

# BANNER

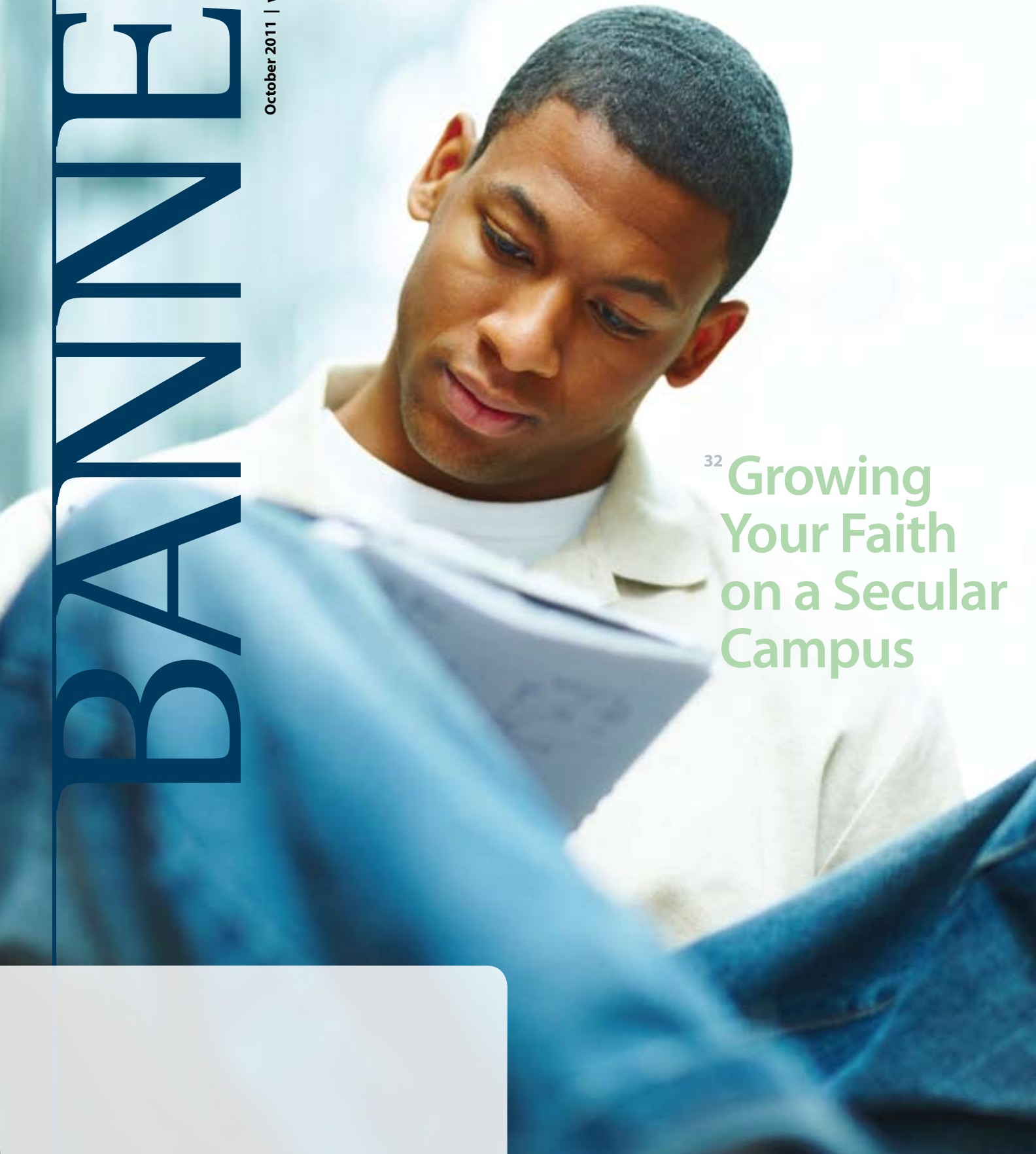
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<sup>20</sup> Trick or Treat?  
Our Halloween Dilemma

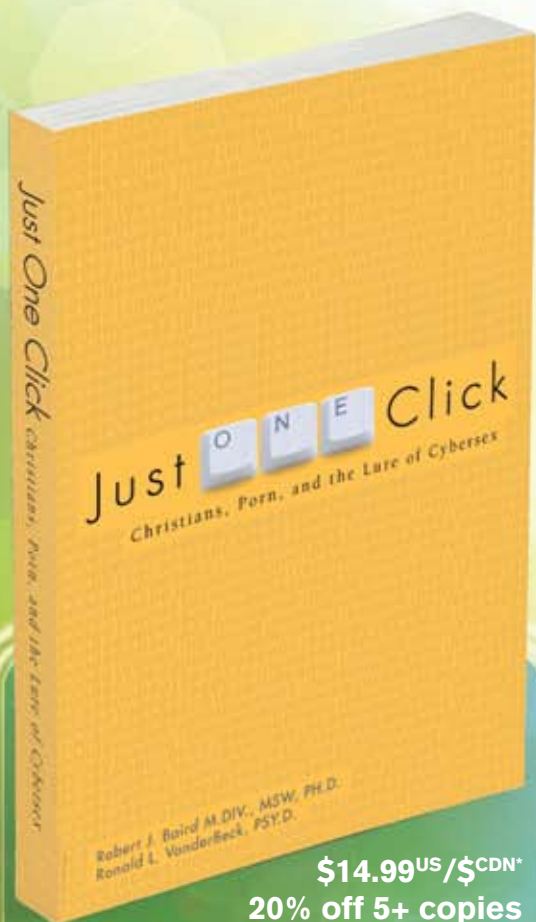
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# BANNER



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# So What Do You Say?

## Does this sound familiar?

Toddler: "Grandma, I wanna cookie."

Parent: "What's the magic word?"

Toddler: "Peazzz?"

