be, Kuyper insisted, various “degrees of purity.” But even so, he said, we can still see in the midst of all of those differences “in some way or other a manifestation of the one holy and catholic Church of Christ in Heaven.”

Like Kuyper, I see many of the differences among churches as having something to do with different aesthetic preferences, temperaments, and spiritual emphases. Some folks like robed choirs and formal liturgies; others prefer bongo drums and informality. Some folks crave intellectual stimulation; others go to church yearning for an emotional uplift. Some folks prefer the parables of Jesus; others want to learn more about being Spirit-filled.

I hasten to add that I am no relativist. All of this has to be nurtured by solid, biblically-grounded theology. But the Word of God itself is an abundant storehouse, and we can draw many different kinds of riches from the pages of Scripture.

So what does all of this mean in more practical terms? Here are three guidelines that I encourage us as Reformed Christians to follow in our relationships with others in the larger Christian community:

**1.** The Lord has given Calvinists a special calling to show others what it is like to place a strong emphasis on God’s sovereignty, on our own inability to contribute to our salva-

# Too often we’ve operated under stereotypes and caricatures of other theological perspectives.

tion, and on what it means to be members of a covenant community that is engaged in Kingdom service in all spheres of human life. Our fellow Christians need to hear us testify about such matters.

**2.** We should be eager to learn from others. For one thing, we need to be sure we really understand other points of view. Too often we have operated under stereotypes and caricatures of other theological perspectives. That is bearing false witness against our neighbors. But even more, we can learn positive things from those whose callings may be different from our own—for example, we can learn from folks who have thought more about the ministry of the

Holy Spirit than we Calvinists have, and from believers who are more effective in the work of evangelism.

**3.** We must find ways of partnering with other Christians in being salt and light in the world. The Baptist theologian Timothy George has written about the way in which the growing cooperation between evangelicals and Catholics in “right to life” activities in recent years is a kind of “ecumenism of the trenches.” The same can be said for our cooperation with Mennonites in ministries of compassion, and with other partnerships we have formed.

We need each other. I can testify to that. In my own encounters and partnerships with Christians in other traditions, two things have happened to me. One is that I have a much richer sense of the wonders of belonging to the body of Jesus Christ. The other is that my basic Calvinist convictions are stronger than ever. I thank the Lord for this. And I also thank the Lord for his servants John Calvin and Abraham Kuyper, who have given me Reformed permission to explore the rich meaning of my professed belief in “the holy catholic church”! ■

**WEB Q'S** **Talk About It.** You'll find discussion questions for this article and the one on page 38 at [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).



**Dr. Richard Mouw** is president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. He is the author of several books, including *Calvinism in the Las Vegas Airport* and *Praying at Burger King*.

## Don't Know Much About the Catechism

**ASK ALMOST ANY CHRISTIAN REFORMED PERSON** what he or she knows about the Canons of Dort or the Belgic Confession, and you'll probably get the proverbial thousand-yard stare. But ask about the Heidelberg Catechism, and his or her eyes are more likely to light up. Yet, to be honest, once we get beyond the familiar and much-loved Q&A 1, lots of church members don't know much about the catechism.

With apologies to those who do know the catechism as an old friend, here are a few basics for the rest of us.

The first edition was published in 1563 in Heidelberg, Germany, for the purpose of instructing ordinary people in the truths of Scripture. This new catechism soon spread throughout Germany and into the Netherlands, then traveled to North America in the early 1600s. Today it has been translated into more than 30 languages and is one of the most popular Christian confessions.

Open the catechism and you'll find 129 questions and answers, arranged in three basic sections: misery (sin), deliverance (salvation), and gratitude (service).

The large deliverance section zeros in on the Apostles' Creed and the sacraments. The gratitude section offers crisp explanations of the Ten Commandments and beautiful restatements of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer—as ways of living out and praying out our gratitude for our salvation. Each answer is footnoted with Scripture passages on which its content is based.

Early on, the catechism's questions and answers were grouped into 52 "Lord's Days," so that a section could be preached each Sunday of the year, though today such catechism preaching is largely a thing of the past.

### Why It Still Matters

I find it stunning that the catechism begins by asking about my "comfort," of all things.

Yes, I know that "comfort" here means strength and assurance, not what I experience when I relax in my favorite recliner. But the emphasis is so personal: "What is *your* only comfort . . . ? That *I* am not *my* own but belong to *my* faithful Savior Jesus Christ. . . ." In fact, most of the catechism's remaining 128 questions are addressed to "you," with answers written in "I/me/mine" language.

Not only that, but the very structure of the catechism—sin, salvation, service—reflects our daily experience as we stumble into sin, experience the joy of God's forgiveness, and attempt to show our gratitude in the way we live.

In a time when doctrine is often looked down on as cold and impersonal, the church needs this confession to call it to a faith

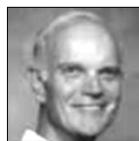
I find it stunning  
that the catechism  
begins by asking  
about **my comfort,**  
of all things.

that is not only informed but also warm and intensely personal. I think the catechism makes wonderful devotional reading both for brand-new members and old-timers like me.

But if the church needs a personal, living confession of faith, it also needs clarity and certainty about its basic beliefs. This is especially true in today's climate of vast tolerance of any belief so long as it is sincere. Over against that mushiness, consider the crispness of Q&A 2: "What must you know to live and die in the joy of this comfort? Three things. . . ." The catechism goes on to summarize the central teachings of Scripture as expressed in the Apostles' Creed, the sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. These are the basic building blocks of faith and ought to be included in the curriculum taught by the church (see *FaithAliveResources.org* for catechism courses recommended for the high school level).

Because the catechism says so many things so incomparably well—for example, Q&A 1 on our only comfort, Q&A 26-27 on providence, Q&A 32 on why we're called Christians, Q&A 54 on the church—it can still be effectively cited in sermons and recited on occasion by congregations today.

While it's far from flawless, the Heidelberg Catechism remains a true confession meant to strengthen our faith and guide our living. To ignore it is to miss what Andrew Kuyvenhoven calls "the best confessional summary of the will of God for the life of the church" (from *Comfort and Joy: A Study of the Heidelberg Catechism*). ■



**Bob Rozema** is a (mostly) retired editor for Faith Alive Christian Resources. He is a member of Ferrysburg (Mich.) Community Church, a Christian Reformed congregation.

# Wacky Water!

It's the middle of summer, and chances are the weather outside is HOT. Some places in North America can reach temperatures as high as 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37° C) or more!

So how do you keep yourself cool during these scorching summer months? Swimming? Sprinkler hopping? Spraying your siblings with the garden

hose while washing the family car? All of those activities contain the best ingredient for cooling off on a hot day—water!

Try some of the fun activities on these pages to stay cool this summer with friends and family. For most of these games you'll probably want to wear a bathing suit!

## Obey Your Thirst!

Nothing quenches your thirst better than a cool glass of water on a steamy summer afternoon. Since our bodies are made up of about 66 percent of this wondrous liquid, we need water to stay healthy. When we get thirsty after outdoor activities like bike riding or playing soccer, our bodies send us a polite message: "More water, please!" Becoming thirsty is a built-in alarm system that lets us know when our bodies need water.

The Bible compares our physical need for water with our spiritual need for God. Listen to the words of David in Psalm 63:1:

O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul *thirsts* for you . . . in a dry and weary land where there is no *water*.

How can we satisfy our thirsty spirits? By spending time with God! Whenever we read God's Word, go to church, or pray, we are filling ourselves up with the best spiritual beverage. See a story about water in John 4:1-26!



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY

## Water Facts You Should Know

Not only is water fun to play in, but our bodies need it to survive—which is one important reason why most of the time we try not to waste it. Check out these cool facts about water:

- Water is made up of **hydrogen** and **oxygen atoms**.
- The **human body** is made up of about 66 percent water.
- Kids should **drink 6-8 glasses** of water each day.
- Our bodies can live only a **few days** without water.
- We use about **80-100 gallons** of water a day. (Wow!)
- It takes 2-7 gallons to flush a **toilet**.
- 75 percent of the **earth** is covered with water.
- 97 percent of the earth's water is in the **oceans**.
- Only **3 percent** of the earth's water can be used as **drinking water**.
- 75 percent of the world's fresh water is **frozen** (in the form of glaciers)!

(With thanks to [www.njawwa.org/kidsweb/waterfacts/waterfacts.htm](http://www.njawwa.org/kidsweb/waterfacts/waterfacts.htm) and [www.ezinearticles.com](http://www.ezinearticles.com))

## Homemade Lemonade

Lemonade is a favorite summertime drink. Try this refreshing recipe that's made with the most important ingredient—water!

### You'll need:

- Pitcher
- Lemon juicer
- Large spoon
- Small pot
- Two small bowls
- Small knife (with adult supervision!)

### Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 1 ½ cups boiled water
- 6-8 lemons cut in half (if you don't have any lemons, you can use 1 ½ cups of lemon juice)
- 5-6 cups cold water

### What to do:

- Add the boiled water and sugar to a bowl and stir until sugar is completely dissolved. Set aside.
- Juice (squeeze) the lemons into a small bowl. Take out the seeds.
- Pour the sugar water, lemon juice, and 6 cups of cold water into a pitcher and stir. If you like, add a few slices of lemon to the pitcher for decoration.
- Pour tall glasses of fresh lemonade for you and your family. Enjoy!



\* Some of these water activities were inspired by the following websites: [www.amazingmoms.com/html/summerfunwaterplay.htm](http://www.amazingmoms.com/html/summerfunwaterplay.htm) and [www.buzzle.com](http://www.buzzle.com).

## Wacky Water Games

### Water Limbo

Magically turn your ordinary garden hose into an irresistibly wet water limbo game! Turn the hose on full blast and ask a parent to hold the "limbo" high and let players walk underneath. Each time players walk the limbo, have the limbo holder lower the hose to make the game more interesting. See how low you can go before getting soaked!

### Dribble, Dribble, Drench

For this wacky water game you'll need a plastic pitcher or a bucket of water. (It's also good to have a kiddie pool filled with water for quick refills.)

This wet and wild version of "Duck, Duck, Goose" is a blast for kids of all ages. Sit in a circle and choose someone to be "it." With a pitcher or bucket of water the player walks around the group and dribbles water on each person's head while saying, "Dribble, dribble . . ." until she chooses a victim to dump the entire bucket of water on by shouting, "Drench!" The drenched person chases the player around the circle until the drencher is tagged or sits in the other person's place. This game is guaranteed to keep you cool—and wet!

### Sponge Tag

If you like to play tag, you'll love Sponge Tag on a hot summer day. You'll need a big sponge and a bucket of water. Choose someone to be "it" and dunk a large sponge in ice-cold water (the colder, the better!). The person who is "it" tries to tag everyone with the wet sponge. The person who is tagged becomes "it." Don't forget to replenish the sponge with more water when necessary. Keep playing until everyone is soaked!

### Wet Potato

For this game gather together in a circle with a large bucket of VERY full water balloons (the kind that nearly pop when you pick them up!). Pick one water balloon, and toss the "wet potato" to anyone in the circle until someone drops the balloon or it bursts. If your group is especially skillful, try passing several wet potatoes at a time!



Christin Baker is a full time stay-at-home mom and writes part time for Faith Alive Christian Resources. She lives in Grand Rapids, Mich., with her husband and 1-year-old daughter.

## Swept Up by Swoopo



ISTOCKPHOTO

**SOMETHING FOR NOTHING?** We all know that's unlikely.

But something for a little, now *that's* what we call a deal, a fair game where the best shopper wins. The online auction site Swoopo offers a deal-lover's dream, displaying items such as a flat-panel TV, won by a bidder for only \$250! Or a Sony PlayStation 3 for \$40! Prices stay low because bidding goes up by as little as a penny.

Too good to be true? Indeed, the first catch is that you need to buy your bids, at 60 cents a bid. A TV may end up costing only \$250 at auction, but might require 1,000 bids. The total cost is then \$600 in bids, plus the \$250 auction price, plus shipping and handling. The attraction is that maybe, just maybe, you may "swoop" in just before the auction ends and place only one bid (the TV would then cost only \$250.60).

But here is the second catch—with every new bid the clock moves back

**I felt an adrenaline rush when I nearly won.**

another 15 seconds and bidding resumes. Auctions can go on for days.

Before Christmas I tried out Swoopo with the hope of finding some presents for my kids. I bought a pack of 40 bids for \$24. I quickly learned to stick to unpopular items or auctions that ended very late at night. But each time, someone else swooped in and got the deal.

One of several recent "penny auction" sites, *Swoopo.com* began in Germany in 2005 and expanded across Europe to the United States in 2009. The company bills itself as "Entertainment Shopping." And I'll admit I felt an adrenaline rush when I nearly won a nifty Eiffel Tower Lego set. Who would guess that clicking a mouse could be so exciting?

But when I became \$24 poorer and wiser, I realized Swoopo is a variation on gambling. In the hope and thrill of finding a deal, auction losers end up paying Swoopo for the cost of the merchandise—and probably a healthy return to its investors.

As a business model, Swoopo is extremely clever. But in the end, it's a case where a deal is truly a steal. ■



**Otto Selles** teaches French at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. He is a member of Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids.

## WOW Gospel 2010

reviewed by **Ron DeBoer**



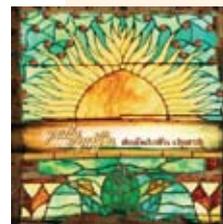
Looking for a praise CD that's bursting with energy and emotion? *WOW Gospel 2010* will help you praise God and make your

spirit soar. Since *WOW Gospel* began putting out its compilation CDs in 1998, they've grown in popularity, with seven platinum and four gold-certified releases. From Kirk Franklin's earnest cry in "Help Me Believe" to Maurette Brown Clark's hopeful "It Ain't Over" to Whitney Houston's prayer "I Look to You," *WOW Gospel 2010* will have you both bouncing in your seat and contemplatively dwelling on the Lord. (Verity)

## Downtown Church

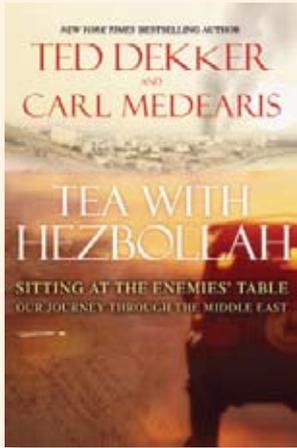
by **Patty Griffin**

reviewed by **Robert N. Hosack**



Griffin's first gospel album, *Downtown Church*, was recorded at a Presbyterian church in Nashville, released on a Christian label,

and produced by the legendary Buddy Miller. Two original compositions from Griffin, who was brought up in the Catholic Church, are presented with gospel standards, including "Wade in the Water." The record draws on a wide variety of inspirations, mixing together a potpourri of genres, cultures, and centuries. Along with Miller, luminaries such as Emmylou Harris and Shawn Colvin join the gospel celebration. A haunting "All Creatures of Our God and King" offers a blessed benediction. (*Credential Recordings*)



## Tea with Hezbollah

by **Ted Dekker and Carl Medearis**  
reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**

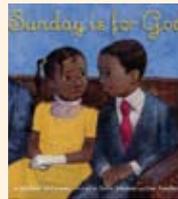
In this thought-provoking travelogue, the authors share what they learned on their trip through Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Syria, and Israel to meet with “America’s perceived enemies, primarily Muslims, whom Jesus suggested we love.” Interviews with muftis, ayatollahs, sheiks, and the leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah reveal that people in the Middle East, as well as in the West, often fail to follow Jesus’ commandment. However, glimmers of hope persist as some groups embrace non-violence. By turns humorous and tragic, *Tea with Hezbollah* opens a window to a fascinating, complex world. (Double-day)

## Priceless

by **William Poundstone**  
reviewed by **Otto Selles**



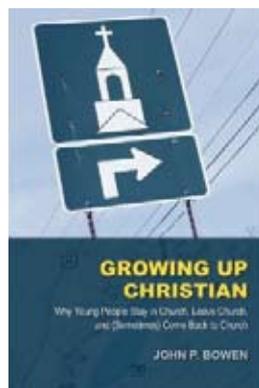
“Buyer beware” goes the old saying. According to Poundstone, we should be wary of the way businesses, with the help of “price consultants,” manipulate our idea of what is a fair deal. The book first presents an anecdotal history of price psychology before turning to concrete examples of how things like menus, minibars, texting plans, and product bundles aim at both confusing and directing the consumer’s attention. Short chapters and a colloquial style make for an easy read that still leaves much food for thought on the value we give to money. (Hill and Wang)



## Sunday Is for God

by **Michael McGowan**  
reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**

Sitting in church wearing his starchy collar and uncomfortable suit, a young boy imagines wading in a river as the congregation sings, “We’ll gather at the river.” Though restless, he notices that most of the people are happy to be praying, reading the Bible, and singing praises to God. In his childlike way, he participates. In this picture book, McGowan’s lyrical text interspersed with Scripture and songs is enhanced by profound collage illustrations. (Schwartz & Wade)



## Growing Up Christian

by **John P. Bowen**  
reviewed by **Sophie Vandenberg**

John Bowen, a longtime campus outreach worker, surveyed hundreds of young people who “grew up Christian.” Retelling their stories, he explores how growing up and leaving home affected their faith. Bowen considers those who remained active in their faith and church, the path of those who left, and “absent believers” who left the church but not the faith. *Growing Up Christian* will be helpful to parents, teachers, youth workers, pastors, and anyone who has a heart for the next generation of the faithful. (Regent College)

SUPERSTOCK

## THE LOWDOWN



**Stick to It:** Larry Osborne’s book *Sticky Teams* offers guidance on working together as church leaders and staff members. (Zondervan)



**Pest Control:** Little sisters, unite! Ramona, of *Ramona the Pest* and other Beverly Cleary books, makes her big-screen debut in theaters this month with *Ramona and Beezus*. (Fox 2000)



**Summer Slump:** Have your children uttered the “b” word yet? Banish boredom with a good book. Check out the Children’s Choices Book Lists at [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org) under Resources.

**Spill It:** Stay up to date on the response to the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico by checking [www.DeepwaterHorizonResponse.com](http://www.DeepwaterHorizonResponse.com) or use an interactive map for current data and images at [www.geoplatform.gov/gulfresponse](http://www.geoplatform.gov/gulfresponse).



Check [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org) for links to find out more about these titles.

BY HENRY SMIDSTRA



## I WAS IN PRISON AND YOU VISITED ME . . .

**T**HE HEAVY PRISON door slammed behind him. Suddenly the cold, clammy cell triggered feelings that frightened him. After what had been a roller-coaster ride of danger, violence, and adrenaline, he broke down in this strange atmosphere of confinement. Sounds like the stifled sobs of a small child welled from deep within him.