Grandma: "Sure, dear, help yourself."

Parent: "Now what do you say to Grandma?"

Toddler: "I wan anadur wun!"

Parent: "CHRIStopher Jonathan Jones, WHAT do you say?"

Toddler: "Thank yew."

Parent: "That's better."

Toddler: "Now gimme anuder wun."

Familiar, right? So let's analyze this a bit. Is Christopher Jonathan Jones basically a good kid who needs only a bit of teaching to set him straight (Pelagius, Erasmus, et al)? Is Christopher basically a decent chap who needs a shot of grace to bump him up to the next level of godliness (medieval theologians, et al)? Or is Christopher showing his real stripes: "conceived and born in sin and subject to all manner of misery, yea, to condemnation itself in Adam" (Calvin, old Reformed baptismal form, et al)?

With kids and grandkids of my own, I confess I don't even consider this a horserace. I'll bet Msrs. Pelagius, Erasmus, and Aquinas were rarely around kids. Else they, too, would surely have been Calvinists.

Upbringing can do only so much. It's not enough for Christopher to learn to mouth words of thanks. It's not enough for Christopher to get a shot of religion to launch him on the road to piety. Those things matter, but what Christopher really needs foremost is a total inside-out transformation of his basic, fundamental being (the Bible calls it "the heart," the real inner self). Somewhere, somehow, through the power and operation of God's Spirit, Christopher needs to be "born from above," "born anew" (John 3:3-5).

Wedge between Canadian Thanksgiving and U.S. Thanksgiving is Reformation Day. Good deal. Reformation Day (Oct. 31) is the day we remember how church reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin rediscovered how deep our need for transformation really goes and how freely and willingly God graciously meets it.

Like any birth, that deep-from-within thankfulness doesn't come without struggle and pain. But it endures even when the cupboard is bare, the soul drowns in grief, and the mind is bedeviled by unyielding depression.

That kind of tough, stubborn, inside-out thankfulness is truly a miracle.

Whether you thrived or strived this past year, whether you observe Thanksgiving in October or November, may you experience that deep thankfulness that keeps on flowing because it's the gift of God's Spirit coming from within. The apostle Paul writes, "When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:15-17, RSV). Thank you, Abba!

May Christopher experience that everlasting gratitude too. Of course, he'll *still* need examples and reminders to help him tell it.

But don't we all? ■

**Tough, stubborn,  
inside-out  
thankfulness is  
truly a miracle.**



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# The Mud Derby



**AS THE MUD FLEW** and the F-150's engine roared, the question occurred: What does it mean to "grow old"?

The adventure started when my Aunt Anna heard what her grandnephew was planning for his high school graduation party. Instead of the usual open house, he planned a demolition mud-derby behind his home.

It was too much for my aunt to resist.

Needing a car, she placed the following ad in the local paper: *WANTED: 68-year-young great-grandma needs cheap running car for a mud derby, good brakes preferred, don't tell Grandpa!*

That ad was too much for her older sister, my Aunt Martha, to resist. So the next day, a new ad appeared: *WANTED: 70-year-old grandma needs a cheap running old car that will outrun the 68-year-old great-grandma's car at the mud derby.*

That ad was too much for my 64-year-old mom, the youngest sister, to resist. So the third day, appearing below both of the above, came a final classified: *WANTED: Two un-motorized wheelchairs to carry the grandmas off of the mud derby. The younger, sensible sister.*

With the date of the derby nearing, the wheels were in motion. Aunt Anna procured a 1991 Astro van with more than 335,000 miles, to which she strapped a mannequin in a rocking chair.

Aunt Martha arrived with a son and grandson, each with their own beaters.

And my mom? Forgoing the wheelchairs, she arrived with an old farm truck decked out, Beverly Hillbillies' style, with garage sale signs, old boots, and life vests—and a scarecrow buckled in the passenger seat. The newspaper sent a reporter to cover the senior carnage.

The Saturday dawned under water-laden clouds, leaving the track covered in dewy grass and globs of mud. Wary of the conditions, my mom asked my wife and me to join her in her truck. So we found ourselves sandwiched next to a scarecrow, with the pop and hiss of old engines cranking around us. As the flag dropped and the race began, there was the question: What does it mean to "grow old"?

The passing of the years causes our bodies to change. But what does the passing of the years do to our souls? What should it do?

The Bible speaks of our need to "become mature" (Eph. 4:13) and to "put childish ways behind" us (1 Cor. 13:11). We are to

"grow up" in Christ. But does "growing up" in the faith mean "growing old"? Does "letting go of childish ways" mean letting go of childlike qualities such as imagination, creativity, and the wonderful capacities to play, risk, and laugh?

Sitting in a rusty pickup, I decided that the answer to those questions is a resounding no. For it was none other than Christ himself who said, "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God *like a little child* will never enter it" (Mark 10:15).

We are to be mature kingdom citizens, yes. But in our maturity we are to be as children.

So maybe three decent, proper CRC grandmas rolling around a mud track with peach-fuzz-faced young men is a good object lesson. Growing up in Christ doesn't mean sitting back in your rocker. Sometimes it means strapping the rocker to an old van. And gunning it. Amen. ■



Rev. John Lee is pastor of Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Sioux Center, Iowa.



Laughter is  
carbonated holiness.

— ANNE LAMOTT

# Slavery in My City

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THE BANNER

God sees the slaves.  
Are we willing to see  
them too?

**A STURDY BRICK CHURCH** in my city sports a poster that you probably wouldn't find in most Christian Reformed churches.

It shows a young woman's face, her natural beauty tarnished by a streetwise, tired gaze. The poster's words communicate a painful reality, a truth to sex-trade workers: "It's not love. You're being used when you're trading sex for a place to crash, for food, or for drugs. If you're under 18, it's exploitation. It's not a fair trade."

What makes this church unique? It acknowledges that, though illegal, slavery exists in my city. Through an outreach program to all women, including sex-trade workers, this church is doing its part to address slavery in one of its evil manifestations.

According to *Modern Slavery: The Secret World of 27 Million People* by Kevin Bales, Zoe Trodd, and Alex Kent Williamson (Oneworld Publications, 2009), sex-trade workers make up only some of today's slaves. Who are the others? They include people enslaved in the following economic sectors: domestic service, agriculture, factory work, restaurant/hotel work, and entertainment.

The authors point out that a person is likely to be enslaved if he or she "is not

free to change employers; has been assaulted or threatened for refusing to work; has been cheated and forced to pay off 'debts' upon arrival in the U.S.; has had his or her passport or other documents taken away; is unable to move freely or is being watched or followed; is rarely allowed to speak freely; lacks the means to support him/herself or control money, in spite of long hours of work; lacks contact with or is isolated from family and friends; has a constant appearance of fear, nervousness, and/or apprehension; has unexplained injuries or is malnourished" (pp. 159-160).

More than likely, there are slaves in your city too. God sees and remembers them, just as he saw and remembered his children in Egypt: "The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them" (Ex. 2:23-25).

God sees the slaves. Are we willing to see them too?

The authors of *Modern Slavery* write, "Slavery often comes to light because a member of the public sees something odd and speaks up" (p. 160). In the eyes of the world, the Christian Reformed Church is a small, insignificant band of people. But we are members of the public, and we have eyes. We can look around us wherever we go, watching for signs of slavery in its various garbs and contacting legal authorities when necessary.

Who knows? God might use us to set his children free! ■



**Sonya VanderVeen Feddema** is a freelance writer and a member of Covenant Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines, Ontario.



## Separated

Your September 2011 article "Separated" hit me like a ton of bricks! This article so closely resembles our parents' experience, except that Dad, 91, is caring for Mom, 88. They are in assisted living, but one day in the not-too-distant future, Mom will have to move to the Alzheimer's unit. Needless to say, we are not looking forward to that day.

By God's grace, we will know when that time has come. And we will know we made the right decision, no matter how hard.

Thank you for printing this article.

—Mary Query  
Traverse City, Mich.

## Safe Churches

My thanks to the writer of "What If IT Happens in Your Church?" (August 2011). Abuse in the church is still a subject many of us would rather avoid, but thanks to the work of the Safe Church Ministry and others, there is help and hope for healing.

—Mary VanderVennen  
Toronto



# TTERS

## A Pastor's List

I found Rev. Reginald Smith's "10 Things Your Pastor Wants You to Know" (August 2011) an enjoyable, easy read. Many times I found my head nodding to his words as tears filled my eyes. His straightforward article gently reminds us to continue putting Jesus at the center of our lives.

—Marilyn R. Vander Wekken  
Picture Butte, Alberta

Thank you so much for Rev. Smith's article. In this one article he mentions Jesus 16 times, which, I think, is more than Jesus has been mentioned in all the articles in all the *Banners* this year. Please lead us to Jesus more often.

—Jack Van Meggelen,  
Toronto

I say a hearty "Amen!" to this article. Excellent!

—Rev. Vernon Luchies  
Kalamazoo, Mich.

## Public Schools

In "Supporting Public Education" (Reformed Matters, August 2011), Thomas Hoeksema provides a good list of reasons for Christians to support public education, but his premise assumes that a system of state-run schools is worth preserving. If Christians want significant educational reform of our dysfunctional educational system, perhaps we should suggest separating state funding and state provision of education. As a Christian educator, I do support "more equitable sharing of public funds"—never by voting for the failing system, but instead by supporting a comprehensive voucher system. When governments fund rather than run education, the "unintended consequences" Hoeksema writes of when Christians send their children to private schools would disappear.

—Bruce Rottman  
Santa Barbara, Calif.

I was extremely saddened by this article. To blame Christian education for the state of public schools is to lack knowledge of a Christian school. It is not only for the elite, either. I know several families who send their "impoverished" children to a Christian school through the help of anonymous donors and scholarships. Many parents make difficult sacrifices to give their children a Christian education.

Having been a teacher in a blue-collar district, I understand the need for Christian teachers in the public school setting. However, I also have a deep desire to train my children in the knowledge of the Lord, not in the views of a teacher whose values I may not share. We can still make a difference in the public schools, but not at the expense of our children.

—Stephanie McCarthy  
Hollandale, Minn.

At a Cardus (think tank) event two years ago, I heard a renowned professor from a secular post-secondary institution argue that it is time we call out public schools for what they really are: state schools! Our governments, influenced and buoyed by powerful teacher unions, dictate the agenda for the instruction of our children. There is no room for Christ in state classrooms, yet the "religions" of Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and witches and goblins, among others, are more than welcome. Have we lost sight of our ultimate responsibility as Christian parents to teach our children that our God is Lord and Master over all creation?

—Henry Koorneef  
Foundation for Niagara and  
Hamilton Area Christian Schools  
Beamsville, Ontario

If we want Christian citizens and leaders in the future, a Christian education is most valuable. If it is better for our children to go to public schools, in another generation or two there will be no need for Calvin College or other Christian colleges.

It appears to us, and to many others, that you are breaking down all barriers for the Christian Reformed Church to join with the Reformed Church in America. Perhaps the RCA should begin to support Christian education. Together we could be a strong force in producing Christian leaders for our future.

—Marjorie Vander Klok  
Bradenton, Fla.

## Correction

**Attention, Christian Reformed chaplains: *The Banner* apologizes for turning you into percentages in our August 2011 infographic "Where Do All the Chaplains Go?" (p. 12). The numbers shown (totaling 117) are the actual number of Christian Reformed chaplains serving in each area. We've corrected it online, if that'll make you feel any better.**

# NEWS

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## Belleville Church Will Appeal to Synod Rather than Disaffiliate

Instead of disaffiliating from the Christian Reformed Church, the council of Maranatha CRC in Belleville, Ontario, decided in July to appeal decisions by Classis Quinte (a regional group of churches) to Synod 2012, the annual leadership meeting of the Christian Reformed Church.