Quickly he sucked in his breath and steeled himself. His father had drilled into him that boys don't cry; they never show true feelings, except anger and contempt. It was all about survival in a cruel world: "If you don't come up fighting, they'll get you first." His dad had spent most of his life in prison. Currently he was doing a long federal stint.

The son had savored the times when his dad had been home from prison, even though his father had fought with his mother. Perhaps now his dad would be

proud of him, especially if he got some serious federal time as well (Canadian federal penitentiaries take prisoners who serve more than two years to life in prison). He would write to him as soon as possible. He sat down on the edge of his bed, and a strange calm fell over him. . . .

Can you imagine committing a crime to win a parent's praise? Those of us who experienced stability and nurture in our families and communities often take those things for granted. Perhaps we attended Christian schools, felt secure in our relationships in our church and community, and were influenced significantly by caring role models. But that's not the way it is for everyone.

The story above is a confluence of heart-wrenching stories I hear every day as a prison chaplain. I often ask myself, "Where was the community for this person when he or she was young?"

Thankfully, I'm able to offer the community a chance to be there now.

### Being There

I let new prisoners know how they can apply to have an M2/W2 volunteer come visit them on a regular basis, and possibly also give them support after they're released. M2/W2 stands for Man to Man/Woman to Woman, a ministry that matches volunteers from local churches with prisoners on a person-to-person basis, fostering some of the first healthy relationships some prisoners have. Currently there are about 210 incarcerated men in British Columbia alone waiting to be matched.

It is well known that individuals with positive family and social support have a much better chance of transcending anti-social connections and behavior. To build community and embrace the vulnerable and marginalized is, of course, also the DNA of Jesus' teachings and work.

Matthew 25 emphasizes that our solidarity with Christ resides in our outreach to people who are often avoided and

# Can you imagine committing a crime to win a parent's praise?

abandoned by society—those who are homeless, institutionalized, sick, and in prison. The unconditional and extravagant love of God through Christ is foundational to Christian thinking and critical to M2/W2's mission.

M2/W2 has at its core the biblical values of reconciliation and restoration, which assist in creating a safer society. *Restorative justice* is forward-looking and focuses on responses to crime that address the harm and fears of all those involved.

Traditional responses focus on assigning legal blame and establishing punishment in the hope that doing so will create positive change. Yet, in view of crime statistics and the frustrated voices of so many victims of crime, that approach is sadly ineffective. Victims generally feel left out except for giving legal evidence. And the traditional approach doesn't place much weight on human needs for emotional, physical, and spiritual healing—on the way forward to living together in the community.

Rather, just as they are crucial for victims, meaningful relationships can make all the difference for prisoners as they engage in a long process of healing and rebuilding their lives.

For more than a decade, volunteers Jim and Ann Kleingeltink of Willoughby Christian Reformed Church, Langley, British Columbia, were family to John while he was incarcerated. John still vividly recalls his first meeting with Jim. "It was a fluke," he said. "Someone that Jim was going to meet didn't show up, so I was matched with him."

Jim visited John in prison regularly for years. When John was eligible for passes, he attended church with Jim and Ann and their family. John became one of the congregation's regulars and enjoyed the fellowship after the service.

"He became a virtual family member," said Ann. John relished Rev. Ken Boonstra's leadership and pastoral care and wanted to continue in the Christian faith. When, after 12 years in custody, he moved to a halfway house in Vancouver, First CRC there agreed to become his new spiritual family.

After having spent years in the structure and security of prisons, being in the community can be a frightening experience without familiar and supportive people. "If it hadn't been for that congregation, especially Pastor Vander Veen, his family, and the Van Rhyn family, I would not have made it through this new phase, either," John said. He's thankful for Jim and Ann and for everyone who opened their lives, homes, and churches to him.

## Just Be Yourself

Despite the training volunteers receive from M2/W2, when they walk through the gates and metal detectors of a prison for the first time, they might ask, "What do I say to this person? How do I start?"

Their M2/W2 coordinator might respond this way: "Just be yourself; just show your humanity. This guy hasn't met too many people in his life who simply listen to his stories without condemnation and rebuke. Just be a human presence—no preaching. Just be a channel of God's love and grace."

Too often we tend to focus primarily on religious conversion. But we need to realize that the Spirit of Christ transforms people's lives most often through Christ's love shown in the simple acts of daily life. This might include giving time to help someone look for a job, standing in line with him or her at a medical clinic or bank, or simply talking together over a mug of coffee.

In providing those ordinary yet biblical "cups of cold water," we discover we are ministering to Christ himself. Actively participating in the lives of people in prison and those returning to society changes the way we see them. Visiting and supporting prisoners invites us to see them not as *criminals*, but as *people*, as human beings made in the image of God—and thus as our neighbors to whom we owe unending responses of love.

Prisons don't need to be schools for crime; instead they can become places where people of grace speak the truth in love. I have seen long-term sanctifying relationships formed—seeds planted that many years later came to fruition in faithful living.

Mentoring prisoners is very much about planting seeds of faith. It's not primarily about seeking religious converts, but of listening to prisoners' stories and recognizing with them the presence of God in their lives.

In that mutual exchange of humanity, labels that divide and isolate people tear free and kinships form. And it can all begin on M2/W2 nights as you meet your match. ■

## M2/W2

Just as we all do, offenders need healthy and responsive communities both for nurture and accountability. M2/W2 Restorative Christian Ministries ([m2w2.com](http://m2w2.com); 1.800.859.3215) began in the Vancouver, British Columbia, area in 1966. It was inspired by a Presbyterian pastor in Washington state who sensed the importance of the biblical mandate to visit prisoners and also realized the practical outcome of showing them love and acceptance. Included among early M2/W2 pioneers were numerous dedicated volunteers from the Mennonite and Reformed communities. In addition to British Columbia, M2/W2 programs can also be found in Alberta; in Saskatchewan, they are called Person to Person; in Manitoba, Open Circle; in Quebec, P2; in the Maritimes, Christian Council for Reconciliation; and in Newfoundland, One-to-One. Similar mentorship programs exist in Michigan and other states of the U.S. as well. These programs need the support of local churches to help in their vital work of rehabilitation and transformation. (As of June, M2/W2 was facing an unexpected and unprecedented financial shortfall.) For further resources and information on how your church can be involved in restorative justice, see [crcjustice.org](http://crcjustice.org).

—Henry Smidstra



Rev. Henry (Henk) Smidstra is a prison chaplain and a member of Willoughby CRC in Langley, British Columbia. He serves on the

board of M2/W2 and participates in restorative justice initiatives in the CRC.

# An Auspicious Moment

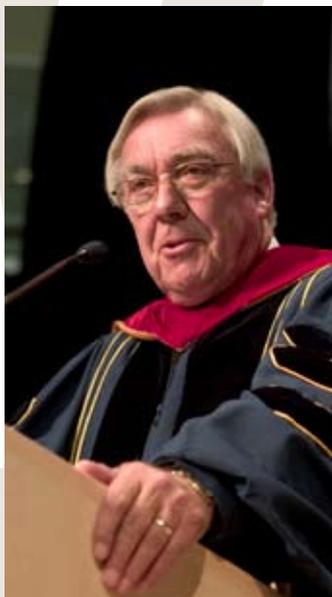
The merger between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) seemed as if it happened in the blink of an eye for Rev. Peter Borgdorff, executive director emeritus of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Now retired from his position at the CRCNA, Borgdorff has remained active in ecumenical relations and was elected president of the Reformed Ecumenical Council, which is based in Grand Rapids, Mich. He worked tirelessly to make the arrangements for the merger meeting. Nonetheless, time flew fast.

"This feels like an auspicious moment in the history of ecumenical relations," Borgdorff said near the start of the Uniting General Council, the meeting at which WARC and REC merged to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). The meeting took place in mid-June on the campus of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.

"Just yesterday we voted to redirect the river of relationships within the global Reformed and Presbyterian family—and now today we close the book on two organizational entities that together have ministered for a combined total of more than 200 years."

Dressed in black and red robes, Borgdorff told the 600 or so del-



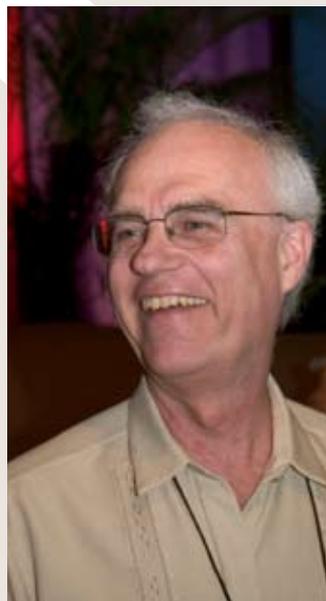
**Peter Borgdorff addresses delegates at the opening of the Uniting General Council.**

egates gathered in Calvin's Van Noord Arena that "there is a lot of history associated with both the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council—a history filled with evidence of commitment and goodwill, blessing and testing, stories of leaders, general secretaries, long and difficult meetings, conflict and resolutions, and debates and controversies. . . ."

The CRCNA served as one of the host denominations for the merger. More than 80 million Christians around the world make up the new World Communion of Reformed Churches.

The meeting was preceded by events for youths and women and

a global theological institute at Calvin Theological Seminary. The heady atmosphere of the early days was sobered by the fact that nearly 75 people, about 40 of them delegates, were denied visas to travel to the United States. The WCRC later lodged a protest against the U.S. government for the denials.



**Richard van Houten, retiring general secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Council, was instrumental in helping the merger happen.**

In his opening remarks, Richard van Houten, general secretary of REC, said the "road getting here was bumpy." Van Houten was honored at the event for all the work he put in to help make the merger happen. He was also given a book, containing essays on his

legacy, to mark his retirement from ecumenical work.

The Uniting General Council opened with a daylong series of events that included separate meetings of the REC and WARC, an opening worship service, recognitions of several leaders who were instrumental in the unification process, an exchange of greetings and gifts between WCRC officials and Native American leaders, and a gala reception celebrating the union.

Borgdorff called the day's events a "construction zone"—proof that God is using all Reformed Christians to "build a new spiritual house for God."

The new organization will combine the strengths of the REC, which has focused especially on biblical and confessional unity, and WARC, which has involved itself in issues of social justice and peace. As such, WCRC can serve as a joint witness of faith and action in a fragmented world.

Rev. Jerry Dykstra, executive director of the CRCNA, said he was pleased that his denomination could help host the event, which, he said, "marks the start of a whole new witness for Reformed churches." Dykstra was a delegate to the meeting.

"Together these two groups now represent a significant number of Reformed churches around the world," said Dykstra. "Since the CRC is one of the churches in both groups, our participation in the merger has been critical to the process."

As part of the weeklong gathering, on the opening and closing weekends delegates worshiped at local Reformed churches, including many CRC congregations. Members of the churches hosted them in their homes after-

## The new World Communion of Reformed Churches represents more than 80 million Christians around the world.



**Sabine Dressler-Kromminga from Germany talks with Ruth Padilla-DeBorst, a missionary from Christian Reformed World Missions.**

ward, meeting delegates from such countries as Hungary, Indonesia, Taiwan, Malawi, Germany, Scotland, and Australia.

Despite cloudy weather, a Native American powwow was a highlight of the week. The powwow took place on the banks of the Grand River in downtown Grand Rapids. A significant focus of the meeting was on issues related to indigenous peoples.

Also during the meeting at Calvin College, the new ecumenical organization elected officers and set the agenda for issues and topics it wants to address in coming years.

"The new organization will be able to provide a strong witness in addressing some of the great economic, social, racial, and climate challenges facing the world

today," said Van Houten. "This organization will have a new energy."

Setri Nyomi, general secretary of WARC and now WCRC, said the gathering provided a chance for people from a wide range of Reformed churches to listen and to talk to one another in one place at one time, in an age when "there is a trend of fragmentation and division in the world."

One issue the meeting dealt with was how to apply the Accra Confession to the lives of people in the churches that make up WCRC.

A few years ago, WARC accepted the confession at a meeting in Accra, Ghana, based on the conviction that "the integrity of our faith is at stake if we remain silent or refuse to act in the face of the cur-

rent system of neoliberal economic globalization."

But many churches have problems with the confession. The CRC, for instance, said at Synod 2009 that it agrees with much that is in the confession. At the same time, "we are concerned that it is incomplete and must go deeper. . . . The

capitalism and what it refers to as "empire."

Rev. John Rozeboom, former director of Christian Reformed Home Missions, credits Borgdorff and his vision for bringing churches and denominations together for being a main driver behind this merger meeting.



**Delegates vote for formation of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.**

Accra Confession presents a particular reading of the signs of the times, but there are other significant voices regarding power, economics, and ecology."

The Accra Confession is a sharp denunciation of global

"Coming together like this is an example of where the ecumenical movement is going today. It eliminates some of the visible separation and emphasizes what we can do together," said Borgdorff.

As delegates left the meeting, Ruth Padilla-DeBorst, a Christian Reformed World Missions missionary, gave them this charge: "May we not merely celebrate that our merger increases our number, grants us greater power of convocation, or more advantageous positions in the public square. . . . Let us tear down the walls of self-defense, security, and prosperity that our greed, pride, and prejudice have built."

—Chris Meehan,  
CRC Communications



**Delegates enter Van Noord Arena at Calvin College to take part in the business of the Uniting General Council.**

ALL PHOTOS ARE BY ERICK COLL, UNITING GENERAL COUNCIL PHOTOGRAPHER

## It Was a Quiet Week in Palos Heights

In a Christian Reformed version of Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion*, Dave Larsen had Synod 2010 delegates in stitches on Sunday night when he told tales of such things as the Cadet pine-wood derby.

His vintage opening line, "It was a quiet week in Palos Heights," also turned out to be somewhat prophetic. Synod was almost over before delegates fully engaged in discussion during plenary sessions.

It was on the final day of synod that delegates held their most substantive discussion. It surrounded the issue of women's



**Dave Larsen:** "It was a quiet week in Palos Heights, where the women are smart, the men are sensitive, and the children all know their catechism."

ordination, a subject that continues to shadow the church even though women may now serve in all the ordained offices and be delegated to church assemblies at every level.

In this case the discussion—at times painful and emotional—

centered on whether two Michigan churches could transfer to a geographically distant classis (regional group of churches) that does not allow women delegates. Synod said they couldn't (see p. 30).

Synod also debated and commented appreciatively on a report from the Committee to Study Migration of Workers (p. 32). Other issues that raised at least some debate included climate change (p. 45), creation and human origins (p. 36), and ministry to abuse victims (p. 34).

Yet when presented with a denominational budget that included a 3 percent increase in ministry share (a per-member amount congregations pay to support the broader ministries of the CRC), delegates had no questions or even comments—though many churches have already cut staffing to meet their own budgets (p. 40).

And when the Faith Formation Committee brought forward its "guiding principle" that will lead to a proposal next year to allow children to participate in communion without a public profession of faith, discussion was minimal, even though this would mark a major change in church polity and practice (see p. 32).

Delegates did express some anger when the denomination's Board of Trustees did not provide a report about what it is doing to include people of color in the senior leadership structure, as had been mandated by Synod 2009 (p. 35).

Yet a related report about how the board would handle signifi-

cant structural change in the future, which had raised much discussion in 2009, passed without comment (p. 35).

What was the cat that had the tongues of this year's delegates? *The Banner* asked around as the week progressed.

Delegates confirmed what we suspected. One factor was that 59 percent of this year's delegates were first-timers, a higher percentage than usual.

Many delegates also said they felt rushed. Delegates were told



**On women's ordination and church unity, Rev. Mark Vermaire, Classis California South:** "One of the great gifts of the CRC is that we have covenanted to live together in heart and truth in very diverse ways."

from the get-go that it was hoped synod would wrap up by Thursday evening, allowing denominational staff and others to get back to Grand Rapids, Mich., for the Uniting General Council meeting that formed the World Communion of Reformed Churches (p. 26). Also, the chapel in which synod was meeting was needed on Friday morning for a funeral.

When synod changed from a two-week event to just one week



## We've Got It Covered

Through email news releases, Twitter, Facebook, webcasts, and the magazine you're holding, *The Banner* and CRC Communications worked hard to bring you all the news of this year's synod, held June 12-17 at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Ill.

The Synod 2010 news team included, from left: *Banner* correspondent Roxanne Van Farowe, CRC director of communications Henry Hess, *Banner* news editor Gayla Postma, web manager Tim Postuma, photographer Karen Huttenga, *Banner* editor-in-chief Rev. Bob De Moor, CRC communications writer Chris Meehan, and *Banner* correspondent Henry Huisjen.

“Those made powerless by abuse are given others who encourage them on their journey.”

—Kathy Vandergrift

back in 1997, it was understood that synod could last from Saturday to Saturday. After all, synods are supposed to be deliberative—studying and discussing issues, discerning common ground, and building consensus when possible. And that takes time.

Some committees this year were unable to reach consensus on matters they were discussing and had to present the plenary sessions with separate reports.

When *The Banner* asked why the committees didn't spend more time trying to find agreement, one delegate said they were told that if they hadn't reached agreement on the first day (Saturday), then they had to start writing separate reports Monday morning.

That first day of synod allows for only about six hours of committee work—hardly enough time to gain understanding of differing viewpoints and build consensus.

Already short on time, delegates rejected a proposal to spend time each year reflecting on an important topic facing the church—simply talking about it without the pressure of voting. Delegates said there just isn't enough room in the schedule to include something like that (p. 31).

Calvin Seminary professor Rev. Henry De Moor, synod's adviser on Church Order for the past 20 years, noted that synod used to have deliberations of great theological depth. “We have much less time,” he said. “Sometimes I bemoan moving to a one-week synod, but other times I rejoice. However, I'm cognizant that you don't make good decisions with airline tickets burning in your pocket” (p. 43).

Despite their time constraints, this synod did some good work. Unlike 2007, when the topic of migrant workers was handled in a way that offended some Hispanic delegates, this year Rev. Eduardo Gonzalez told delegates he was moved almost to tears and proud to be Christian Reformed after the



**On undocumented workers, Rev. Bill Renkema, Classis Zeeland:** “The church helped [Maria] through the legal process to become a documented immigrant, holding prayer vigils and filling the courtroom for her. She is now a permanent resident of the United States.”



**On ethnic diversity in CRC senior management, Rev. Paul DeVries, Classis Thornapple Valley:** “At last year's synod we heard a message of concern and pain from people of color. Now I'm back at this synod and we're hearing about the same pain.”

way Synod 2010 delegates talked about how to minister to undocumented workers.

Following discussion of the Abuse Victims Task Force report,

Rev. Greg Schuringa spoke about how impressed he was with the work, the expertise, and the heart for bringing healing evidenced in the report.

In addition, Synod 2010's work included appointing a new president for Calvin Theological Seminary (p. 42), the Christian Reformed Church's official theological school.

Finally, delegates also approved promoting synod's youth observers to “young adult advisers,” beginning next year—a status that will give them a voice on the synod floor (p. 36).