The appeal regards requests by Classis Quinte that

- the Maranatha council “apply special discipline to [Rev.] John

Visser,” deposing him from the office of minister of the Word and sacraments in the CRCNA.

- in the event that not all office-bearers comply, classis, through its classical ministry committee, suspend those members of council and be empowered to help form a new council in the Maranatha congregation.
- the Maranatha council provide honorable suspension to staff members engaged in healing

ministry at the church and allow classis to appoint an accredited team to evaluate the healing ministry.

Those requests resulted from a May 2011 meeting of classis. At a subsequent meeting in June, during which the Maranatha council was given further opportunity to present its case, the classis upheld its requests.

The leadership of Maranatha initially indicated that it intended to disaffiliate from the denomination rather than comply with the requests of classis. (See *The Banner*, August 2011.)

Classis Quinte’s requests came after an independent team assessed that Visser was guilty of breaking confidentiality and abuse of office, which are grounds for deposition in the CRC. Classis made the requests of the Maranatha council, since only a local council can apply discipline to its pastor.

In its report, which was presented to classis, the assessment team noted that the issues raised all related to Maranatha’s healing ministry. Members who have been concerned about the healing ministry had raised several issues, among them: excessive power imbalance between counselors and counselees; labeling and diagnosing, a practice in which staff members diagnose a counselee’s condition; and confidentiality—staff sharing a counselee’s personal information with council.

Dave Botting, assistant pastor of Maranatha, told *The Banner* that the church’s council is appealing the decisions because “classis is



Members of Faith Christian Fellowship CRC minister with their grills.

### Grilling for God in Central California

Faith Christian Fellowship in Walnut Creek, Calif., emits an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

They use their culinary expertise to feed people in their community who are homeless, and they also cook for various non-profit events in the San Francisco Bay area.

For nearly eight years, a group of church members, including Harvey Dykstra, have gotten together almost monthly to grill chicken for the local Loaves and Fishes ministry.

“We rarely have any problems getting help from other members at church, especially men, as everybody seems to like to barbecue,” said Dykstra.

“It’s fun and enjoyable, and you get to meet people,” said Dykstra.

—Heidi Wicker

## Community Gardens Promote Inclusion in Michigan

Creston Christian Reformed Church tilled new ground this summer when it turned a vacant lot and the playground of a closed school into community gardens designed to include people with disabilities.

Partnering with other churches and the local neighborhood association and a grant from the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition enabled the church to install more than 40 individual raised-bed garden plots, including eight specially designed wheelchair-accessible plots.

"One of the highlights has been the community that has developed," says Mandi Creveling, the gardens' Involving Our Neighbors volunteer coordinator. "Whenever you go out there, you get to talk to someone, creating a natural connection."

—Noah J.K. Kruis



Kevin Heys pulls weeds in a specially designed raised garden bed.

MANDI CREVELING

asking council to do something that it can't do in good conscience before God."

Botting said that the council does not believe that the assessment was fair, nor that the grounds of the motions have merit. "This goes to the heart of the ministry of this church, and council stands behind the integrity of its senior pastor, its staff, and our ministry," Botting said. "We do not believe we received a fair hearing or an opportunity to fully present our case. We are looking forward to a judicial code hearing." (The judicial code is part of the Church Order of the CRC to ensure just treatment of those involved in judgments and decisions of the church.)

—Gayla R. Postma

### IN MEMORIAM



#### Rev. Repko Popma

1913-2011

Rev. Repko Popma, age 98, at the time the oldest Christian Reformed minister and the longest-serving (71 years), passed away July 17. He was a devout and dedicated pastor to parishioners on three continents.

Popma entered the gospel ministry in Holland during World War II. During the war he became involved with the underground partisan movement in radio work and had to go into hiding, preaching under an assumed name.

Popma spent some years pastoring in Indonesia before moving to Canada in 1957. In Canada he served Christian Reformed congregations in British Columbia and Ontario.

Popma was a sympathetic listener, a diligent pastor, and a faithful preacher of the Word. He reflected the humility of his Savior. Until well into their 90s, he and his wife visited the lonely and the needy. And together they planted wonderful flower gardens.

Popma is survived by his wife, Ini, by their six children and spouses, and by 11 grandchildren.

—Louis M. Tamminga

Further information on recently deceased ministers is available each year in the front pages of the Christian Reformed Church's annual Yearbook.

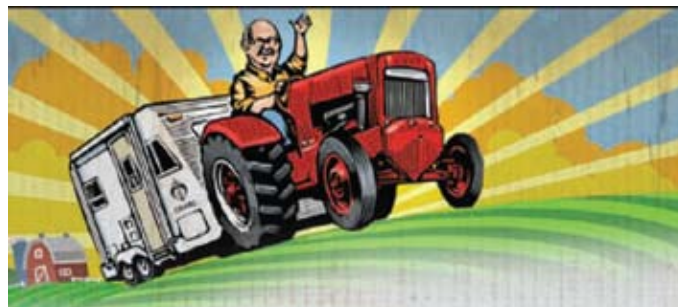
## Tractor Dave Completes Shortened but Successful Ride

"Tractor Dave" Wolfsen considers his 4,125-mile (6,639 km) ride all in a day's work.

"For the layperson this looks like quite a project," Wolfsen said, "but for me it was all in a day's work. I enjoy driving the tractor. . . It was so enjoyable—not only the occasion to meet and greet people, as well as teach people and learn things that were going on, but also seeing America itself as it is."

Wolfsen's "day's work" was actually 63 days as he traveled through 14 states, raising funds and awareness for the Foods Resource Bank (FRB) and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee's Disaster Response Services (DRS).

Wolfsen initially planned to travel 10,000 miles (16,000 km) through the lower 48 states, but the hilly terrain of the East Coast



proved too much for his 1937 CO-OP tractor, with which he originally pulled a camping trailer.

After taking a two-week hiatus to regroup, Wolfsen hit the road again at a slower pace, this time pulling an empty trailer that served as a billboard to promote FRB and DRS. He also had at least one crew member with him at all times, driving a truck and pulling a trailer. As his journey concluded, Wolfsen had raised more than \$33,000.

"The highlight was the generosity that was blatantly evident with people," he said, "and the joy of having people stop and ask further questions about either one of the entities or both and ask for more information. Those are highlights because that's growth."

Wolfsen, unsure about what the future holds, will take the next several months to discuss with his family and church any further opportunities.

—Melissa Holtrop

# NEWS

## Calvin College Religion Profs in the News; One Alleges College Is Being Dishonest

Two Calvin College religion professors, John Schneider and Daniel Harlow, were in the news again recently when a story on National Public Radio quoted their views on interpreting the early chapters of Genesis.

Both professors came under fire from the college's president this past year after publishing articles in *The American Scientific Affiliation's* journal *Perspectives on Science & Christian Faith* question-

ing the existence of Adam and Eve, whether there was a literal fall into sin, and suggesting that the historic Reformed confessions are in conflict with recent scientific discoveries and biblical studies. (See *The Banner*, February 2011)

Their views also raised the ire of some members of the Christian Reformed Church, which owns the Grand Rapids-based liberal arts school.

Schneider has now left the employ of Calvin College. A joint

statement signed by both Schneider and the college administration states that Schneider requested an early retirement and the college granted it.

When *The Banner* asked Schneider about his departure from Calvin, he would refer only to that public statement. Cheryl Brandsen, academic dean for social sciences and contextual disciplines at Calvin College, also referred to that statement and said the report on NPR that Schneider was pres-

sured to resign was a factual error. "Professor Schneider chose to request retirement on terms that reflected his love and respect for the college," she wrote in an email to *The Banner*.

That was when Harlow spoke out publicly. He told *The Banner* that statements to the media and the college's constituents about how the departure took place are dishonest and misleading. "John was pressured to leave," Harlow said. "He was pressured by the

## Michigan Churches Get Coaching for Better Ministry

When Rev. Nathan Visker, pastor of Ferrysburg Community Christian Reformed Church in Spring Lake, Mich., wanted his church to become more missional, he took advantage of coaching services available from Christian Reformed Home Missions in the Great Lakes region.

"One of the great outcomes of the coaching relationship has been the development of specific initiatives," said Visker.

Rev. Jeff Boersma, a church planter in nearby Muskegon, Mich., was Visker's coach.

Boersma met with Visker to help identify where God was already working and to take those ministries to a new level. This included a letter writing ministry to prisoners, a meals program for a nearby neighborhood, and specific times of congregational prayer for discernment. "Jeff helped me identify the steps that needed to be taken to see these initiatives through," said Visker.

Boersma, who has been a coach for seven years, describes coaching as a process guided by the Holy Spirit of coming alongside ministry leaders or teams to help discern God's call for their life, leadership, and ministry.

At McBain CRC, one of Rev. Jaclyn Guikema Busch's professional goals was evangelism. Through a coaching relationship, Busch was able to recognize current outreach opportunities in her everyday interactions.

"My coach and I prayed together that I would see and

seize opportunities. The next time we talked I told him of two opportunities to share the gospel that I had had in the previous month. One was at a coffee shop with a stranger. Another one was at a funeral, talking with a grandchild of the person who had died," said Busch. "Coaching helped me see through my problem to a solution. It has been wonderful to have a coach to vent my heart and focus my mind on solutions to problems in life and in ministry."

—Daina Kraai

**A truck delivers food to neighbors in Ferrysburg Community Church's parking lot.**





**Daniel C. Harlow**

president, and to avoid a lawsuit and negative publicity, the college cut a deal with John's lawyer."

Harlow said he understands the concerns with the substance of their articles and the administration's need to protect the college from negative publicity. "But now the truth of what happened has taken a backseat," he said. "At a Christian college, very concerned about its Reformed identity, its reputation as a truth-telling college has been damaged. Personnel matters can be kept confidential without stating falsehoods."

#### **Academic Freedom at Risk?**

That may not be the only part of Calvin's reputation at risk. Others are concerned that academic freedom at the school is suffering.

Both Harlow and Schneider have previously stated that before their articles were published, they followed proper and extensive vetting procedures within the college.

But after the articles were published, college president Gaylen Byker (who was on sabbatical while the articles were vetted) publicly stated at a faculty senate meeting that the two professors had violated the CRC's Form of



**John R. Schneider**

Subscription (which requires Calvin College faculty to teach and write in accordance with Reformed confessions.) That, according to Harlow and others, was a violation of due process at the college.

Harlow stated that he has received many expressions of concern about the deterioration of academic freedom at the school. "People outside the college, alumni, former students, academics, and ministers tell me 'we're worried that Calvin will be forced to become a conservative, fundamentalist, evangelical college where faculty won't have freedom to explore these sensitive issues.'"

Loren Haarsma, associate professor of physics and astronomy and co-author of the book *Origins*, said the question of academic freedom is larger than the college's administration, extending to the constituency and the church. Indeed, the issue of those articles by Harlow and Schneider came under discussion at Synod 2011, the annual leadership meeting of the Christian Reformed Church.

"Certainly the college and the constituency are comfortable with academic freedom where a profes-

sor can publish an article on a controversial topic, if that article examines multiple viewpoints, some of which are within our tradition and some of which aren't. Even if it is a challenging article, if it takes the tone of examining pros and cons of multiple views, that's okay," he said.