Today's youth observers will likely be tomorrow's delegates. And if the quality and ambition of this year's observers are any indication, then whatever the shortcomings of synod's format, the future looks very bright.

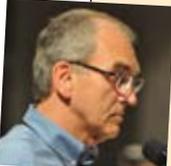
—Gayla R. Postma is news editor for *The Banner*.



Rev. Bernard Bakker: “Pastors currently receive \$75 for submitting sermons for use in reading services.”



Rev. Rudy Ouwehand: “I recently got \$90, not \$75.”



Rev. Henry Jonker: “Yeah, but that was Canadian money.”

## Michigan Churches Not Allowed to Join Distant Classis

**S**ynod 2010 decided not to allow two West Michigan churches to transfer to another classis hundreds of miles away.

The two churches—Trinity CRC of Sparta, Mich., and Second CRC of Kalamazoo, Mich.—want to join Classis Minnkota, because its churches share their opposition to the ordination of women. The two churches do not wish to attend classis meetings when female elders or pastors are present.

Classes are clusters of regional churches that usually meet twice a year. Classis Minnkota covers churches in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

For two hours, delegates engaged in the most passionate debate of this year's synod.

Some delegates urged the two churches to stay and continue their struggle with people whose views differ. "It is more powerful to experience grace where there is difference than to hide and escape in uniformity," said elder Wendy Gritter, Classis Toronto.



**Elder Wendy Gritter, Classis Toronto:** "It is more powerful to experience grace where there is difference than to hide and escape in uniformity."

Gritter spoke from her own experience as a woman in ministry, she said.

"One of the great gifts of the CRC is that we have covenanted to live together in heart and truth in very diverse ways," said Rev. Mark Vermaire, Classis California

South. "This [request] seems to say 'We'd be together in name but not in reality.'"

Rev. Kevin DeRaaf, Classis Hamilton, who chaired the committee that addressed the two churches' request, said the request could further divide the CRC. "What's clear in the overtures

brought . . . is the desire to form a theologically aligned classis. To move away from our calling to be present in a place is a matter of deep concern."

But nearly half of the delegates disagreed, preferring to let the churches join Classis Minnkota in spite of its geographic distance.



**Elder Sharon Broersma DeVries, Classis Chatham:** "I hurt for the young girls at Trinity CRC and Second Kalamazoo CRC who may silently question and believe differently from the positions of their congregations. I was one of those girls."

"I agree that we are called to be where we are and work through our differences, but this is the will of [these churches]," said Rev. Tim Raakman, Classis Kalamazoo. "We can give them all the sound arguments we want, but at the end of the day what can we do—force them?"

"This feels like we are saying, 'We will make room for you, but we will tell you where to stand,'" said Rev. Tom Niehof, Classis Northcentral Iowa.

Elder Sharon Broersma DeVries, Classis Chatham, was overwhelmed by emotion as she said that it hurt to be at synod where some disagreed with her presence there. "I hurt also for the young girls at Trinity CRC and Second Kalamazoo CRC who may silently question and believe differently from the positions of

We repent for the ways we have not always treated others with love and respect. We are sorry for whatever hurt we have caused those who disagree with us. We pray that with God's help we will be able to once again accept one another in the name of Jesus Christ.

—Adopted by Synod 2010



**Rev. Bill Vis:** “While neither of these churches has breathed a hint of leaving [the denomination], the reality is, if they cannot go to their classis meeting, they will leave.”

their congregations,” she said. “I was one of those girls.”

Once the decision was made, with a very close vote, a few delegates shared their opinions of its consequences.

“While neither of these churches has breathed a hint of leaving [the denomination], the reality is, if they cannot go to their classis meeting, they will leave,” said Rev. Bill Vis, Classis Grand Rapids North.

Rev. David Snapper, Classis Pacific North-West, urged CRC

leaders to reconcile with those who oppose the full inclusion of women in ministry.

“We’ve lost a lot of members over [the issue of women in office],” he said. “We are not innocent in what happened. I can’t think of anything that would be more encouraging than if leaders found out their brothers and asked for forgiveness.”

Synod in fact made a statement of repentance for past hurts caused (see p. 30).

Synod also instructed the CRC’s Board of Trustees to have executive director Rev. Jerry Dykstra and others work with the two churches in order to try to “seek ways forward.”

Later that same day, Rev. Henry DeMoore, synod’s adviser on church polity, reminded delegates of something he heard from the late Rev. John Kromminga, former president of Calvin Theological Seminary: “An airplane needs both its right wing and its left wing to fly. The same applies to the church.”

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Rev. Aldon Kuiper, synod president: “Any further discussion or silly comments?”

## No Time to Talk

Citing concerns that synods are already getting too rushed, delegates declined to mandate a discussion time at future synods.

The recommendation, from the denomination’s Board of Trustees, was that future synods allow time at each synod to deliberate on topics of church-wide interest, some of which would be suggested by the board.

“Synod is giving short shrift to its core responsibilities,” said Rev. Thomas Niehof, Classis Northcentral Iowa. “I am not in favor of adding something to synod unless we go back to meeting for two weeks.”

“I would like to see those [discussion topics] come from the churches,” said Rev. Mary-Lee Bouma, Classis British Columbia North-West. “I fear that we are becoming too centralized.”

Rev. Mark Vermaire, Classis California South, defended the recommendation. “Sometimes



**Rev. Thomas Niehof, Classis Northcentral Iowa:** “Synod is giving short shrift to its core responsibilities.”

synod doesn’t have the opportunity to talk about important issues because [those issues] don’t come from the churches,” said Vermaire, who is president of the Board of Trustees.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## First-Time Officers

None of the delegates to this year’s synod came with any experience as synod officers, so it was no surprise to have an executive of first-timers.

But the officers were not short on synod experience; between them they had 20 synods under their belts.

Rev. Aldon Kuiper, Classis Iakota, was elected president. He is a veteran of nine previous synods. Rev. Peter Slofstra, Classis Quinte, was elected vice president.

Chosen as first and second clerk, respectively, were Rev. William Verhoef, Classis California South, and elder Wendy Gritter, Classis Toronto.

—Gayla R. Postma

**Synod 2010 officers (l-r): Wendy Gritter, Rev. Peter Slofstra, Rev. Aldon Kuiper, and Rev. William Verhoef**



## Synod Moves Toward Communion Without Profession of Faith

**S**ynod 2010 approved a guiding principle that moves the denomination toward opening the Lord's Table to younger baptized members who haven't yet made a public profession of faith.

Current church policy requires a formal profession of faith in some form before participation in communion.



**Elder Paul LaGrand, Classis Grand Rapids South: "It is important not to devalue the importance of public profession of faith."**

Formal proposals to change the Church Order allowing this change are expected to come to Synod 2011.

The principle approved by this year's synod states that all baptized members who come with age- and ability-appropriate faith

in Jesus Christ are welcome to the Lord's Supper, under the supervision of the elders. It came to synod from the denomination's Faith Formation Committee as part of a wide-ranging study of faith formation issues.

Formal public profession of faith is a vital faith formation practice and one pastoral approach to consider, the principle says, but is not required by Scripture or the confessions as a condition of participation in communion.

Several requests came to synod asking that Synod 2010 reject or withhold action on the Faith Formation Committee's recommendation, contending that children lack the capacity for self-examination required for proper participation in the Lord's Supper, but synod did not accept those requests.

Elder Paul LaGrand, Grand Rapids South, did point out that it is important not to devalue the importance of public profession of faith.

Synod did not give permission to implement the practice immediately—and delegates debated whether churches should have to wait for formal changes in Church Order before changing their communion practices.

Rev. George Vander Weit, elder delegate from Classis Lake Erie, said churches that are ready to welcome children to the Lord's Supper should not have to wait for another synod to act on a principle that Synod 2010 has already approved.

"Synod often slows the church down," Vander Weit said. "Now synod is saying 'stop' again."

Elder Tim Miedema, Classis Zeeland, said waiting for final synod approval is important—and not following Church Order will lead to confusion.



**Rev. John Witvliet, chair of the denomination's Faith Formation Committee**

"We are a body of churches," he said, "and in an age of congregationalism, if we don't follow Church Order, that's what we have."

The Faith Formation Committee will propose appropriate Church Order changes and work with church agencies to develop pastoral resources for congregations.

—Henry Huisjen

## Reaching Out to Undocumented Workers

**I** have almost been moved to tears about the sensitivity that you have shown today," said Rev. Eduardo Gonzalez, Classis Arizona. "Truly, you made me really proud to be a part of this denomination."

Gonzalez was referring to Synod 2010's discussion about how churches need to respond to the issues facing both undocumented workers and governments trying to protect their borders.

The discussion was the result of a report from the Committee to Study Migration of Workers. That committee was formed in 2007 after a discussion at synod about how to minister to undocumented migrant workers, including whether to invite them to the Lord's Supper.

At that time, several Hispanic pastors and others were hurt by the way the issue was handled during Synod 2007. So Synod 2010 acknowledged the sorrow and misunderstanding caused by that process. "It was a cultural bump that should not have happened if we had been culturally alert," said Teresa Renkema, chair of the study committee. "But our hope is that it will lead us in the direction of cultural embrace and inclusion."

The report that came to Synod 2010 was warmly received as "pastorally sensitive, warm-hearted, and very helpful," according to a statement adopted by synod.

Delegates from all corners of the U.S. spoke of the report's relevance to their ministry.



**Ethnic adviser John Gonzales:** “For some migrants to obey the law is very difficult because to do so means having their children separated from them.”



**Rev. Eduardo Gonzalez, Classis Arizona:** “I have almost been moved to tears about the sensitivity that you have shown today. Truly, you made me really proud to be a part of this denomination.”

Rev. Bill Renkema, Classis Zeeland, told about a Hispanic woman in an abusive relationship who became involved with his congregation. The church helped her through the legal process to become a documented immigrant, holding prayer vigils and filling the courtroom for her.

“Because of the prayers of God’s people, Maria is now a permanent resident of the United States, and we give thanks to the Lord for that,” he said.

“Many in our church are new to the Christian faith and will be looking for some guidance because this is so vexing,” said Rev. Ken Vander Horst, Classis Rocky Mountain. “I’m not only comfortable with this [report], I am empowered by it.”

“I hope that the churches will take this report very seriously,” said Rev. LeRoy Christoffels, Classis Minnkota. “The opportunity to reach [undocumented workers] is burgeoning.”

Synod adopted all the committee’s recommendations, including the following:

- encouraging the Office of Race Relations to equip the church with resources to deal with crosscultural conflict;
- encouraging local churches to educate their membership about issues facing immigrants and equip them to respond with love;

**Rev. Ken Vander Horst, Classis Rocky Mountain:** “I am empowered by [this report].”



**Chris Pullenayegem and Teresa Renkema represented the Committee to Study the Migration of Workers.**

- urging the denomination and local churches to affirm the need to reach out to immigrant people with mercy and compassion;
- encouraging congregations and church members to advocate for immigration reform and for a more just process for those incarcerated for their lack of status;
- encouraging churches to be mission partners with churches that serve immigrant communities.

Synod also wants the CRC’s Office of Social Justice and the Canadian Committee for Contact with the Government to present synod with a “concrete direction” for ways to “advocate on behalf of those who are marginalized.”

“For some migrants to obey the law is very difficult because to do so means having their children separated from them,” said ethnic adviser John Gonzales.

Rev. Philip Reinders, Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan, closed the discussion in prayer:

“Thank you, God, for the place in Jesus that we call home. . . . We pray for the undocumented children of God. . . . We pray that they would find that sense of home quickly. Lead us to be compassionate givers of the welcome you have given to us.”

—Roxanne Van Farowe



**Rev. LeRoy Christoffels, Classis Minnkota:** “The opportunity to reach [undocumented workers] is burgeoning.”

## Synod Strengthens Ministry to Abuse Victims

**S**ynod 2010 took several steps to improve the CRC's pastoral care of victims of sexual abuse by a church leader and its care of those accused of abuse.

The proposals came from the Abuse Victims Response Task Force, appointed by Synod 2006 when it recognized that the church hasn't always done enough when abuse cases come to light.

In fact, synod delegates prayed in unison asking God's forgiveness for times when the Christian Reformed Church did not help abuse victims and did not discipline abusive church leaders.

Rev. Greg Schuringa, Classis Northern Illinois, who reported on the task force's work, said, "Pastoral care has

not been applied as it could have been and should have been in the past."

So Synod 2010 urged church councils to immediately provide pastoral care for a claimant, the accused, their families, and other church members as soon as an allegation of abuse is made. It noted that someone who is accountable to the elders should be given the task of ensuring that such pastoral care happens.

Churches are urged to learn more about restorative justice and



**Kathy Vandergrift: "Not talking about it is not going to be an excuse any longer if [an abuse situation] arises."**

apply those approaches in abuse cases when appropriate.

The CRC's Board of Trustees was given the task of developing additional educational resources on abuse prevention and church leader misconduct, including a handbook for church council members.

"I think, from my own experience, that most of us elders do not have the education or knowledge to help people who are abused," said elder Peter Hagedoorn, Classis Hudson. "If we're going to have a booklet, we're going to have to have it pretty quickly."

Synod also urged church councils, just as many previous synods have done, to provide yearly training for elders and deacons about abuse-related topics.

Elder Martin Boersma, Classis Grand Rapids North, wondered whether synod's resolutions would increase the liability of a church in the case of an abuse allegation.

Kathy Vandergrift, chair of the Abuse Victims Response Task Force, replied that "not doing something, not talking about it, is not going to be an excuse any longer if [an abuse situation] arises."

Elder Tim Miedema, Classis Zeeland, said that the process for reporting abuse does not seem to follow the Matthew 18 pattern: "Here [what you have against your brother] goes to a whole lot of people before it goes to your brother."

Vandergrift responded that Matthew 18 assumes a power balance. "Those made powerless



**Elder Peter Hagedoorn: "Most of us elders do not have the education or knowledge to help people who are abused."**

by abuse are given others who encourage them on their journey."

Several delegates affirmed the task force report and the need for churches to be aware of abuse issues.

"I'm very impressed with the task force's work, expertise, and heart for bringing healing to broken situations and for equipping the church," said Schuringa.



**Rev. Greg Schuringa: "Pastoral care has not been applied as it could have been and should have been in the past."**

"This is stuff that is so phenomenally important," said Rev. Carel Geleynse, Classis British Columbia South-East "There's no way that councils and churches are going to understand and get it unless we say 'You need to sit and study this [report].'"

—Roxanne Van Farowe



**Rev. Carel Geleynse: "This is stuff that is so phenomenally important."**

## Synod Again Disappointed with Diversity Efforts

Synod 2010 expressed “deep disappointment” at not receiving an expected report about what the denomination’s Board of Trustees is doing to bring more ethnic diversity to the senior leadership team.

The report was supposed to have been the result of the Diversity in Leadership Planning Group that was mandated by Synod 2009, when it was noted that a restructuring of the denominational leadership resulted in



**Rev. Richard Jones, Classis Greater Los Angeles: “How can we learn to be the body of Christ unless we have people at the table?”**

removing from the senior leadership the one director who is a person of color.

That group was to report to Synod 2010 but experienced several setbacks that prevented it from presenting a report on



**Rev. Paul DeVries, Classis Thornapple Valley: “What are people of color supposed to think? There is no attempt on behalf of the board of trustees to explain why [there is no report]. I don’t see how this can be anything but a lack of being forthright.”**

time, according to executive director Jerry Dykstra.

“At last year’s synod we heard a message of concern and pain from people of color,” said Rev. Paul De Vries, Classis Thornapple Valley. “Now I’m back at this synod and we’re hearing about the same pain. I’m concerned that the Board of Trustees did nothing to inform

the churches about this. . . . What are people of color supposed to think? They don’t know why and there is no attempt on behalf of the Board of Trustees to explain why [there is no report]. I don’t see how this can be anything but a lack of being forthright.”

“I’m trying to understand why, if there was a mandate given by synod, we do not have the report,” said Rev. Eduardo Gonzalez, Classis Arizona. “If we’re going to walk the walk, let’s talk the talk.”

“I’m feeling as if once again something wasn’t done,” said Rev.

Richard Jones, Classis Greater Los Angeles. “I was disappointed to know there was not a report. How can we learn to be the body of Christ unless we have people at the table? It is like if everyone has real money and people of color have Monopoly money—we can’t do anything.”

As a result of its disappointment, Synod 2010 told the board that it now wants it to report its work on ethnic diversity and racial justice at every synod.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Rev. Eduardo Gonzalez: “I think I’m the only Hispanic delegate this year.”

Rev. John Gonzales (from across the room): “Hola!”



## Board of Trustees Must Connect Better to Churches

Synod 2010 approved several measures meant to better connect the work of the denomination’s Board of Trustees to the broader church.

Last year’s delegates learned of a restructuring of the CRC’s top staff leadership team that, among other things, resulted in removing from the senior leadership the one director who is a person of color (see “Minority Voice Lost,” June 2009). That restructuring had not been approved by synod.

So Synod 2009 instructed the board to develop guidelines, to be received by this year’s synod, on how it would better involve the broader church community when considering such significant structural changes.

Synod 2010 accepted the response offered by the board, but felt it did not go far enough. It wants the board to outline the process it would use for making significant structural change. That process would be approved by next year’s synod.

Synod also approved other steps to improve the connection of the BOT to the church:

- encouraging classes to provide time for board members to address them;
- instructing the board to brainstorm the most effective ways to communicate with the broader church;
- allowing time at future synods for a more formal report from the board;
- encouraging executive members of the board to attend synod and meet with advisory committees.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



## Creation and Science Teaching Restriction Lifted

Synod 2010 declared that a directive from 1991 (known as “Declaration F”), which restricted what Christian Reformed Church members could teach regarding the origins of humans, is no longer part of the denomina-

**Rev. John Cooper, Calvin Theological Seminary: Declaration F has impeded dealing with creation and evolution from a Reformed Christian perspective.**

tion’s official position on creation and science.

Declaration F said that “the clear teaching of Scripture and our confessions on the uniqueness of human beings as imagebearers of God rules out the espousal of all theorizing that posits the reality of evolutionary forebears of the human race.”

Rev. John Cooper of Calvin Theological Seminary, who served as a faculty adviser at synod and has taught classes dealing with creation and evolution from a

Reformed Christian perspective, told synod that Declaration F has impeded proper treatment of the topic.

Synod determined that the church should not bind the conscience of its members beyond the clear teaching of Scripture and the creeds, and that other declarations of synod sufficiently safeguard the church’s confession with respect to the uniqueness of humans as imagebearers of God.

—Henry Huisjen



Front row, l-r: Robert Van Lonkhuyzen, Peter Keep, Mark Eekhoff, Paul DeWeerd. Back row, l-r: Violet Mutoigo, Amy Vander Vliet, Elizabeth Jennings

## Young Adults to Advise Synods

Next year young adults will not only observe synod, they will be able to speak from the floor.

Synod 2010 voted to change the role of “youth observers” to “young adult advisers.” In future years a panel of seven young people, ages 18-26, will advise synod on matters from their perspective.

“Young adults bring a valuable and unique perspective to the issues we face as a denomination and should be engaged as we deliberate regarding these issues,” Synod 2010 stated.

Young adult advisers will be able to participate in committee discussions and speak in plenary sessions, as do synod’s ethnic advisers.

“I think it’s an important step,” said Amy Vander Vliet, serving her second year as a youth observer. “Synod will be able to call on youth advisers for insight on things that would be helpful for the entire floor of synod to hear.”

The youth observer panel was begun at Synod 2009.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## Youth Ministry Plan Presented

About 50 people gathered following a session of synod to discuss a youth ministry plan being created by the Youth Ministries Task Force.

The task force was created by senior denominational leaders to develop a “coherent youth ministry plan” for the Christian Reformed Church.

“Our students graduate from high school and graduate from church, in many cases,” said Ministry Associate Ty Hogue, youth pastor for Harderwyk Ministries, Holland, Mich. “We need to help them retain a living and active faith once they graduate from high school.”

The task force identified three key needs: helping adolescents live in today’s culture, equipping adolescents for discipleship, and encouraging congregations to engage adolescents.

Elder Ken Douma, Classis Lake Superior, said that often there is a disconnect between adolescents and the older generations in the church.

“We should be focusing more on adults, teaching them how to live their faith in ways that kids will engage with,” Douma said.



**Elder David Stewart: Young people need to have real roles in the church.**

Elder David Stewart, Classis Columbia, said that young people need to have real roles in the church.

“We have youths on every church committee,” said Stewart, who is youth pastor for Sunnyside (Wash.) CRC. “We’ve started to see a shift in the mentality. It’s becoming *their* church, [they’re] equals to the adults.”

The group also discussed ways to build relationships with youths.

“What if every kid had five adults who knew their name and cared about them?” said Hogue.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

Rev. Henry De Moor, faculty adviser: "If the chair, who is the vice president, is challenged, the president, who is sitting in the vice president's chair, resumes the chair."



**Rev. Daniel Mouw, Classis Grandville:** "We can do more to really unleash the office of deacon in our local churches."

## Task Force to Explore Role of Deacons

Synod 2010 wants a task force to review the role of deacons in the CRC and to recommend ways to revitalize the diaconate and its role in the community.

Classis Grandville requested the task force with the intent to encourage, empower, and educate churches in their diaconal ministries.

The task force will also look at the place and role of deacons at higher assemblies and examine possible changes in Church Order to allow deacons to serve in parity with other church officeholders.

Rev. Daniel Mouw, Classis Grandville, said the time has come to make diaconal ministry a higher priority in churches and at classis.

"We can do more to really unleash the office of deacon in our local churches," Mouw said.

—Henry Huisjen

## Youth Observers Propose Biennial Summit

The seven young adults who served as youth observers to Synod 2010 have proposed holding a youth summit every other year during synod, in order to expand the engagement of young adults with the life of the church.

The observers envision a meeting that would operate much like synod, with an elected president and executive body who would represent the youth summit on the floor of synod.

Youth summit teams, similar to synod's advisory committees, would discuss issues of importance to CRC youths as well as issues under discussion at synod. After discussion and debate, youth advisory team leaders would offer insight and recommendations to



**Youth observer Elizabeth Jennings addresses synod.**

their corresponding synodical advisory committees.

The purpose is to connect young adults in the CRC with their peers, offer them a visible, accountable voice, and spark interest in how the church works at all levels. It would also allow young adults input into future synod agenda items and provide leadership training and experience.

The youth summit proposal will go to the CRC Board of Trustees for review and could be formally proposed to Synod 2011.

The youth observers would like the first summit to happen in 2012, when synod will be debating whether or not to adopt the Belhar Confession. That is also the year the Faith Formation committee is expected to make its final report to synod. Both topics are of great interest to young adults.

—Henry Huisjen

## CRC to Strengthen Advocacy for Unborn



**Elder Don Jabaay, Classis Yellowstone:** "What more of a social justice issue is there than life, life itself?"

Synod 2010 decided that the CRC's Office of Social Justice should "boldly advocate for the church's position against abortion."

A request made to synod stated that the Office of Social Justice does not currently offer many resources to advocate for the unborn. It pointed out that Synod 1998 urged CRC churches to "proclaim boldly our opposition to the North American atrocity of abortion."

"We ought to speak out for the unborn," said elder Don Jabaay, Classis Yellowstone. "What more of a social justice issue is there than life, life itself?"

"It's true that we haven't been very forthright in the past to make our [CRC] position [on abortion] well known and encourage government officials to take action to prevent abortion," said Calvin Theological Seminary faculty adviser Rev. Calvin Van Reken.

Synod agreed.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



**Rev. LeRoy Christoffels:**  
 “This is not against women in any way whatsoever.”

## Synod Again Declines Reopening Women in Office Argument

**S**ynod 2010 refused to reopen the discussion on biblical interpretation regarding women in office.

For the second year in a row, Classis Minnkota asked synod to acknowledge that the biblical/theological interpretation of the Bible used to favor the ordination of women contains errors and needs to be corrected.

Synod decided that Classis Minnkota’s request did not present new or sufficient grounds to reconsider the biblical/theological argumentation approved in 2000.

Rev. LeRoy Christoffels, Classis Minnkota, said the request was a matter of integrity and not an attempt to undermine the CRC’s position on women in office.

“This is not against women in any way whatsoever,” Christoffels said.

—Henry Huisjen

## Synod Looks Ahead to Revised Form of Subscription

**S**ynod 2010 unanimously approved a working document intended to replace the current Form of Subscription.

The CRC requires its office-bearers to sign the form, affirming their agreement with the church’s creeds.

Now provisionally called “A Covenant for Officebearers,” it will come to Synod 2011 for approval.

The impetus for revising the document was a request to study the efficacy of the form. Some churches were not using it because office-bearers were reluctant to sign it.

The Form of Subscription Committee is developing a document that gives officebearers a more contemporary way to affirm their commitment to the confessions of the CRC.

The new version, the committee says, is intended to affirm promise making, a binding together of parties, and ongoing theological reflection. The committee says it has also worked to produce a document with language that “sings rather than plods along.”

—Henry Huisjen

## Church Order: Revised, Not Rewritten

**A** substantial update of the Christian Reformed Church’s Church Order—the rules that govern denominational life—gained Synod 2010’s approval. But a proposal to completely rewrite the Church Order did not.

The revisions brought to Synod 2010 were primarily intended to update or remove outdated language, bring articles in line with each other, or make clarifications.

One significant change involved Article 54, which states that in worship services “the minister of the Word shall officially explain and apply Holy Scripture” and that “at one of the services each Lord’s Day, the minister shall ordinarily preach the Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism, following its sequence.”

The new and shorter form of Article 54 states that “proclamation of the Word shall be central to the worship of the church and shall be guided by the creeds and confessions of the church, especially by the Heidelberg Catechism.”

The task force said, and synod agreed, that the revision better reflects previous synodical decisions and encourages the use of the creeds and confessions to shape the preaching ministry of the church.

Classis Lake Erie had requested that the Church Order be completely rewritten in light of current CRC practice and today’s ministry context.

Rev. George Vander Weit, an elder from that classis, said a comprehensive, not piecemeal, rewriting of the Church Order is needed. It needs to be a modern and more hospitable document, he said—one that reflects diversity in church and culture.

“We have a Church Order that was developed in the 1600s in Europe for Anglo people,” Vander Weit said.

However, Rev. Rudy Ouwehand, Classis Niagara, said a total update would take another six or seven years, cost between \$60,000 and \$70,000, and produce a document that would still be subject to changes every year.

Synod 2010 decided against the rewrite.

Synod also approved a new introduction intended to explain the purpose, importance, and function of the Church Order in an engaging way. It ends with this exhortation: “May God bless you as you serve in Christ’s church in a fitting and orderly way!”

—Henry Huisjen

Elder Henry Eygenraam: "You'll find that in our next recommendation, which we may come to in a few minutes—or a few hours."



Rev. Don Poest, Reformed Church in America

## Belhar Thumbs-Up from RCA

Rev. Don Poest, who will be president of the Reformed Church in America for the next year, brought greetings to Synod 2010.

He told delegates that the RCA, at its synod the week before, had formally adopted the Belhar Confession and placed it in its constitution.

"During the last years of debate," he said, "I heard it's a good document, but not necessary as a confession." He told delegates that his life had been profoundly impacted by the Heidelberg Catechism. "[However], had I been taught the Belhar Confession as a child, about reconciliation and justice, would I have had the same attitudes I grew up with?" he asked. "We are not living in a vacuum. The truths we confess impact us in more ways than we realize."

—Gayla R. Postma

## Ecumenical Relations Committee Gets Interfaith Mandate

Synod 2010 added to the mandate of the denomination's Ecumenical Relations Committee, giving it the task of representing the CRC in interfaith dialogue and providing advice and resources to help congregations with that dialogue.

It also changed the name of the committee to reflect the additional task. It is now the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee.

Not all delegates were in favor of the change. Rev. LeRoy Christoffels, Classis Minnkota, noted that it changes the nature of the committee quite a bit. "What would be the purpose of [interfaith] dialogue at a high level without evangelism being involved?" he asked.

Rev. William Koopmans, chair of the committee, said there are contexts when emphasis on evangelism would not be appropriate in a pluralistic society. "When there are interfaith meetings, it would probably not be appropriate to engage in public evangelism," he said. "It is precisely because those questions are being raised that a committee needs to address it. The complexity of the questions makes a good argument in favor of needing this."

Koopmans noted that in the context of congregations and missions, interfaith ques-



Rev. William Koopmans, chair of the newly renamed Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee: "In the context of congregations and missions, interfaith questions are the reality."

tions are the reality. He also noted that the reason for changing the name of the committee was to underscore that interfaith dialogue is distinct from relating ecumenically to other Christian churches. "The primary concern of [the committee] was not to blur ecumenicity and interfaith dialogue," he said.

Rev. Dan Roeda, Classis Wisconsin, said that when he saw the violence that occurs between Christians and Muslims in places like Nigeria, it made him think. "We as spiritual leaders in our communities need to get together and promote the peace of all," he said. "In our ecumenical context, we can promote that dialogue."

—Gayla R. Postma

## Greetings from the Canadian Council of Churches

Rev. Karen Hamilton, director of the Canadian Council of Churches, brought greetings to Synod 2010 on behalf of the 23 denominations the CCC represents.

With Anglican, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches included, the council represents 85 percent of Christians in Canada.

Rev. Bruce Adema, director of Canadian Ministries for the CRC, is currently the council's president.



Rev. Karen Hamilton, Canadian Council of Churches

Hamilton told delegates to continue bringing the many gifts of the CRC to the world. "You have so much to say," she said, "so many gifts—your

vitality, your passion for Scripture, your willingness to work for others."

—Gayla R. Postma

## Why Increase Ministry Share Now?

For two years, ministry share (the per-confessing-member amount that congregations contribute toward denominational ministries) has remained the same.

However, without comment synod bumped up that amount by 3 percent for 2011.

Asked why an increase now, Rev. George Vink, chair of synod's finance committee, explained: "Staying where we are will limit meeting anticipated needs, knowing it will not generate revenue until 2011. We expect an improvement in the economy and a desire not to cut ministries."

The extra ministry share amount—which will begin generating funds in April 2011—will not go directly toward increasing the fiscal 2011 budgets of CRC agencies and ministries. It will be used to fund "strategic initiatives that further the ministries of the CRC during the 2011 fiscal year," said John Bolt, the CRC's finance director. "The use of the ministry-share increase in fiscal 2012 will be determined as the budgets for that year are developed this fall."

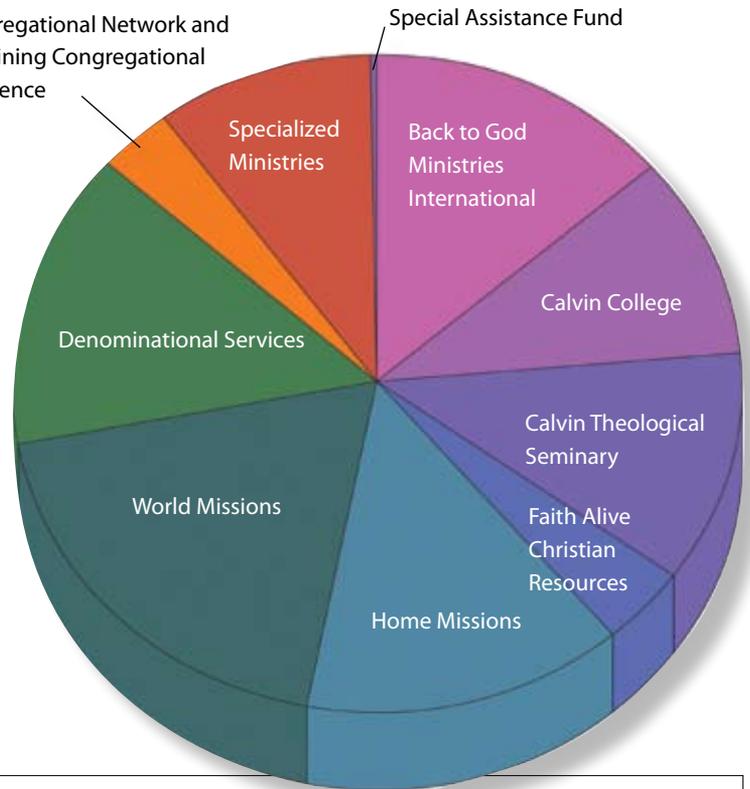
Present ministry-share funding remains strong despite the economic downturn, indicating that churches have the ability and the heart to support the work of the denomination through ministry share.

—Bob De Moor

## Ministry Share for 2011

Synod 2010 set the per-member rate of ministry share at \$316.76 for calendar year 2011. That represents a 3 percent increase from 2010. Ministry share is the amount each church is requested to contribute to the denomination for each active professing member age 18 and older. It provides a stewardly way of raising funds for the worldwide work of the CRC.

Congregational Network and Sustaining Congregational Excellence



## How Our Dollars Support CRC Ministry

### Ministry Share Breakdown for Fiscal 2011<sup>1</sup>

Back to God Ministries International	\$43.97
Calvin College	\$31.60
Calvin Theological Seminary	\$35.91
Faith Alive Christian Resources	\$12.49
Home Missions	\$44.24
World Missions	\$59.93
Denominational Services <sup>2</sup>	\$46.69
Congregational Network and Sustaining Congregational Excellence	\$10.56
Specialized Ministries <sup>3</sup>	\$31.01
Special Assistance Fund <sup>4</sup>	\$0.36

### Total Per-Member Assessment

**\$316.76**

The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee receives no ministry share.

<sup>1</sup> These amounts represent allocation for the \$316.76 ministry share for the 2011 fiscal year budget (July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011). The extra money generated by the 3% increase will not be allocated directly to the budgets of agencies and ministries during fiscal 2011, but will be held in Denominational Services. As strategic initiatives are identified, the funds will be applied where needed most. Allocation of ministry share for fiscal 2012 will be determined as the budgets for that year are developed this fall.

<sup>2</sup> Synod Assembly, Board of Trustees, and General Administration

<sup>3</sup> Chaplaincy Ministries, Disability Concerns, ministries in Canada (Aboriginal Ministries, Committee for Contact with the Government, ServiceLink), Pastor-Church Relations, Race Relations, Restorative Justice, Safe Church Ministry, and Office of Social Justice.

<sup>4</sup> A fund that provides assistance to cover the cost of a pastor's final move at retirement, as well as special needs of retired pastors or their surviving spouses.

## More Time Needed to Study Creed Revisions

Synod 2010 said churches need more time to consider revisions of our three Reformed confessions—the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort. It also discussed the use of gender-inclusive language for humans and God.

The revisions are proposed for inclusion in a worship songbook being developed by Faith Alive Christian Resources for use in congregations of both the CRC and the Reformed Church in America.

The two denominations use different versions of the creeds, so the revisions are intended to bring the two versions together. But Synod 2010 decided the changes were too extensive to have been reviewed in time for this synod.

Synod 2010 asked that the task force handling the revisions post a final draft of the three confessions online by Nov. 1, and that it be printed in the *Agenda for Synod 2011* for consideration and adoption.

Rev. Kevin Jordan, Classis Alberta South, said the new timeline is still insufficient—“a rather short time to look at three confessions.”

Rev. Paul De Vries, Classis Thornapple Valley, disagreed, noting that draft versions of the revised confessions are already available.



Rev. Kevin Jordan, Classis Alberta South: “It is a rather short time to look at three confessions.”

“It’s a process that allows due time for response and feedback,” De Vries said. “We want to keep moving along.”

Delegates also debated the use of gender-inclusive terms in references to humans and reducing the number of male pronouns for God when doing so could be done “with felicity.”

Rev. Dan Mouw, Classis Grandville and a member of the advisory committee presenting the confessions revision, defended the use of inclusive language, saying it is consistent with what Faith Alive has been doing for many years.

—Henry Huisjen

## Chaplaincy Director Introduced

Rev. Ronald Klimp was introduced to Synod 2010 as the new director of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry for the CRC. Rev. Mark Stephenson had been filling the position on an interim basis.

“The work of chaplaincy is exciting to me,” said Klimp. “[It is] wonderful work that is so needed in our world today.”

Chaplains provide pastoral care in the military and in prisons, hospitals, and other settings. Klimp’s job description also includes advancing ministries of care to CRC pastors, congregations, and ministries.

“Pastoral care should be elevated to the same level as pastors of the Word,” Klimp told delegates.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Rev. Ronald Klimp

## Writers Needed

The *Banner* is seeking a news correspondent in the Grand Rapids, Mich., area to write about Christian Reformed people and activities of interest to our readers. If you live in that area and like to write, we’d like to hear from you. All expressions of interest should be addressed via email to Gayla Postma, News Editor, at [gpostma@crcna.org](mailto:gpostma@crcna.org). Please include a summary of your writing experience and some recent samples of your work. We are also still accepting applications for writers in Washington/Oregon and southwest Ontario.

## Synod Headed to Canada

This year’s synod was intended to be held in Edmonton, Alberta, but the plan was canceled due to budget constraints—thus synod met again at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Ill.

But delegates last year said they wanted synod held in Canada as soon as possible.

Canadians will be glad to know that Synod 2012 is scheduled to meet at Redeemer University College, with Ancaster (Ont.) CRC as the convening church.

Synod 2011 will be held at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., convened by Madison Square Church.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Rev. Don Poest, fraternal delegate from the Reformed Church in America: “If someone CRC marries someone from the RCA, is that an interfaith marriage?”

## Medenblik Appointed Seminary President

**R**ev. Julius Medenblik came to Synod 2010 as a delegate from Classis Chicago South—and left as the next president of Calvin Theological Seminary.