"But are the college and constituency comfortable with another kind of academic freedom in which a professor, in a scholarly article, does not examine multiple viewpoints but advocates for a minority view that pushes the church a bit?"

"This is not to say 'anything goes;' I mean a view which the professor believes is compatible with the core teachings of Reformed doctrines, but the professor knows this is a minority opinion and is pushing the majority to rethink its position. Do the church and the college want to support that kind of scholarship? There is a difference of opinion in the church and the college whether that kind of scholarship ought to be allowed, and some professors find that chilling."

Harlow is about to go on sabbatical until the end of January. When he returns, he won't be doing any of that exploring or writing on those sensitive issues.

"I will no longer be writing and publishing in this area," he said. "At this point in Calvin College's history, it cannot handle that and the CRC in its current climate cannot handle that. I cannot handle that. It's taken a heavy physical and emotional toll on me."

—Gayla R. Postma

#### **IN MEMORIAM**



**Rev. Jacob Hasper**

1920-2011


Rev. Jacob Hasper, 90, an eloquent preacher as loyal to friends and parishioners as he was to their Savior, and a church leader of thoughtful initiatives, passed away May 30 from natural causes.

After completing his studies at Calvin Theological Seminary in 1947, Hasper served Christian Reformed congregations in Michigan, New Jersey, and California.

Hasper will be remembered for his unflinching faith in his Savior, his patience, his gentle sense of humor, the joyful hope in his preaching, and the tenderness of heart with which he ministered to the needy and lonely.

In denominational circles he was respected for his grasp of Reformed theology, and he served on many denominational boards. He was one of the founding members of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.

Among his hobbies were woodworking, fishing, sailing, and gardening.

Hasper was preceded in death by his wife, Gladys, and by son-in-law Anton Fredrick Borst. He is survived by four children and their spouses, and by five grandchildren. 

—Louis M. Tamminga

# NEWS

## Preparing Students for Campus Life



HENRY LISE

At the end of last school year, Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Newmarket, Ontario, invited college-bound students and their parents to “Christianity on Campus,” to equip and inform students about faith and lifestyle challenges associated with campus life.

Ministry Associate Shiao Chong, campus pastor for York University in Toronto, spoke about

**Ministry Associate Shiao Chong talks to college-bound students.**

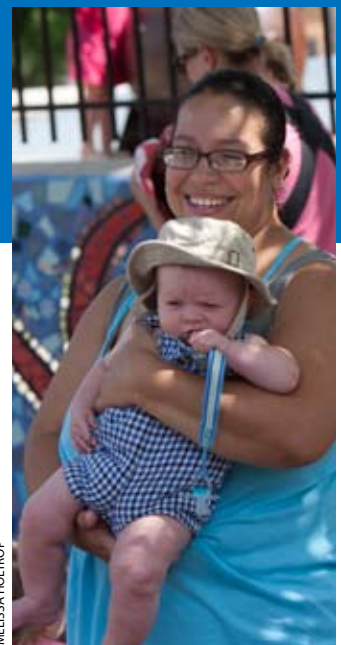
how students grow and how they can lose their faith. Afterward there was a time for questions and discussion.

Participants raised some tough questions, such as “How well are our youth ministry programs preparing our students for university and real life?”

Jason Postma, director of youth and family programs for Bethel, first thought of organizing an event like this when he began seeing statistics about how many students walk away from their faith upon arriving at university. He hopes to offer the event annually.

“We are facilitating a dialogue to bridge the gap between campus ministry and church youth programs,” he said.

—Monica de Regt



MELISSA HOLTROP

**Monique Moore holds a friend's son, Amos Moes, while attending Pullman at the Park.**

## Chicago Church Connects in the Park

It started with Rachel Heyboer, a stay-at-home mom, seeking fellowship and time outside of the home. Three years later, “Pullman at the Park” is a thriving weekly gathering of members from Pullman Christian Reformed Church in Chicago.

Each Wednesday morning from June through August, children, parents, grandparents, and other church members meet at a different local park. Since Pullman CRC draws members from near and far, the parks are intentionally selected in different communities.

“I have gained amazing relationships from some people in the church that I may not have normally interacted with,” said Heyboer. “It has been wonderful.”

Augustine Young has been attending Pullman at the Park since it started, sometimes with her grandchildren and sometimes alone.

“I try to come every week,” Young said. “I am a retired grandmother. I love the outdoors, and I like helping with the families and kids.”

—Melissa Holtrop

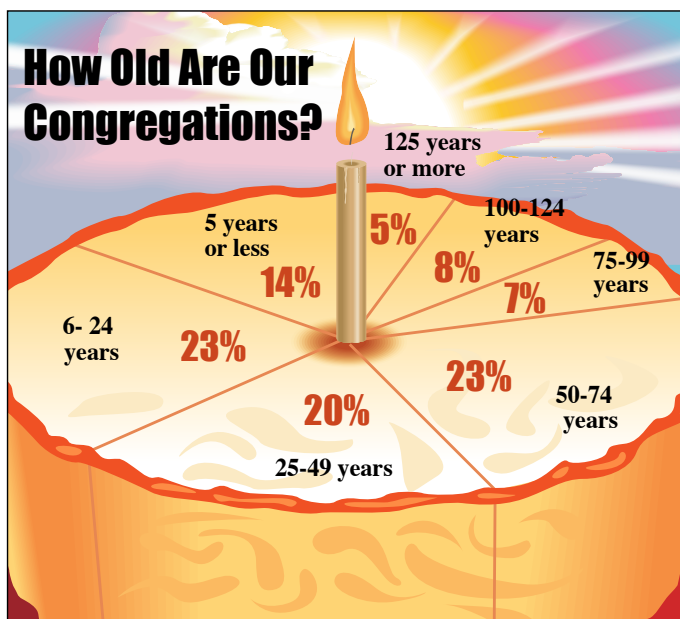
## Washington Church Celebrates 100 Years

Reminiscing and fellowship marked the weekend the people of First Christian Reformed Church in Everett, Wash., gathered to celebrate 100 years of God’s faithfulness.