Synod approved Medenblik's nomination at the end of an hour-long, wide-ranging interview before delegates, members of his congregation, family, and many other observers.

He will take office in August 2011.

Medenblik, 49, is founding pastor of New Life Christian Reformed Church, a congregation he planted in New Lenox, Ill., that has grown to 700 members with three worship services.



Before entering the ministry, he had a brief career in civil law in Florida. He is a graduate of Trinity Christian College, the University of Florida Law School, and Calvin Theological Seminary.

During the interview, which was conducted by Rev. Cal Hoogendoorn and included questions from delegates, Medenblik spoke about his life, his family, his ministry, his law background, and his vision for the seminary.

"My greatest hope is that we would train leaders and pastors who are committed to the history

**Rev. Julius Medenblik (r) was appointed to be Calvin Theological Seminary's next president, effective August 1, 2011.**

of Christianity, who are theologically astute, who are warm in their hearts, and who are mission-oriented," he said.

The health of the Christian Reformed Church and the health of the seminary are directly related, Medenblik said, and they need to be in constant dialogue and conversation.

One great challenge facing the denomination and the seminary,

he said, is staying rooted in a strong Reformed heritage while effectively reaching out to a world that needs to know God better.

"God is seeking to build communities of faith that reflect his heart," Medenblik said.

Delegates gave Medenblik a standing ovation as the interview ended, then rose again to shout their unanimous approval as the motion to affirm his nomination was made.

Following a benediction and prayer, Medenblik was joined on the floor of synod by his wife, Jackie, for greetings from delegates and friends.

"This is a joyous moment—to see the Spirit of God at work," synod president Rev. Aldon Kuiper said.

—Henry Huisjen



**Rev. Jerry Dykstra: "I know and trust that God will take us where he wants us to go."**

## Executive Director Cites CRC's Joys, Challenges

**W**hile the Christian Reformed Church has much to be joyful about, its executive director, Rev. Jerry Dykstra, told Synod 2010 the denomination is also facing serious challenges.

Alive, vibrant, and well, the CRC is transforming lives worldwide with the gospel of Jesus Christ and the "cup of cold water," Dykstra said, in what has become known as the annual State of the Church address. Dykstra also said the CRC provides thoughtful ecumenical and theological leadership that is much appreciated in the larger Christian community.

"I'm proud of the Christian Reformed Church in a humble sort of way," he said, expressing joy at

seeing church members of all ages "living in harmony with God and his creation."

The greatest challenge facing the CRC, Dykstra said, is diversity at all levels—and he used synod as an example.

"I'm extremely disappointed that this year we have half the number of ethnically diverse delegates that we had a year ago," he said.

Dykstra identified an increasing distrust of institutions and leaders as another problem the church must overcome.

"We need to find a way as brothers and sisters in Christ to support each other, to support our leaders, and to trust one another," he said.

Other challenges facing the CRC, Dykstra noted, include a tendency toward congregationalism—"more allegiance to causes outside the church than to what we do together as a denomination"—and the danger of allowing political perspectives to take precedence over biblical ones.

But we can face the future without fear, he said, because the church serves a God we can trust for the future.

"We are on a journey together," he said. "I don't know exactly where it's going to take us, but I know and trust that God will take us where he wants us to go."

—Henry Huisjen



**Rev. Henry De Moor: "Synod serves the church and the Lord, and as long as that's still happening, we're good."**

dictated by Scripture—when we'd already said in 1987 that it wasn't a creedal matter," De Moor said. "That was an absolute low in terms of seeking unity in a bond of peace."

Synod 1995 brought the high point of his synod experiences: "That was when we tried to find each other again."

That year synod adopted what is known as the "regional option," of which De Moor was the architect. Synod 1995 said each classis (regional body) could determine whether it would allow ordination of women. "The argument was that the classis knew churches in the region better than the synod," De Moor said.

"I think we made our tent a little bigger that year," he added. "It put an end, mostly, to people departing on the right and the left. We began to find each other again."

### **Dramatic Change**

De Moor said that in the past two decades there has been a huge change at synods, one that reflects the broader culture.

"[We had] deliberation of great theological depth... church leaders disagreeing but thriving on a common pilgrimage," he said. "We didn't care if Aunt Jessie experienced something; we cared what God said, what Scripture said."

But De Moor has seen a gradual move to the other extreme. "Many things said now are nothing more than running everything through [the filter of] personal experience. So truth comes through persons and relationships, rather than intellectual pursuit," he said, noting there are both negatives and positives to that.

Some of that change came with shifting synod from a two-week to a one-week format. "We have much less time [for deliberation]. There are times I bemoan moving to a one-week synod, and other times I rejoice," he said. "But I'm cognizant that you don't make good decisions with airline tickets burning in your pocket. The question is how to be efficient *and* effective."

But after all these years, De Moor isn't cynical about synod. "We have that assembly to experience the unity that the Lord gives us," he said. "Synod serves the church and the Lord, and as long as that's still happening, we're good."

### **A Message for His Mother**

De Moor has written a commentary on the Church Order—the first since 1965—which will be published by Faith Alive Christian Resources by early 2011. It will be dedicated to his "other mother," the Christian Reformed Church.

At synod's banquet honoring retirees, De Moor said he had a message for that mother:

"Dr. John Kromminga said an airplane doesn't fly without a left wing and a right wing," he said, referring to a former Calvin seminary president.

"Keep the wings in place," he told delegates. "Sit on the plane. Remember who is on the flight deck, the only one in command. Love him with all your heart."

—Gayla R. Postma

## Synod's Senior Statesman Retires

**R**ev. Henry De Moor, adviser on the Church Order of the CRC to synods for 20 years and teacher of an entire generation of seminarians at Calvin Theological Seminary, retired following Synod 2010.

De Moor received standing ovations twice this synod, a bit of sweet irony considering that Synods 1986 and 1988 dealt with overtures (requests) that he *not* be appointed to the seminary faculty.

De Moor's appointment became controversial because of his approval of women serving in ecclesiastical office, though he

never advocated that point of view when teaching seminarians.

He said his warm synodical send-off "goes a long way to saying I tried to be fair to every segment of the denomination in teaching students the Church Order."

### **Highs and Lows**

The issue of women's ordination brought De Moor both his lowest and highest points of synod experiences.

His low point, he said, came in 1994. That was the first time synod adopted recommendations that insisted the Bible teaches only one view regarding women in office.

"[Synod] didn't just say [its stance] was favored, but was



**Synod 2010 approved 41 candidates for ministry in the CRC.**

## Candidates for Ministry Approved

**W**ith cheers and applause, litany, prayer, and song, Synod 2010 welcomed 41 new candidates for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.

Delegates also gave a standing ovation to family and friends of the candidates.

"I hope you have just heard and registered the church's enthusiasm for you," Rev. Cornelius Plantinga Jr., president of Calvin Theological Seminary, told the candidates.

"We're grateful for you. You have learned so much, and you still have much to learn. The church is very pleased with you today. God bless you."

—Henry Huisjen

# NEWS

## Offering the Radical Hospitality of God

**G**race Community Christian Reformed Church of Oak Lawn, Ill., warmly welcomed delegates, denominational staff, and visitors to Synod 2010 with a service of prayer and praise on Sunday, June 13.

The service celebrated the generosity of a God who seeks out people from all the ends of the earth and invites them to the banquet table of the kingdom.

Worshippers found themselves participating directly in the celebration through the responsive reading of Scripture and the format of the sermon itself.

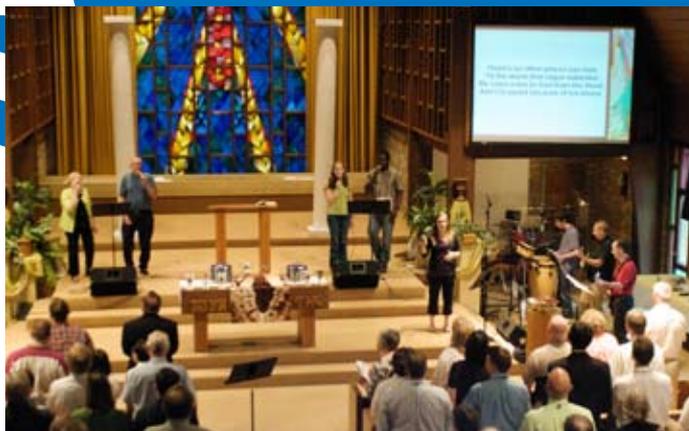
Rev. Michael Kooy, pastor of Grace Community, presented the

**Synod 2010's Service of Prayer and Praise at Grace Community CRC, Oak Lawn, Ill.**

sermon together with Rev. John Wilczewski, church planter for neighboring Jacob's Well Church Community in Evergreen Park. Several times during the message the pastors invited worshippers to share their thoughts and reflections.

The message focused on Jesus' parable of the host whose guests refuse to show up at his banquet after initially accepting his invitation. The frustrated host then shows radical hospitality, ordering his servants to bring people in off the streets so the seats at his table will be filled.

This story about our hospitable God calls all of us to issue that



**(Bottom Photo) The Grace Community Friendship Group provided special music for the Synod 2010 worship service.**

The pastors left this challenge with the worshippers: "Are we prepared to give the best we have to strangers without expecting anything in return? Do our neighbors know our house as a feast, as an example of the radical hospitality of God?"

—Bob De Moor

same invitation to all who will come, including those who would be more than surprised by the invitation, Kooy said.



**Elder John Oosterhof (center), Synod 2010's sergeant at arms.**

## The Mayor of Synod

**W**ielding the shepherd's staff as Synod 2010's sergeant at arms was elder John Oosterhof, Classis Huron. His job was to make sure all delegates returned to their seats after coffee breaks.

Oosterhof is the mayor of East Luther Grand Valley, Ontario, and found his executive experience helpful in dealing with large groups of people and getting them to pay attention.

But his farm background was an even bigger asset. "I know how to herd hogs," Oosterhof said. "That was helpful."

—Henry Huisjen



**This was Rev. George Vander Weit's 14th synod.**

## Synod by the Numbers

Oldest delegate:	78
Youngest delegate:	25
Avg. age of minister delegates:	52
Avg. age of elder delegates:	60
First-time delegates:	59%
(last year 49%)	
Ethnic minority delegates:	7%
(last year 13%)	
Female delegates:	9%
(same as last year)	
Delegate to most synods:	

George Vander Weit, 14th

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## Synod 2010 'Trolls' for Humor

**A** last-minute recommendation came before Synod 2010 to declare that a troll is an appropriate mascot for a Christian college.

As Trinity Christian College's troll mascot made a surprise appearance, synod chair Rev. Aldon Kuiper said, "If I do not grant the troll the privilege of the floor, I will feel like an ogre."

Synod heard that the troll mascot was chosen by a former Trinity president and his wife, who searched the dictionary for nouns starting with "tr" to name the col-



The Trinity Troll made a surprise appearance at 2010.

Trinity Christian College president Steve Timmermans, aka the Troll: "Whether you're on top of the bridge or under the bridge, Trollville is the place to be!"

lege's new basketball team. "Troll" was defined as a supernatural being: "They agreed that God would need to give Trinity supernatural power to develop a viable basketball team."

Other grounds for the declaration: "There is nothing evil about a troll, in spite of what Tolkien may

say" and "There have been nocturnal troll sightings by the 123rd Street bridge."

The minority reporter was booed off the floor after saying, "How can anything so evil encourage anyone?"

The troll took off his head to speak, and the face of Trinity

president Steve Timmermans appeared. "Whether you're on top of the bridge or under the bridge, this is the place to be, Trollville USA and Canada," he said, amid cheers from the delegates.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## Synod Creates Task Force to Look at Climate Change

**S**ynod 2010 created a two-year task force to identify "a biblical and Reformed perspective on our position on creation stewardship, including climate change."

The task force was created because delegates saw a need to pull together scientific and theological information to inform the ongoing discussion of climate change.

In February, the denomination's Board of Trustees signed on to the Micah Declaration on Creation Care and Climate Change, a multidenominational statement on the environment that confesses human responsibility for climate change.

Synod did not endorse that declaration, but did say that the intent of the Micah Declaration is consistent with the denomination's contemporary testimony "Our World Belongs to God."

Delegates spoke of the need to address creation stewardship



Rev. George Vink, Classis California South: "This is not an issue we're ever going to be finished with."

and climate change as a church, though they expressed differing opinions on whether science has proven a connection between climate change and human activity.

"This is not to suggest that the scientific arguments both ways don't have validity," said elder

Henry Eygenraam, Classis Toronto. "We're trying to encourage the church to address the issue with a biblical perspective for our care of the globe. We don't want to fiddle while creation burns."

—Roxanne Van Farowe



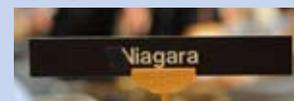
Elder Henry Eygenraam, Classis Toronto: "We don't want to fiddle while creation burns."

## Mischief at Synod

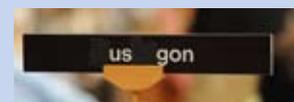
**R**ev. Duane Kelderman, seminary faculty adviser to Synod 2010, filed a complaint with synod's president.

"I want to report a serious breach of hospitality," he complained, amid gales of laughter. "Someone has taken our sign, and now it says 'Cult Advisers' on one side and 'Faulty Advisers' on the other."

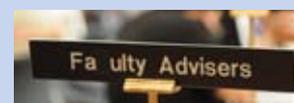
Delegates from some of the classes also found their signage altered:



Classis Niagara's sign



Classis Muskegon's sign



The faculty advisers' sign

# NEWS



## Synod's Oldest Delegates

**S**ynod 2010's oldest delegates were a pair of 78-year-old first-timers: Wilbert Vanden Bos (left), an elder from Classis Iakota, and Chester Vander Zee (right), an elder from Classis Minnesota. Vanden Bos, a retired mental health services worker, and Vander Zee, a retired science educator, grew up 20 miles from each other in South Dakota and are both Korean War veterans who attended basic training together.

—Henry Huisjen

## Mother and Daughter Share Love of Theology

**F**or Elizabeth Jennings, serving as a youth observer at Synod 2010 was a chance to follow in the footsteps of her mother, Rev. Ladan Jennings.

Ladan, Classis Pacific Northwest, became a Christian nine years ago. She now co-pastors Mill Creek (Wash.) Community Christian Reformed Church.

"When I was about 13, I was introduced to theology through my mom," Liz said. "Her example in ministry has inspired me. I love theology."

Liz plans to become either a pastor or a teacher of theology.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Rev. Ladan Jennings and daughter Elizabeth



## Youngest Delegate

**A**t age 25, elder David Stewart from Classis Columbia was the youngest delegate to Synod 2010.

"I feel it's a great privilege and honor to be elected by classis at such a young age," said Stewart. "I've learned and gleaned so much more than what I knew before about the agencies and ministries of the CRC."

One thing he learned the hard way was the rules for synodical procedure that guide discussion on the floor. "The first comment I made was overturned as out of line," he said, grinning.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Rev. Aldon Kuiper, synod president:  
**"Can I declare we're going to the minority report?"**

Rev. Henry De Moor, faculty adviser:  
**"Yes, you're the president!"**



Kuiper: **"I understand that, but I am looking for wisdom!"**



## Ethnic Advisers

Ethnic advisers for Synod 2010 were (from left) Thurman Rivers, Rev. John Gonzales, Mary Rivers, Rev. Andrew Henry, Pearl Banks, and Verney Kho. Synod 2009 had only two ethnic advisers. More were needed this year because only 12 of the delegates to synod were of ethnic minority.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Violet (left) and Ida Mutoigo

## Mother and Daughter Served Synod Together

Ida Mutoigo and her daughter, Violet, both served at Synod 2010—Ida in her role as director of CRWRC-Canada, and Violet as a youth observer. However, they were so busy that they hardly saw each other, they told *The Banner*. Violet is pursuing international studies at Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Elder John Vander Wall and daughter Emily Vander Wall-Vanden Heuvel.

## Father and Daughter Celebrate at Synod

Elder John Vander Wall, Classis Thornapple Valley, celebrated with his daughter Emily Vander Wall-Vanden Heuvel as she was declared a candidate for ministry in the CRC at Synod 2010. Emily said she felt the Holy Spirit directing her to ministry as a teen. That was when her father served on the committee at Synod 1995 that recommended women be allowed to become pastors.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Rev. Cal Hoogendoorn to Rev. Julius Medenblik during his interview to be seminary president, noting that he also interviewed Medenblik when he entered the ministry: **"I sure hope you do better this time."**

Rev. Greg Schuringa, Classis Northern Illinois, got to hang out with his dad, Rev. David Schuringa, at Synod 2010. "We've always had a rock-solid relationship," quipped David as they had their picture taken while seated on a rock. David serves on synod's Faith Formation Committee.  
—Roxanne Van Farowe



## Just the Two of Us

For three couples, Synod 2010 was a team effort.

Rev. Bernard Bakker was a delegate from Classis Quinte, and Irene Bakker served on synod's Faith Formation Committee. Thurman and Alice Rivers served side by side as ethnic advisers. And while Teresa Renkema chaired the study committee on Migration of Workers, her husband, Rev. William Renkema, was a delegate from Classis Zeeland.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Rev. Bernard and Irene Bakker



Thurman and Alice Rivers

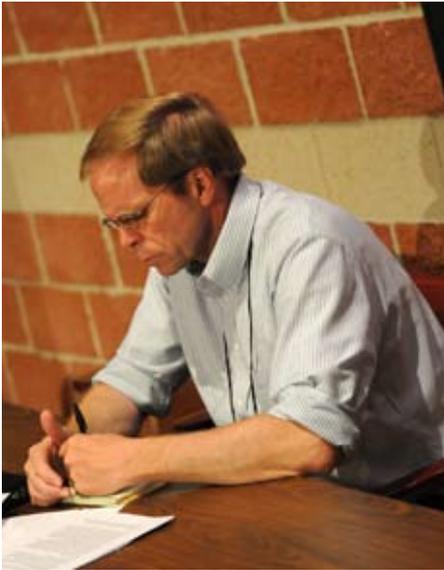


Teresa and Rev. William Renkema

# NEWS

SYNOD 2010

*Banner* writer Henry Huisjen gets it all on the record.



Korean interpreter Sinai Chung



Synod second clerk, elder Wendy Gritter, dons a tie to match the dress code of the rest of the executive.



The children's choir from New Life Community CRC in New Lenox, Ill., led synod's worship one morning.



Elder Stedford Sims in worship

Synod's youngest delegate, elder Dave Stewart (left), with *Banner* writer Roxanne Van Farowe



Rev. Bob De Moor, *Banner* editor, has some words for older brother Rev. Henry De Moor, faculty adviser to synod (right).

Synod's binational character was observed by both John Calvin and the Trinity Christian College troll.



Rev. Roger Ryu said he wanted to move to the next table to join Classis Niagara.



Rev. Norman Brown: "Someone who saw my last name asked if I'm related to [delegate] Tim Brown. Only in the CRC would I get that question. Brown is the second most common name in the U.S."



Rev. Henry De Moor, faculty adviser, thoroughly enjoyed being roasted and toasted by his brother Rev. Bob De Moor, *Banner* editor, during the banquet honoring retirees.



Synod's poet laureate, elder Rod Hugen, wrote an ode following one rookie elder's experience at synod. You can find "A Poet's View of Synod 2010" in the Ministry Associates section of [www.crcna.org/Network](http://www.crcna.org/Network).



Delegates from Classis Northern Illinois (l-r: elder Rick Wright, elder Allen Van Der Dyke, and Rev. Merle Den Bleyker) celebrated the Chicago Blackhawks' hockey championship with their own tiny Stanley Cup.

Synod's youth observers navigated the storm of paper.





# Communities of Care by Chris Meehan

**L**ate at night you can often find Rev. John W. De Vries in the emergency room of the newly opened Metro Health Hospital in suburban Grand Rapids, Mich. But he's not there in a medical capacity. De Vries serves under the umbrella of Chaplaincy and Care Ministries, one of six Specialized Ministries of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Having been awakened at home by a phone call, De Vries swings through the doors into

the brightly lit treatment area, searching for the doctor, nurse, or social worker who called him.

Then he seeks out the patient or the patient's family. He might be called to step inside a treatment room or to visit anxious parents in a nearby waiting room.

Occasionally the ailment that brought the patient to the hospital is minor. But often it involves serious trauma. As the patient is treated, the family gathers, awaiting answers, seeking solace.

Whatever the reason for the call, De Vries is there to address the needs of the injured person and his or her family. These needs can come in different forms. They don't always involve praying at a bedside or in the waiting room, but often they do.

"Our job is to be with a person during a time of need—a crisis or a challenge," he says.

De Vries, a CRC pastor who worked for many years in the emergency room of a hospital in inner-city Los Angeles, is also director of Chaplain Ser-

vices Inc. in Grand Rapids, a group that provides chaplains to a variety of local settings.

"Our goal is not to convert people; we do this work because we are committed to Jesus Christ. We are often there for those who do not have other sources of support and encouragement," says De Vries.

### Showing God's Love

The work of the CRC's Specialized Ministries such as Chaplaincy and Care is one way in which the church rises to the challenge of showing

people God's love, justice, and care.

The CRC's other Specialized Ministries include the Safe Church Ministry and the offices of Race Relations, Pastor-Church Relations, Disability Concerns, and Social Justice.

Each ministry has a specific mission assigned to it, often by synod, the annual leadership meeting of the CRC. Those missions

“Our core value is to serve hurting, broken people.”

almost always involve trying to bring justice, peace, healing, and comfort to people in the church and, as in the case of chaplains, outside the church as well.

“This denomination has an ethic. It believes in the value of reaching out to people who have serious issues of brokenness,” says Beth Swagman, director of Safe Church Ministry, which handles allegations of abuse by church authorities and provides a range of training and educational resources related to the subject.

“Our core value is to serve hurting, broken people in the context of the church,” Swagman says.

Sandy Johnson, director of denominational ministries for the CRC, says that although Specialized Ministries tend to have a low profile when compared to the denomination's agencies, they are essential to the mission of the church.

“They are all communities of care,” she says. “We'd like to lift up

these ministries and communicate the message of what they do and of the common threads they share. Each of these ministries has a biblical, prophetic edge to it.”

### A Voice of Restoration

In a presentation made to Synod 2010 in June, the Specialized Ministries explained their mission as speaking up for people who have no voice, standing up for the poor and destitute, advocating for the rights of all people in need, and speaking out for social justice for individuals and groups “regardless of appearance, ability, color, personality, or status.”

Specialized Ministries described themselves as a voice the Christian Reformed Church has together. “We create a dialogue for change that reconciles people and restores communities to God's redemptive plan. We are a voice that advocates for people whose voices are not heard. We are a voice of restoration when and where others could not find hope or healing.”

Rev. Ron Klimp, director of Chaplaincy and Care Ministries, says his office has 125 people like John De Vries “out there doing crisis care” in the military, in the workplace, in nursing homes, hospitals, hospices, and other settings. “We are willing to go into crisis situations and be the quiet, confident presence of God,” he says, speaking for all the Specialized Ministries.

“The reason we were called into being,” says Klimp, “is to help people and address the many versions of conflict in a culture that is not very settled.” ■



Chris Meehan is news and media relations manager for the Christian Reformed Church.

## Everybody Belongs. Everybody Serves.

Earlier this year, members of South Grandville (Mich.) Christian Reformed Church had the opportunity to witness the profession of faith of a young woman, one of 16 members of the congregation who have cognitive and/or physical disabilities. With the help of their congregation and the CRCNA's Disability Concerns office, they have been able to fully participate in the life of their church.

Three or four members from other churches also attend South Grandville because of the “welcome mat” the congregation has put out for people who have disabilities.

“A lot of what we do is advocacy for people with disabilities by helping churches understand that caring for these individuals is part of the mission God has given us,” says Rev. Mark Stephenson, director of Disability Concerns.

Stephenson says that he sees his office “emphasizing the matter of justice . . . (for) people with disabilities,” adding that the ministry works hard “to get rid of the stigma—an un-Christian division of those who are acceptable and those who aren't.”

Another church that's very active in living out this mission is Madison Avenue CRC in Paterson, N.J. Emma Anderson, one of the coordinators of the ministry, says her church has worked hard to include and accommodate people with all kinds of disabilities.

The church has a large-print Bible in every pew and offers PowerPoint presentations with song lyrics in large, bold type. It offers Sunday school for children with autism and other disabilities, provides devices for people with hearing loss, and has a signing choir for children and adults. In addition, people who are homebound are served by elders and deacons who organize meals and prayer visits.

“The body of the church is not as healthy if it doesn't include people with disabilities,” says Stephenson.

—Chris Meehan



Emma Anderson (left) rehearses with the signing choir

### Advocating for Justice Everywhere

A recently produced video about an irrigation project in West Africa is “one of the best examples we have of the work that the Office of Social Justice does,” says OSJ Director Peter Vander Meulen.

Called “Office du Niger,” the video focuses particularly on the work done by Mary Crickmore, a longtime Christian Reformed World Relief Committee mission worker, and her husband, Scott.

When Crickmore heard about a proposed U.S.-funded irrigation project that would not only bypass people who could benefit from it but even displace them from their land, she encouraged villagers to write letters to their government. She

arranged to have their messages translated and photocopied. She also sent them to the U.S. embassy.

OSJ took up the cause, publicizing it and educating church members about it. In the spring of 2005, the Crickmores visited churches in the U.S. to talk about their work. They told of the irrigation challenges and encouraged people to take action.

As a result, government officials asked Mary Crickmore and the people of one of the villages to help put together a new proposal for funding. With input from the villagers and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, the government created a proposal that brought irrigation

to the area without destroying the villages in the region.

The process was documented in the new video. Vander Meulen did much of the filming, while Meghan Kraley, communications director for OSJ, edited the story.

The collaborative nature of this project is what OSJ is all about. “We work with others to address the root causes of what keeps people in poverty and hunger,” explains Kraley.

OSJ is one of six Specialized Ministries of the Christian Reformed Church.

—Chris Meehan

### A Place of Healing

Normally the work of Pastor-Church Relations starts with a telephone call from a Christian Reformed congregation going through a time of tension or strife.

Maybe their pastor is using pornography or engaging in some other damaging behavior. Maybe the church is hemorrhaging members and isn’t sure why. Maybe the church is divided by cultural differences or different ideas about liturgical practices.

Whatever the problem, it is always sensitive and requires absolute confidentiality.

Rev. Norm Thomsma, the director of Pastor-Church Relations, and Rev. Cecil Van Niejenhuis, education specialist for Pastor-Church Relations, respond to the churches’ calls. They listen carefully, asking questions and clarifying points of concern.

Occasionally they can resolve things over the phone. But frequently they find it necessary to visit a church to get a

firsthand understanding of what’s happening. At that point, simple, open discussion can lead to resolution.

If that doesn’t happen, an intervention—an in-depth assessment with specified suggestions for change—takes place. Thomsma or Van Niejenhuis spends significant time with the pastor and members of the congregation—sitting in on meetings, setting up and attending small listening groups, and trying to come up with suggestions for resolution.

“We find that there are many versions of conflict,” says Thomsma. “Often our role is to hold a mirror up to a church and help them have the conversations they need to have, but have no clue how to do.”

“We look for the presenting issues and the underlying themes and patterns of the problem,” he explains. “Our response is to integrate a biblical, theological perspective with a psychosocial perspective as we address and try to resolve the difficulty.”

As with the other Specialized Ministries of the CRC, Pastor-Church Relations has as its mission seeking a just solution to problems facing people in a broken world.

The office handles other duties as well, such as trying to link churches with new pastors. It also organizes healthy-church trainings and seminars. But the nitty-gritty is working with a church to overcome problems and return it to a place of healing.

—Chris Meehan



Rev. Ron Klimp, now director of Chaplaincy and Care Ministries for the CRC, worked as a chaplain to employees at businesses in Cadillac, Mich. He and other chaplains ministered to employees during breaks or at their work stations.

# Dealing with Sin and Human Failure

**A**s a Safe Church Ministry advocate for people who bring allegations of abuse against a Christian Reformed church leader, “Ralph Johnson” has been involved in some highly emotional and touchy cases.

He asked that his real name not be used to avoid bringing publicity to the victims of abuse with whom he has spent long and often very painful hours. He says the work can be hard, disturbing, and truly heartbreaking.

Part of the job includes listening to the story of the person who has contacted the Safe Church Ministry office to report an incident of abuse, either recent or in the past.

It is rarely an easy process. There are times when, initially, no one believes the allegation. That is not surprising, Johnson says. Abuse usually occurs in an isolated office or some other out-of-the-way place, meaning it can come down to one person’s word against another’s.

Often the allegation of abuse refers to a sexual act, but not always. Emotional abuse, abuse of power, and other abuses also occur in church contexts.

The advocate’s role can be an unpleasant one, since it involves looking into the darker side of congregations and dealing with issues of sin and human failure, Johnson explains. Many emotions come into play, ranging from denial, anger, and shock to grudging acceptance.

As the advocate for the victim, Johnson supports and guides the person who has brought forward the charge of abuse from the start of the process to the end. He often spends significant time with the victim, helping him or her to prepare a case.

Cases go before a regional Safe Church Team composed of members who have expertise in this area. When a case reaches



**Beth Swagman,**  
director of the  
CRC's Safe Church  
Ministry

a Safe Church Team, it challenges everyone to seek God’s guidance.

The Safe Church Team refers its findings to the church council of the congregation where the abuse is alleged to have occurred. But even when a council accepts that there is evidence to support the charge, it does not have to take further action. In the majority of cases, it doesn’t take action.

Although the task is difficult, it also can have great rewards, Johnson says. “To

be willing to do this kind of work in the name of Jesus Christ for the church is awesome,” he says. “You come face to face with the human dynamics that go on as sinful things surface.”

Beth Swagman, director of the Safe Church Ministry, says that this Specialized Ministry focuses on helping people who are hurting and on preventing others from being hurt. “We deal with individual people; we don’t deal with organizational issues. We also bolster the awareness of abuse through education and work with churches so that they have child-safety policies.”

—Chris Meehan

# Dismantling Racism

**W**hen he went through the Dance of Racial Reconciliation (DORR) training about five years ago, Rev. Sochet Na realized he had some hard, unpleasant work to do.

Na, the pastor of Cambodian Fellowship CRC in Holland, Mich., knew he needed to ask God to help him forgive others, as well as to seek forgiveness, as an important part of the process of breaking down the barriers of racism. He also realized that respecting and understanding others was as important as wanting them to respect and understand him.

Today, Na serves as a trainer for the DORR program, which was created for church groups and others by the CRC’s Office of Race Relations.

“It is very important for our denomination as well for our churches to go through this training if we really want to become the most effective and productive workers of the Lord who take his Great Commission seriously,” says Na.

Synod, the annual leadership meeting of the CRC, established the Office of Race Relations “to help the denomination address issues of racism and discrimination,” says Rev. Esteban Lugo, director of Race Relations. “We have been asked to design, organize, and implement programs that the church can use to eradicate the causes and effects of racism in the body of believers.”

Lugo says that the CRC’s Specialized Ministries such as Race Relations play a quiet role in supporting the mission of the church on a wide range of issues. Often working in the background, these ministries take on individual tasks and issues as a way to keep the church, its congregations, and members on the course set by synod.

The job of dismantling racism is a never-ending enterprise, Lugo says. “The sin of racism is more deeply embedded than we want to believe within our structures, institutions, and policies. We work to develop a value in our church for ethnic, racial, and cultural participation on all levels.”

—Chris Meehan



**Rev. Esteban Lugo,**  
director of the  
CRC's Office of Race  
Relations

## A House Well Built

**H**ave you ever built a house? Most people buy existing homes, but some get the opportunity to build one from the ground up. It can be quite a process.

The process begins with determining the location: where will we build this house? The next step is the design: what will it look like and how will it meet the needs of those who live there? At this point, most folks hire an architect and, soon thereafter, a contractor. The contractor hires subcontractors to do specific parts of the work.

These subcontractors hire the workers who actually build the walls and install the plumbing, electrical systems, heating, and air-conditioning. Others plaster the walls, paint the house, and so forth. Each person brings his or her skills and ideas to the process. In the end, after much work and many inspections along the way by both contractor and homeowner, the house is completed.

But only when the homeowner takes possession and moves in does the house become a home rather than a construction site. It is not the home of the architect, the contractor, or the tradespeople who built it; it belongs to the owner.

In reflecting on this past synod, I was reminded how much of our annual meeting is like a homeowner building a house. Synod adopted a number of major reports this year. Those included reports on caring for abuse victims, ministering to undocumented workers, revisiting the Church Order, supporting faith formation, and revising our Form of Subscription.

“ We need to gratefully acknowledge all who faithfully and passionately engaged in producing excellent direction for the future of the church. ”

Some of the reports are already completed, while a couple are still under construction.

A few years ago synod faced a problem regarding abuse: how can we most fairly and sensitively minister to people who have been abused by leaders in the church? Synod had some ideas but needed a contractor—a task force—to actually carry out the work. But the task force could not do it all, so they contacted many experts. They met with social workers, lawyers, advocates for abuse victims, and, most important, they heard from victims of abuse themselves.

The process took significant time and much energy—thousands of hours and thousands of tears. Like the tradespeople who build the house, some who contributed to the report put in hundreds of hours and others

just a few, but all added toward crafting it.

Some contributed ideas that formed the major framework for the report; others provided that perfect example needed to complete the story. This report and the others represent the work of many people who contributed to the whole.

I share this with you because, at the end of the day, these reports no longer belong to the authors and contributors, but to the church. That is as it should be. However, it's important to remember the individuals who did the work.

We need to express our thanks to the task forces and committee members who served so faithfully and so well. We need to thank all who contributed the wisdom and experience that formed the content of the reports. We need to gratefully acknowledge all who faithfully and passionately engaged in producing excellent direction for the future of the church.

So to all those who contributed to the issues addressed by Synod 2010, on behalf of the Christian Reformed Church, please accept our grateful appreciation for a house well built.

To God be the glory. ■



Rev. Jerry Dykstra is executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

## Two Fulbright Awards for Calvin

Two Calvin College professors have earned Fulbright Awards to do international research in 2010-2011.

Henk Aay, professor of geology, geography, and environmental studies, will spend 2011 in the Netherlands, focusing on documentary films about his native country. Aay has researched Dutch language and culture for 25 years, spending sabbaticals in the Netherlands at Dutch universities and leading Calvin interim classes there.

Amy Patterson, a political science professor, will work in Zambia in 2011, studying how



Cheri Ackerman

HIV/AIDS support groups, both Christian and secular, empower members emotionally, socially, and politically. Patterson first worked in Zambia in 2007 with Calvin student and McGregor Scholar Kyla Vander Hart.

### And a Goldwater Scholar

Cheri Ackerman, a junior from Holland, Mich., double-majoring in biochemistry and Spanish, is the recipient of a 2010-2011 Barry S. Goldwater Scholarship awarded to students pursuing careers in traditional sciences, mathematics, and engineering. Her scholarship of up to \$7,500 goes toward tuition, room and board, books, and supplies.

Ackerman works with Calvin chemistry professor Eric Arnoys, studying a protein linked to various cancers and to processes inside and outside the cell's nucleus.

Jake Baker, a biology and Spanish double major from Grand Rapids, Mich.; Lauren Manck, a chemistry and biochemistry double major from Fort Wayne, Ind.; and Ethan Van Anandel, a math and computer science double major also from Grand Rapids, received Goldwater competition honorable mentions. ■

—Matthew Kucinski,  
Calvin College  
Communications

## Author Seeks a New Diversity

Richard Rodriguez was a guest this spring at Calvin Theological Seminary to discuss his autobiography *Hunger for Memory*. It's the story of his experiences as an ethnic-minority student who achieved social assimilation and academic success at the cost of alienation from his past, his parents, and his culture.

Rodriguez's book was the seminary's "Book of the Semester," which many faculty, students, staff, alumni, board members, and community groups read.

Referring to his book, Rodriguez shared his discomfort with modern categories of race. "I've only met about three 'white' people," he said, arguing that all people are



Richard Rodriguez (left) is interviewed by Scott Hoezee at Calvin Seminary.

blends of ethnicities and cultures. "And even *they* were pink or shades of gold, not white. And the black people I know are almost all brown."

Rodriguez says he is considered Mexican, yet is really a combination of Indian and Spanish, ethnicities that are themselves combinations of other ethnicities. Rodriguez explained how the history of virtually every ethnic group in North America is deeply

connected with nearly every other group.

He expressed hope that Americans will "get over diversity" and embrace "brown" as a new way to describe people, not to reference skin color but to capture the underlying unity of all people.

On matters of religion, Rodriguez argued that the migration of Spanish people from Latin America, with their rich Catholic past and more

recent Pentecostal renewal, are the greatest hope for "Christian replenishment" and revitalization in North America.

With pain in his voice, Rodriguez observed that Americans have "a problem with poverty." They believe being poor is to be a failure, to be broken, in need of reform. But in Mexico, the poor are not bent over, he said. They have joy and dignity. They model how poverty, love, and cheerfulness coexist.

Today Rodriguez spends much of his time in other countries. He shared his recent passion to learn more about the religions of "Abraham's children," referring to the fact that Islam, Judaism, and Christianity all trace their roots to Abraham. ■

—Duane Kelderman, vice president for administration at Calvin Theological Seminary

## HAITI

### Connecting Local Communities with Aid

One morning this spring, Canadians George and Toni Fernhout sat down for a long meeting with community-development officials in the village of Masson, Haiti. The event that brought their worlds together was the Jan. 12 earthquake.