Following a special Sunday worship service in which Rev. Jim Wiersum preached about God’s faithfulness, church members and friends gathered for a luncheon and a time of fellowship.

“As I have said on occasion, the church’s 100th anniversary is not just a celebration of what God has done, but a bold act of faith towards what God will do in the future. . . . I believe God has given us the task of being a Reformed witness in the midst of our community,” said Wiersum.

—Amy Toornstra



# What 'All Nations' Looks Like in the CRC

In a recent survey, 70 percent of the Christian Reformed Church in North America's 1,052 official congregations reported their ethnic make-up as primarily Anglo. Only 8 percent described their congregations as multiethnic. Yet the latter come closest to the vision of God's church set before us in Revelation 7:

*After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. . . .*

"We have been given the vision of Revelation 7 to aspire to. Our preparation should not be predicated on current church leadership or group percentages, but on obedience to God's Word," notes Rev. Esteban Lugo, director of Race Relations for the CRC since 2004. In addition, he points out that every church should be making efforts to become multiethnic because that is the future of the communities around us—if it isn't already the case now.

"As Reformed Christians, we have to believe that these demographic changes are a part of God's overall plan," Lugo said.

Lugo doesn't think the CRC is doing all that well in becoming more ethnically diverse. "When I review the *Yearbook* statistics, it does not appear to be all that favorable," he said. "From a denominational perspective, the results would show an increase over the past 20 years, but I think this has tapered off in the last five to six years or at least remained steady."

What will it take to change? Lugo would like to see more ethnic minority leaders selected to plant churches among ethnic minority people. And he would like to see more resources applied to the development of multiethnic leaders, including scholarships for those leaders to attend Calvin Theological Seminary.

Sociologist George Yancey, keynote speaker for the CRC's 2011 Multiethnic Conference, writes that becoming successfully multiethnic will be about survival and church growth. After receiving a Lilly grant to study successful multiethnic churches,

Yancey wrote *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Multiracial Churches*. In that book he observes that as our children and grandchildren increasingly experience ethnic integration in housing, education, and employment during the week, they will be less likely to accept a monocultural worship setting on Sundays.

Yancey lays out several principles he sees as necessary for successful multiethnic churches:

- Inclusive worship—worship that includes cultural elements of more than one ethnic group.
- Diverse leadership—leadership that reflects the racial diversity of church members.
- Intentionality—not just "allowing" a multiethnic atmosphere to develop, but taking deliberate steps to foster one.
- Personal skills—the abilities of a church leader to handle the needs and conflicts that arise when transitioning into a multiethnic environment.
- Location—multiracial churches tend to be grouped together in transitional areas of cities where whites move out and ethnic minorities move in.
- Adaptability—a readiness to adapt to new ethnic groups and cultures the church will encounter and to learn how to blend those cultures.

On the following pages you will find profiles of five Christian Reformed churches that have achieved some success in becoming multiethnic. They demonstrate that while such change is never easy, it's a worthwhile adventure.

—Gayla R. Postma



Rev. Esteban Lugo: "We have been given the vision of Revelation 7 to aspire to."



# NEWS

## Two Churches That Would Not Give Up

**G**randville Avenue Christian Reformed Church and Bethel CRC, both started by Dutch immigrants in southwest Grand Rapids, Mich., in the late 19th century, faced a choice when the demographics of their community shifted from 99 percent white to largely Hispanic and African American in the 1970s and '80s. Even though the white members who'd left the neighborhood com-



**Rev. Reggie Smith:**  
"People come when the leadership looks like them."

mutated back for Sunday services, it was obvious that death throes gripped the congregations.

So in a bold move, the churches decided to close both congregations, blend, and re-emerge as Roosevelt Park Community CRC, specifically to serve the altered neighborhood.

"We wanted to be intentional in welcoming and inclusive without being condescending or paternalistic," said Rev. Reginald Smith. "The first thing [we] did was

hire leaders who are not white. I was the first hire as pastor almost 17 years ago. People come when the leadership looks like them."

Former World Missions church planter Rev. Pablo Canche followed in 2004. About 22 percent of the congregation reflects the multiethnic neighborhood.

Worship changed from stately hymns and psalms to livelier music. Not all of the members liked this and other changes.

"We took about 10 years to get to our present worship state," Smith said. "I expect to be surprised every Sunday. I've experienced the gifts of songs, prayers, worship, and fellowship that show the Revelation vision of the church. We sing in English and Spanish. Christian hip-hop dancers bring an offering of praise to God. A Hispanic family gave testimonies in Spanish, while Pastor Pablo translated for them."

While many former members left, 16-year member Jack Sluiter, 64, an elder, stayed. "My wife and I felt it was the right thing to do," he said.

Attitudes were challenged, said elder Kelvin Jackson, 45, an African American who has attended Roosevelt Park for 14 years. "One of the most important changes is the language. It used to be 'us and them' or 'those people.' That's a hurtful phrase if you're on the outside."

Jackson believes God called him to be a bridge-builder. "It's not always comfortable. We're learning to trust each other," he said.

Smith said the makeover proved challenging. "We fought without giving up our principles to be biblical and theologically Reformed. We knew we would lose

people on the edges, but we held to maintaining our commitment to reimage ourselves as God's diverse people to glorify the triune God."

In door-to-door interviews, members found that their neighbors wanted English classes, to be self-sufficient, and for youths to be mentored into leadership. Roosevelt Park Ministries became the medium of delivery. The church also joined neighborhood organizations to foster home ownership and to form a library and arts center.

"Evangelism is a core value. Both churches died as a result of not intentionally trying to reach the new community. We will not take for granted that we can sit on our laurels and minister only to ourselves," Smith said. "We still need to intentionally evangelize our neighborhood. It's hard because the results are few.