Masson is a small community amid sugar cane fields near the city of Leogane, the epicenter of the massive Jan. 12 earthquake. The Fernhouts are international relief managers for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.

In the meeting, which covered a range of issues, the Fernhouts explained that CRWRC desired to work closely with the people

of Masson and other communities hit by the quake. “We want to impact the entire population,” said George Fernhout. “We are working for all of the people in this area. We need your participation.”

During the meeting the Fernhouts spoke of problems that had arisen in food distribution, the issue of how many latrines had been built and how many new wells had been drilled, and the criteria CRWRC would use in assessing damage to homes and helping residents to either repair or rebuild.

Besides Masson, CRWRC is working in Macombe, Luitor, Croix des Pere, and

Flon, where an office to help coordinate relief efforts has been located.

“The area was still quaking when we arrived here,” said Toni Fernhout. Retired from their jobs, she and her husband are seasoned international relief managers who are called on in times of major devastation to survey the needs of an area, hire local people for staff, and determine the most effective ways for CRWRC to help.

“My first thought was that everything would be down,” she said. “I heard about the vast and horrific damage. But it was wonderful to see some houses here and there still up. . . . This earthquake affected everyone: the rich, the middle class, and the poor.”

The village representatives asked many questions. They told the Fernhouts they appreciated that a sanitary engineer working for CRWRC had overseen the drilling of wells and placement of temporary latrines, and they expressed a need for more. “[CRWRC is] very much welcome in our community. They are doing a good job,” said Joanel Toussaint, a member of the committee. ■

—Chris Meehan, *CRC Communications*

### CRC and RCA Church Planters “Catch the Wave” Together

More than 150 church planters and other leaders from both the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America gathered recently for a two-day “Catch the Wave” pre-conference in Orlando, Fla., to focus on growing new churches together.

Church planters in attendance at the pre-conference, which took place before the larger Exponential church-planting conference, participated in worship, training sessions, small group learning events, and networking with parenting churches. The conference ended with a visit from Amway co-founder Richard DeVos, who challenged the denominations to work together closely to bring the gospel to more people.

“The CRC-RCA gathering was historic and groundbreaking,” says Rev. Jul Medenblik, who leads the Home Missions Church Planting and Development team and has been appointed to be the next president of Calvin Theological Seminary. “We sought to be used by God in the development of gospel movements where we support, encourage, challenge, and learn from one another.”

Tim Vink, the RCA’s coordinator of Church Multiplication, adds, “For both the CRC and RCA, this is a calling from God that many churches are hearing and asking to be further equipped.”

While the denominations have collaborated on church planting for a while, the conference marked the first formal gathering of church planters and parenting churches from both denominations.

“Catch the Wave” began with a worship service led by RCA church planter Rev. Mike Hayes, who leads an urban church plant in San Francisco and also led one of the pre-conference’s most popular group sessions on the pros and cons of urban church planting.

Throughout, CRC and RCA church planters and parent churches told stories about their experiences—the challenges and the joys—of multiplying new churches.

A session on multicultural churches initiated lively discussion about language barriers, cultural nuances, and immigration. Also emphasized was working in clusters—groups of churches and leaders located in the same region who work to create gospel movements and develop diverse leaders. “We laughed and worshiped and prayed and learned together as one family of God,” says Vink. ■

—Ben Van Houten,

*Christian Reformed Home Missions Communications*

This story is part of a series on how the Christian Reformed Church in North America is working with the people of Haiti in the wake of the January earthquake. To learn more about how the CRC has been active in Haiti for more than three decades, see [www.crcna.org/Haiti](http://www.crcna.org/Haiti).

## Advertising Information

**Deadlines:** August issue is 7/5/10. Sept. issue is 8/2/10. Visit [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org) for complete details.

**Prices:** Most ads are \$0.33<sup>US</sup> per character (min. 150 characters including punctuation and spaces). A discounted rate of \$0.26<sup>US</sup> per character applies to Anniversaries, Birthdays, Obituaries, Denominational and Classical Announcements, and Congregational Announcements. Photos are \$22<sup>US</sup> extra.

**To Advertise:** Place your classified ad online at [www.TheBanner.org/classifieds](http://www.TheBanner.org/classifieds). If you are unable to submit your ad online you may continue to email it to [classifieds@TheBanner.org](mailto:classifieds@TheBanner.org) or fax it to 616-224-0834. If you have questions, call 616-224-0725.

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## Denominational and Classical Announcements

### Announcement of Candidacy

We are pleased to announce that Jeffrey Dephouse has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word. Rev. Gerard L. Dykstra, executive director

### Available for Call

**Emden CRC** heartily recommends our pastor, Rev. Jeff Vanderhooft, for call to the churches of the denomination. The church council is taking this action due solely to our congregation's financial situation which no longer allows us to support a full-time pastor. If you have any questions please call the chair of council, Duane Mulder, at 320-329-3203.

**Rev. William Delleman** who served Bridge Community CRC in Langley for 7+ years is now available for call. He can be contacted at 19610 - 50A Ave., Langley, BC V3A 7L2 or [wdelleman@gmail.com](mailto:wdelleman@gmail.com). Classis BCSE heartily recommends him to the churches.

**Rev. Kevin Vryhof** is available for call. By August 15, 2010 he will have completed a Clinical Pastoral Education Residency at Iowa Methodist Medical Center, Des Moines, Iowa. He can be reached by email ([kjvryhof@yahoo.com](mailto:kjvryhof@yahoo.com)) or by phone ((515) 661-2077).

### Financial Aid

**Classis Chicago South** makes student aid funds available for anyone from this classis who is pursuing ministry, ordained or not, in the CRC. To make application for the coming school year, contact Pastor Michael Kooy 10415 S Kedvale Ave, Oak Lawn, IL 60453; (708) 636-2848 or [michaelkooy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:michaelkooy@sbcglobal.net).

**Classis Northern Illinois** is now accepting student aid applications from students pursuing word-related ministries. Contact committee chair, Mark van Stee, 5130 Wolf Rd., Western Springs IL 60558 (email [office@crcws.org](mailto:office@crcws.org)). Application deadline July 31.

### Meetings of Classis

**Classis Columbia** convenes Saturday, September 18 at Oak Hills Church in Portland (Beaverton). Agenda deadline: Aug. 12. Howard B. Spaan, stated clerk

**Classis Kalamazoo** will be meeting in regular session Tuesday, Sept 14 at River Walk CRC, 1021 Wagner Dr., Battle Creek, MI, beginning at 9:00 A. M. All correspondence and material for Classis should be sent to the Stated Clerk, (1782 5th St. Martin, MI 49070 or [jweeda@mcn.net](mailto:jweeda@mcn.net)), by Aug 3. Jake Weeda, SC

## Congregational Announcements

### General

**Newman CRC** invites friends and neighbors to the dedication of our new sanctuary on July 25 at 10:30, located at 4075 S. 132nd Ave, Hesperia, MI

**The Drenthe CRC** wishes to congratulate Pastor Jim and Brenda Busscher as they celebrate 25 Years of ordained ministry and marriage. We praise God with them for His faithfulness and wish Jim and Brenda God's continued blessings in the years to come.

**Vacationing In the Ludington** area this summer? Come worship with us Saturday nights at 5:30. It's casual. It's contemporary. Lakeside Chapel, 301 N. Washington, Ludington, MI 49431. Phone (231) 843-9515.

### Church's 50th Anniversary

**Palo Alto CA** All friends of the Palo Alto Christian Reformed Church are invited to a weekend of praise and remembrance celebrating 50 years of service in Palo Alto. Festivities are planned for Sept. 4 and 5, 2010. For details please call Kim Fiske at 650 493-1152, email [info@pacrc.org](mailto:info@pacrc.org), or search for the church's full name on Facebook.

## Announcements

**Retirement Celebration** Family and friends of Rev. Jim Osterhouse and his wife Norma are invited to an open house at Calvary CRC, 400 Beeline Rd., Holland MI, from 2-5 p.m., August 7, 2010 to celebrate their 39 years in ministry.

## Birthdays

### 95th Birthday



**Gerard (Yardy) Streelman** Sunset Manor #179, 725 Baldwin St. Jenison MI 49428 will celebrate his 95th birthday August 5. An Open House will be held at Sunset Manor Town Square August 7 from 2-4 pm. His children rejoice in God's faithfulness to him.

### 90th Birthday



**Elizabeth Boersma (Mellema)** celebrated her 90th birthday on June 19th, 2010. Her husband, Sidney, went to be with the Lord in 2002. Her children William (Anneke), Irene (Pete), Jeanette (Hans, went to be with the Lord in 2006) and Joyce (Andy), along with 15 grandchildren and 40 great-grandchildren, thank God for her life and her example of faith and love. Elizabeth's address is 26 Brussels Court, Visalia, CA 93277

**Gertrude Hekman (Van Till)** of 2500 Breton Woods Drive SE, Apt. 3036, Grand Rapids, MI 49512, on July 16. Her 7 children and their spouses, 17 grandchildren, & 22 great-grandchildren praise God for His faithfulness in her life. There will be an open house in her honor on Sat. July 24, 2-4 pm at Woodlawn Ministry Center, 3190 Burton St. SE for friends and extended family.

**Anne Mulder**, 2111 Raybrook SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 on July 12. Widow of Rev. John A. Mulder. Children: Jackie Venegas, Marianne and Charles Stehouwer, Arlys and Gene Heeringa, Lois and Dick Van Donselaar, 10 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren. Great is Thy faithfulness!

**Talena Pessink (Hovinga)** 2121 Raybrook SE #218, Grand Rapids, MI 49506 will celebrate her 90th birthday on July 24. Love and congratulations from her family: children Bob and Carolyn Zwiers, Jackie Folgers, grandchildren and ten great grandchildren. Mom, we thank God for your Christian example.

**Christopher Zeilenga**, of Oak Grove, 221 W. Division, Room 125, DeMotte, IN 46310, celebrated his 90th birthday on June 19. Wife: Bernice (deceased). Children: Judie & Larry Bolt, Christine & Jack VanDeel, Eileen & Jim Decker, Marjorie & Phil VanEck, Neil & Judy Zeilenga, Christopher & Pauline Zeilenga, Jim & Bonnie Zeilenga. 19 grandchildren and 28 great-grandchildren. We are thankful for our father's example of love and devotion to his wife and family.

## Anniversaries

### 70th Anniversary

**Haveman** Jim and Helen (Wyngarden), 34 W. Oak, Fremont, MI 49412, will celebrate their 70th anniversary on July 9, 2010.

**Rozenboom**, Rev. Gysbert & Ada (Van Gilst) 2500 Breton Woods #3008, Grand Rapids, MI 49508, will celebrate 70 years together on Aug 1. Children: Lois (Arnie deceased) Bordewyk, Al & Jan Rozenboom, Pat & Jr. Flier, Nadine and Ron Stuursma, 13 grandchildren, 34 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandchild. Your life together has blessed us all.

### 65th Anniversary

**Dehorn**, Cornelius and Grace (Huizenga) will celebrate their 65th Wedding Anniversary on July 31, 2010. Thanking God for their 65 years together are their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren: Donna and Bruce Essebaggers (Jodi, Mark and Sam Blanton, Robin, Matt, Jack and Avery Hollebeek, Chad, Julie, Addison and Luke Essebaggers), Nancy and Terry Boerema (Meg, Aaron and Ben Gillette and Todd and Jenn Boerema), Gail and Jim Punt (Nicholas and Christopher), and Tom and Gwen DeHorn (Nathan, Grace and Sarah). Congratulations may be sent to them at 33486 Forest Beach Road, Eau Claire, MI 49111

**Hulst**, Harold B. and Gertrude (Vork), 94 Old Mill Dr. #2, Holland, MI 49423. July 31, 2010. With thanks to God for your Christian example from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

**Sjaardema**, Don & Ruth, of Bradenton, FL. celebrated their 65th anniv. on June 28 with their 3 children, 10 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren. Jer. 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you..."

### 60th Anniversary

**Cooper**, Jesse and Myrtle (Fisk), 75 Planten Ave Prospect Park, NJ 07508, celebrated 60 years on June 24, 2010. Congratulations and love from Ruth and Bud Bouma, George (deceased) and Elizabeth, David and Ruth, Thomas and Cynthia, eleven grandchildren.



**Van Hamersveld**, Dale & Dorothy (Lindemulder), of 2489 Red Maple Dr., Grand Rapids, MI 49512, will celebrate their 60th anniversary on July 18. Son: Rev. Dr. Michael and Peggy Van Hamersveld (Rachel, Matthew, and Sarah). Daughter: Terri Lynn and Dr. Jack DeJong (Rev. Jack

and Sonya DeJong, Paul and Elizabeth DeJong, Michael and Colleen DeJong, Lynn and Zach Bradshaw). Six great-grandchildren. With praise and thanksgiving to God for his faithful care.

**Verkaik**, Arie & Bertha (Hemple) 2895 S Wentward Ct, Hudsonville MI 49426 will celebrate 60 years of marriage on July 14. God has blessed them with 5 children, 5 Godly spouses, 14 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. Thank you for the wonderful example of love that you have shown to us.

## 50th Anniversary

**Evenhouse**, Rev. James M. & Helen (Van Dyk), Byron Center, MI., observed 50 years of marriage on June 24. The event will be celebrated in July with a four day family retreat at The Ludington Beachfront. Children: Daniel & Georgia Evenhouse, Sally & Michael Pressler, Philip & Annie Evenhouse, 3 grandchildren.

**Terborg**, Bill & Gert (VanDyken) Tinley Park, IL Celebrate 50 yrs on July 30. Randy & Barb Terborg; Todd & Denise Loid; Mark & Sue Blazis. 9 grandkids & 1 great

**Trumpie**, Duane & Marilyn (Toering) celebrate 50 years of marriage on July 29th. Celebration open house, Aug. 7 at Seymour CRC. Brian & Phyllis, Keith & Brenda, Ken & Theresa, Brenda & Calvin Friend, Jeff & Julie, & Jody

**Vant Land** Jake & Carol (Osenga) 312 SE Diagonal Rd, Inwood IA 51240 Celebrating 50 years on July 1st. Children: Jay & Julie, Cal & Dawn, Clint & Lisa, Jon & Sharon, Jo & Kyle. 10 grandchildren. Congratulations Mom & Dad

## 40th Anniversary



**Kuperus**, Al (Auke) & Nyla (DeHaan), 5926 Glenbrook SE, Kentwood, MI 49508. Celebrating 40 years of marriage, and as many years of faithful commitment to Jesus Christ, their home church (Ideal Park CRC, Wyoming, MI) and their ever expanding family. We praise God for the gift you are to us! Celebrate together at an open house on Saturday, Aug. 7 at Ideal Park CRC from 1-4.

## Obituaries

**Armour**, Dr. David A., 72, Grove City, PA succumbed to cancer on April 28, 2010. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Grace, and four children and their families, Marian and Randall Gemmen of Morgantown, WV, Arthur and Rebecca (Lew) Armour of Portland, OR, David and Joanna

(Tong) Armour of Bellevue, WA, Anneke and Matt Myers of Mackinac Island, MI. David graduated from Calvin College in 1959 and received his PH. D at Northwestern University in 1966. He facilitated Hmong, Jamaican and college student ministries in Michigan. He was an elder at River Terrace Church, East Lansing and at Covenant CRC, Grand Ledge, vestry Trinity Episcopal Church on Mackinac Island. Memorial and burial services will be held on Jun 18 at Fort Mackinac, Mackinac Island, MI.

**Bangma**, Raymond, age 87, of 46 Whitin Avenue, Whitinsville, MA 01588 went to be with his Lord on April 27, 2010. He is survived by his wife Catherine (Baker) of 64 years, children: Les (Rebecca) Bangma, Todd (June) Bangma, 5 grandchildren: Stacy & Justin Pominville, Jason & Jennie Bangma, Kimberly Bangma and 2 great-granddaughters Nora Bangma & Zoey Pominville, brother Louis Bangma. Memorials to Pleasant Street CRC Memorial Fund 25 Cross Street, Whitinsville, MA 01588

**Bangma**, William; aged 85; Uxbridge, MA; went to be with the Lord on May 3, 2010. Bill is greatly missed and lovingly remembered by his wife of 58 years, Gladys (DeYoung) and children: Len (Kathy) Bangma, Karen (Mark) Boer, Don (Michele) Bangma, Donna Kibbe, and Dale (Kim) Bangma, 17 grandchildren, 2 step grandchildren, and 6 great grandchildren.

## Church Positions Available

**Worship Director** Inglewood Christian Reformed Church in Edmonton, Alberta is looking for a part-time Worship Director. Visit the Worship Director Job Description Link at [www.inglewoodcrc.org](http://www.inglewoodcrc.org) for more information.

**Director Of Youth Ministries** First Christian Reformed Church of Taber, Alberta is seeking a full time Director of Youth Ministries. The successful applicant will oversee and be involved in the various youth programs, will strive to establish personal relationships with young people and young adults, will organize SERVE trips/projects. He/she will preferably have a university degree, or its equivalent from an accredited Bible college. We seek someone who has a strong personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. A love for and rapport with youth is also essential. A more detailed job description is available upon request. Please forward resumes/questions to [karenjanehamilton@gmail.com](mailto:karenjanehamilton@gmail.com), Fax 403.223.1573, or 4904 56th Ave, Taber AB T1G 1H4.

**Emo CRC** with 275 members and regular attendees is now actively recruiting a full-time pastor. Reflecting on our congregational needs, we seek a pastor who is energetic and charismatic, effective at preaching the Word of God, and comfortable with pastoral care. Our goals are to engage our youth while still relating to all members, develop our adult education and to create a vision that includes outreach. Emo, Ontario is a rural town on the Rainy River, 30 minutes from a U. S. border and near several large lakes. We praise God for our previous pastors and councils and pray that our journey in faithfulness that began in 1953 will remain fruitful. Please contact Ed Heerema at [emosearch@bellnet.ca](mailto:emosearch@bellnet.ca) for more information.

**Terra Ceia CRC** located in beautiful eastern North Carolina is seeking a full time pastor. We are a small, but active, congregation looking for a pastor who will lead and nurture us. For more information contact Arie DeHoog at 252-964-2230.

**Worship Director:** Heritage Christian Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, MI is seeking a part-time worship director to develop and lead the worship ministry. The applicant must be committed to a blended worship experience, proficient on the piano and able to take the lead in worship planning. The position is for up to 20 hours per week. For more information on this position and to submit a resume and cover letter please contact the church office at [churchoffice@heritagecrc.org](mailto:churchoffice@heritagecrc.org) or (269) 372-3830.

**Associate Pastor** Golden Gate Christian Reformed Church, San Francisco, CA is seeking an associate pastor to lead the English-speaking congregation. We are a multi-cultural church family with 500+ members in three language services (Mandarin, Cantonese, and English) that joyfully worships, serves, and reaches out to the world for the glory of God. We are seeking a full-time minister with a M. Div. and minimum two years of pastoral experience in North

America to provide spiritual leadership, through shepherding, and working together with the pastoral team to oversee the body of Christ. Please contact David Hau at [pastorsearch@ggccc.org](mailto:pastorsearch@ggccc.org)

**Music Coordinator** Ebenezer CRC located in Trenton, ON is seeking a part-time music coordinator. For a detailed job description and contact information please visit [www.ebenzerccc.ca](http://www.ebenzerccc.ca).

**Pastor Of Pastoral Care** Prairie Edge CRC of Portage, MI is seeking an ordained pastor in the CRC or RCA (possibly retired) to fill a part-time position (40 hours/month) of ministering to our elderly, sick, and widowed. A full job description is available at [peccr.org](http://peccr.org) or from Tom Vandenberg at 269-207-4024 or [tvandenberg@mallcitycontainers.co](mailto:tvandenberg@mallcitycontainers.co)

**Youth Pastor** Trinity CRC of Sparta, MI is looking to fill a full time Youth Pastor position. Contact [douma7@i2k.com](mailto:douma7@i2k.com) for more info. or [www.spartaCRC.org](http://www.spartaCRC.org)

**Pastor** Interested in reaching this culture? Many people consider themselves Christians here but haven't found a "safe place" to come back to church. That's our focus, and our outreach efforts are starting to work. We're an innovative, small (but growing) church. But now we need a pastor. We're in a university town up in the cool, sunny mountains and forests of northern Arizona, near the Grand Canyon. Former church planters and those with a heart for reaching a post-Christian community are encouraged to contact us. Hope Community CRC, 3700 N. Fanning Dr., Flagstaff, AZ 86004. 928-526-0677

**Ann Arbor Crc** The Ann Arbor CRC (Michigan) has an exciting ministry opportunity for a full-time pastor. We are looking for a qualified person to join our pastoral team which ministers to the whole congregation. We are looking for a pastor to take on primary responsibility for the needs of family and youth. He/she will partner with our Pastor of Worship Ministries including shared worship leading and some preaching. The job description comes with built-in flexibility to shape the position, based on the selected candidate's gifts and interests. To learn more, please visit: <http://www.aacrc.org/about/pastor-position>, e-mail [AACRCPastorSearch@aacrc.org](mailto:AACRCPastorSearch@aacrc.org), or call Ross at 734-945-0683.

**Trinity CRC** in Rock Valley, Iowa, is currently searching for a Director of Ministry. This individual will serve with the Shepherding and Worship pastors in a team ministry environment. This is a full time position. Ordination not required. This person will: \*Provide leadership to the ministry teams, administration, and supervision of the church office and non-ordained staff. \*Lead teams to create opportunities for service and outreach. \*Assist in leading us in our mission to equip people for works of service. \*Provide opportunities to reach people, grow people, and celebrate with people. \*Lead and challenge individuals to use their spiritual gifts. For a full job description, please visit our website at [www.trinitycrc.com](http://www.trinitycrc.com). If you are a servant leader

with a passion for outreach and congregational life, please send a cover letter and resume to [secretary@trinitycrc.com](mailto:secretary@trinitycrc.com) or mail to Trinity CRC, 2020 8th St. SE, Rock Valley, IA 51247.

**Willard CRC** located in the quaint village of Celeryville just south of Willard OH is actively seeking a full-time pastor. We are a congregation of about 70 families who are involved with active church life and Christian education. We are looking for a caring leader who will lead us in Bible-based preaching, nurture our multigenerational members and encourage and enable our congregation to continue in spiritual and congregational growth. We are a rural community in the heart of agricultural Ohio. We are not far from Lake Erie and are on the edge of an industrial community. For more information and to obtain our church profile, please send inquiries to Willard Christian Reformed Church, attn: Allison Wiers, Secretary of the Search Committee, 4163 Broadway Rd, Willard, Oh 44890

**Director Of Music** The North Hills Christian Reformed Church of Troy, Michigan, is seeking a part-time Director of Music. The Director of Music will participate in planning worship services wherein music is an integral part, coordinate music schedules, and direct the choir. North Hills Church is a vibrant, liturgical community that values music as an essential component of each worship service. The Director of Music will enjoy congregational, pastoral and staff support. To learn more about North Hills Church, visit our website at [www.northhillscrc.org](http://www.northhillscrc.org). For further information, or to submit a letter of application and resume, contact Pastor Randy Engle by August 1 at: North Hills Christian Reformed Church, 3150 N Adams Road, Troy, MI 48084. 248-645-1990

**Covenant CRC, Winnipeg**, is seeking a pastor who will lead our staff and congregation. We have recently gone through an intense transition process in which we have resolved some of the issues of the past and have determined an unified direction for the future. Our new pastor needs to enjoy preaching and teaching, have leadership skills, and possess inter-personal strengths, all of which God will use to build the church as a Christ-following community. Please indicate your interest in being considered for this position to Pete Ploegman at [pete.ploegman@gmail.com](mailto:pete.ploegman@gmail.com)

**Youth Ministries Coordinator** Friendship Christian Reformed Church of Byron Center, MI is seeking a full time Youth Ministries Coordinator. The successful candidate will coordinate and oversee the entire high-school and middle-school youth programs including vision casting, implementation, and administration. We seek someone who professes Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and desires to see youth grow to love Christ, and increase the capacity to love, learn, seek, and serve. Specialized youth training helpful, but not required. Please forward resumes/questions to: [careers@friendshipcrc.org](mailto:careers@friendshipcrc.org) or Friendship CRC Attn: YMC Search Team 190 - 100th St. SE Byron Center, MI 49315

**Bos**, Gerald "Jerry" F.; aged 87; April 27, 2010; 2500 Breton Woods Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512 and Bradenton FL; Surviving are his wife: Ann (DeMaa) Bos; children: Carol (Mark) Hebden of Cherry Hill, NJ, Jay Bos of Grand Rapids, MI and Jack Bos of Grand Rapids, MI; grandchildren: Jessica, Rachel, Emily Hebden, Jessica (Ryan) Ogle, Jacqueline Bos; great grandchildren: Ethan and Hudson Olge; brother-in-law: Marty (Janet, dec.) Ozinga.

**Brock**, Sydney J., age 82, went to be with our Lord on May 23, 2010. He is survived by his wife, Margaret, and children: Sheryl (Don) Van Eck, Ken and Kathryn Brock, Roger and Kathy Brock; seven grandchildren. Sid was a lifelong example of a humble servant of God.

**Cook**, Mr. John; age 92; May 30, 2010; He was preceded in death by his wife, Irene (Korthuis) Cook. He is survived by his children: Ed & Ruth Kind, Eileen Cook, Dr. Bruce and Nancy Cook (Chicago, IL); grandchildren: Erick and Carol Kind, Matthew and Sabrina Kind, Cara Kind, Andrew Cook and Timothy Cook; great grandchildren: Malena, Audrey, Arabella and Elijah Kind; and brother-in-law: John Dykhouse.

**Deters**, Ellis E.; aged 75; May 26, 2010; 6993 Holly Hill Ct. S. W., Byron Center, MI 49315; Ellis is survived by his loving wife of 52 years, Laurie (Veldman); his children: Jim and Sari, Don and Gayle, Joy and Paul Holtrop; nine grandchildren: Trevor, Ryan, Lyn Deters; Sandy (Jon) Van Huis, Jana Deters; Ruth, Andrew, Lydia, Josh Holtrop.

**Diephuis Johanna** (Jalving) Diephuis, age 92, went to Jesus on April 27, 2010. Her dear husband, Bill, preceded her. She is survived by her children, Trudi (Paul) Ippel, Rudi (Virgi) Diephuis, Fenna Diephuis Stoub, Jeanne (David) Clemo, 13 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, and sisters Gertrude Kleinheksel and Reka Lamer.

**Faber**, Mr. Harry; age 97; May 30, 2010; He was preceded in death by his wife, Joanne (DeBoer); and son, Harry Douglas. Surviving are his children: James A. Faber and Joyce Miyamoto, Paul W. and Jacinta Faber, David S. and Connie Faber; daughter-in-law, Marilyn Faber; 10 grandchildren; 7 great grandchildren; and one sister-in-law, Elinor Faber. He was a charter member of Boston Square CRC and remained a member there until his death.

**Ippel**, Janet Marian (VanDerPuy); age 88; May 29, 2010; 2265 Radcliffe Circle S. E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546; She was preceded in death by her parents, Gerhardt and Marie VanDerPuy; her siblings, Abe (Dolores Hicks, Marge Saint) VanDerPuy and Gerald (Connie) VanDerPuy. Surviving are her husband, Lester; sister, Mary (Bob) DeSmith; children, Tom (Mary) Ippel, Jim (Linda) Ippel, and Mary B. (Carl) Carew; 14 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren

**Nikkel**, Jan, age 72, 311 University St, Pella, IA 50219, April 27, 2010. Jan is survived by her husband of 51 years, Bruce; children Laurinda (Arne) Nikkel Knudsen, Judi (Bill) Byrna, Carla (Tom) Solle, Bryan (Cindy) Nikkel and 11 grandchildren.

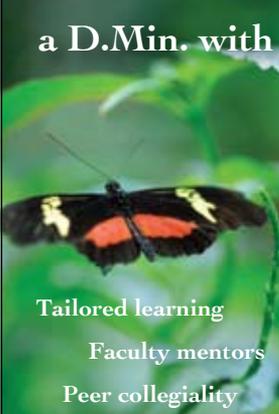
**Postma**, Elisabeth A., nee Koffijberg, age 73. 129 Chestnut Hills Circle, Burr Ridge, IL 60527. Wife of Thomas; mother of James J. (Teresa); grandmother of Elizabeth and Thomas Postma; survived by many brothers and sisters, all of the Netherlands.

**Pylman**, Edward, 88, June 2, 2010, Byron Center, MI survived by his wife of 66 years Anna (DeHaan), children Judy (Ken) Slager, Sharon (Jim) Oppenhuizen, Ed (Lori), Marilyn (Frank) Smith, 11 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren

**Stoit**, Madelynn, age 86 (Maclean) entered her heavenly home on April 26, 2010, survived by her husband of 65 years Jacob (Bud) (10310 Village Circle Dr #203 Palos Park, IL 60464) and children Nancy (Larry) Starr, Carol (Ken) Bayens, Debby, Jim & Mary Ann, Tom and Ruth, 21 grandchildren, & 26 great grandchildren.

**Tazelaar**, Peter R., age 63, 955 Swain, Elmhurst, IL 60126. Husband of the late Grace, nee Van Houten; father of Jane Cintron and Brian (Carrie) Tazelaar; grandfather Linnea, Thomas and Sabrina Cintron and John, Olivia and Braden Tazelaar. Son of Raymond (Gertrude) and the late Jean Tazelaar; brother of Jan (Joe) Commanda, Beth (Larry) Cunningham, Tom (Ruth), Jim (Jo) Tazelaar, Karen (George) Folkerts, John (Cindy) and Rob (Laura) Tazelaar; and brother-in-law of Mary (the late Bill) Van Houten-Eggen and Peter (Maggie) Van Houten. Uncle of many nieces and nephews.

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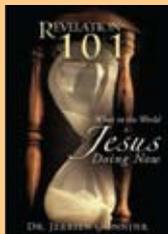


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**Vanderbilt**, Rev. Maas, 85, passed away in Glendale, AZ, on May 5, 2010. He is survived by his wife, Eloise (Kuipers), and six children: Lori, Cori, Monty, Lois, Deb, and Joni, their spouses, 13 grandchildren, and 8 great-grandchildren. Maas served in the military in WWII and was stationed in the Philippines. After the war, he attended Calvin College ('51) and Seminary ('54). Maas and Eloise married in 1950, and in 1955 moved to Japan as missionaries, where Maas established and pastored three churches. In 1980, they were transferred to the Philippines, where Maas established the BF Homes Christian Fellowship in Paranaque. A memorial service was held on Friday, May 14th, at West Valley Christian Fellowship, and Maas was buried with military honors at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona.

**Vander Borgh**, Grietje (Oldenziel), age 100, died on April 30, 2010, in Strathroy, ON. Survived by her children Jean (Adrian) Van Geest, John Vander Borgh, Winnie Vander Borgh, Herman (Marjory) Vander Borgh, Nettie (Jerry) Kiers, Rita (Jerry) Kavanaugh; 17 grandchildren and 43 great-grandchildren.

**Verhoeven**, Martin, age 92 of Artesia, CA went home to be with the Lord March 28, 2010. He is survived by his wife June (Hage), children Gilbert (Diana) Verhoeven, Gail (Jess) Visser, Cheryl (Don) Carrico, Colleen (Randall) Aase, 12 grandchildren and 25 great grandchildren, brother Henry (Lorraine) Verhoeven, and sister Marie Kroezee.

**Voogt**, Edwin G., age 82, April 27, 2010, born in Chicago; moved to Grand Rapids area. Survived by his wife, Laverne (Ericks) of 61 yrs; children: Ron (Andi) Voogt, Diane (Sam) Sterk, Cal (Amy) Voogt, Russ (Toni) Voogt, Karla (Marlin) Broersma; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; survived by brother, Gary (Grace); preceded by sister, Catherine.

## Employment

**New Testament Position Available:** Mid-America Reformed Seminary announces an opening in New Testament Studies. Applicants should be able to teach Greek and courses in New Testament exegesis and biblical theology, and ordinarily have a postgraduate research degree in New Testament. Membership in a Reformed or Presbyterian church is required, and ordination and pastoral experience is especially desirable. Applicants should send a copy of their curriculum vitae, including names of two references, to Dr. Cornelis P. Venema, President, Mid-America Reformed Seminary, 229 Seminary Drive, Dyer, Indiana, 46311.

**Caregivers Needed** Are you interested in working for the best living assistance services company in West Michigan? Visiting Angels is looking for people who can be excellent, not average; make a connection with our clients; be perfectly dependable; practice compassion and work with integrity. Contact Heather at 616-243-7080 or [heather@vangels.com](mailto:heather@vangels.com) or visit our website at [www.vangels.com](http://www.vangels.com) and complete an online application.

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**The Christian Reformed Church in North America** (CRCNA) has a full-time position opening for Church Advancement Officer - Canada with Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI), a ministry of the CRCNA. This position is based in Burlington, Ontario office. This person will be responsible for: 1) Building relationships of joint ministry between Canadian congregations and BTGMI; 2) Developing strong relationships with congregational volunteers; and 3) Serving as liaison within the Canadian office. In keeping with our Equal Opportunity Policy, we encourage applicants from any ethnic (racial) community, as well as persons with disabilities. For a detailed job description or to apply visit [www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org) by July 31, 2010.

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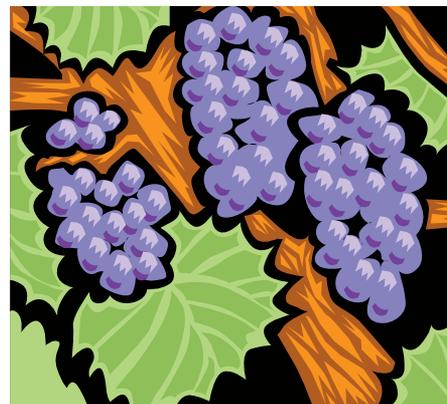
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# Punch Lines

Got a photo of something funny related to Reformed history, culture, or tradition? Send it to *The Banner* and you might see it in print! You can email photos to [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org) or send them to 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560.

**T**wo youngsters were closely examining bathroom scales on display at the department store.

"Have you ever seen one of these before?" one asked.

"Yeah, my mom and dad have one," the other replied.

"What's it for?" asked the first boy.

"I don't know," the second one answered. "I think you stand on it and it makes you mad."

—John Veltkamp

**A** great bumper sticker: "Honk if you love Jesus. Text while driving if you want to meet him."

—Martha Westdorp

**M**r. Jones said to his doctor, "It's been more than a month since my last visit, and I still feel miserable."

"Well," said the doctor, "did you follow the instructions on the bottle of medicine I gave you?"

"I sure did," Mr. Jones replied. "It said 'keep tightly closed.'"

—Gladys Gritter

**A** preacher decided one Sunday morning that he was going to put the fear of God into his congregation. So he began his sermon by saying, "Remember, everyone in this congregation is going to die." Then he noticed a fellow sitting up front smiling broadly. When the preacher asked him why, the young man

responded, "I'm not from this congregation."

—Agnes Lindeman

**W**hile listening to one of my kindergarten friends recite the Lord's Prayer, I couldn't help but smile at the following: "Forgive us our debts as we eat our dinners."

—Dawn DeYoung

**A** few days after we changed our clocks this spring, my 12-year-old son asked me, "When do we get our hour of sleep back?"

"Not until November," I told him.

His head immediately drooped and his shoulders slumped.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"I'm going to lose an hour of sleep every night until November," he replied incredulously. "I'm going to be exhausted!"

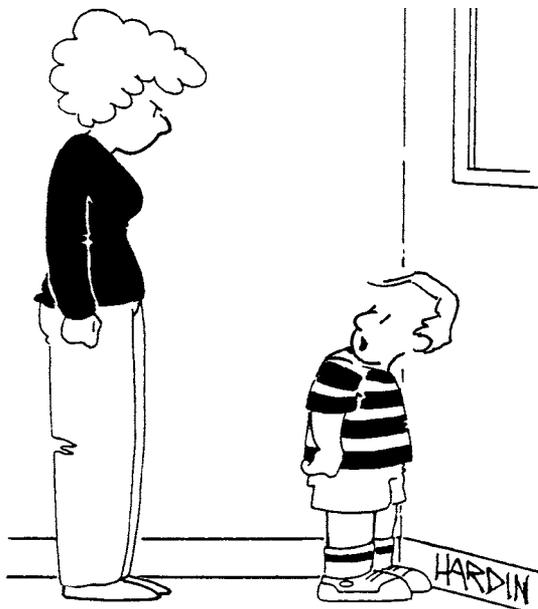
—Bruce Vaandrager

**W**e were passing a cemetery one day, and my 3-year-old daughter, Nina, saw a cross. She said, "Mommy, Jesus died on the cross for us . . . but now he lives in my heart . . . and he can't get out. Beautiful."

—Amanda Pasma

## Send Us Your Photos!

Katie Ritsema Roelofs sent us this photo of her 6-month-old son, Benjamin, "digesting" *The Banner*. Unbeknownst to most people, Benjamin was likely the youngest attendee at Synod 2009, since Katie was pregnant with him when she served as an elder delegate. Katie, the youngest visible delegate at age 25, wrote about her experience in the July 2009 *Banner*. You can reread the article at [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).



"Why do you ask me questions if you don't want to hear the answers?"

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