"Our churches have not done evangelism well, especially in urban areas, because our history has been to build churches for church people. Our cities are now more brown and diverse, and our churches are caught in the thick of it," he said.

Rev. Smith advises other churches to be unrelenting: "Ask hard questions that push a church to die and rise and live an adventurous life with the untamed Jesus."

—Carolyn Koster Yost

## Spirit & Truth Fellowship: Where Diversity Is a Value

**T**he praise service begins even as the praise team starts to assemble: songs are sung in English and Spanish, and the pace picks up and the singing becomes more spirited.

The deacons—one African American, one Anglo, and one Hispanic—take up the offering.

Rev. Manny Ortiz preaches from Philippians on the transforming power of the gospel in difficult times. The service concludes with an invitation to come forward and pray. An Anglo woman kneels in front. An African American woman puts her arm around her, and together they pray.

This was a typical service on a nondescript corner of a lower socioeconomic neighborhood in north Philadelphia, Pa., where Spirit & Truth Fellowship Christian Reformed Church meets.

From its beginning in 1995, this church was intentionally multiethnic in a neighborhood that is approximately 55 percent Hispanic, 35 percent African American, and the remaining 10 percent Asian and Anglo.

Today both the membership and leadership of the congregation closely reflect the community's demographics.





Members of Spirit and Truth Fellowship CRC enjoy a picnic.



Check [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org) for the expanded story.

What makes this church succeed as a multiethnic congregation where others have not? The worship service is conducted in English but incorporates Spanish praise songs. For worshipers more comfortable speaking Spanish, there is a concurrent service in that language.

Some members, like Trina Wisecup, a farm girl who grew up in a homogeneous Anglo church, chose the church because of the diversity and “couldn’t go back.”

Jessica Owens, another member, lives in the community and gives this advice, “Do something awkward and out of place to learn

the culture.” Both Wisecup and Owens know Spanish.

Peter and Wendy Hileman moved into this community from the suburbs five years ago, motivated to serve. “Diversity is a value,” Peter Hileman states.

The church is often helped by interns from several Philadelphia

seminaries, some of whom have returned to plant more local churches—eight so far, with more to come.

Spirit & Truth’s senior pastor, Rev. Manuel Ortiz, has previous experience establishing multiethnic churches in Chicago. His message and that of his fellow leaders is to break out of your comfort group and don’t be afraid to make mistakes.

—Calvin Hulstein

## Take a Walk to the Nearest Wal-Mart

That’s the advice of Rev. Larry Fryling for those who want a demographic snapshot of their church’s neighborhood.

Fryling has been pastor of Christ’s Community Christian Reformed Church in Hayward, Calif., for the past 16 years.

The church began 50 years ago when a number of primarily white families from another Christian Reformed church moved into the area, started a church, and named it, predictably, Hayward CRC.

Over time, some members moved farther from the church, and others in the congregation wanted to focus on reaching their immediate neighborhood.

After that “trip to Wal-Mart,” Fryling suggests that churches “pray about how to reach” their neighbors and about “what stands in the way of [neighbors] coming to your church.”

The first thing this congregation did was to change their name from Hayward CRC to Christ’s Community CRC. They drastically changed their worship style to

appeal more to the general culture. The church then set a goal to look more like their neighborhood.

Members were encouraged to invite neighbors, and the leadership became “image conscious.”

“We were and are very conscious of the pictures that we put on the screen during worship and in things we hand out. Too many of the stock pictures were of white families living in areas very different from our urban situation,” said Fryling. “We also passed over certain educational materials and Sunday school curriculums due to their homogeneous pictures.”

The church has also worked hard to have their leadership reflect the ethnic make-up of the neighborhood. They started by ensuring that all members were aware of their spiritual gifts and how they were wired to serve. “As a result, our elders, deacons, and pastors are as diverse as our congregation,” said Fryling.

In 2008, the church merged with Living Faith Fellowship, a Filipino-American church planting ministry led by Ministry

Associate Fernando del Rosario. Del Rosario said his members did not have trouble adjusting because “there were other Filipino families and the congregation was of mixed cultures.”

Fryling acknowledges that challenges remain. It can be easier to build relationships [with those] of shared background, experiences, and ages, he said. Anything beyond Sunday’s worship takes extra effort.

Christ’s Community’s inclusiveness extends beyond ethnic boundaries. The church embraces people with physical and cognitive challenges, mental illness, and differing socioeconomic levels, religious histories, family structures, and educational backgrounds.

Today, the membership and leadership of Christ’s Community comes close to matching the demographics of the neighborhood: Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, and African American people.

However, warns del Rosario, “Unless a church, after authentic teaching and modeling by its leaders, is heart-willing to obey

God’s call, that church should not force itself to become diverse ethnically. Otherwise, the church’s desire to transform will not be authentic, [but may be] short-lived and may even cause race-related problems within the church, actually pushing ethnic people to group by themselves.”

—Heidi Wicker



Fernando del Rosario: “The church’s desire to transform [must be] authentic.”

## Close the Doors or Open Them Wider

**F**irst Christian Reformed Church of Vancouver, British Columbia, is a landmark on Victoria Street on the city's east side.

The modest white clapboard building is home to a congregation established in 1926 by an early wave of immigrants from the Netherlands. At that point the east side was already a diversely immigrant and transiently populated area of Vancouver. A post-World War II boom saw the church's population grow to more than 900 people by the mid-'60s.

In the mid-'80s, the city "cleaned up" its downtown core. People without homes moved to the east side. "This changed our church's neighborhood almost overnight," said Rev. Trevor Vanderveen, a pastor of First CRC. First CRC became a "commuter church" as its own members moved away.

In the late '90s the church reached a crossroads: to close their doors, or open them wider to something new.

Two new initiatives came out of this soul-searching: Community Night, which continues today, and a Chinese ministry. Although the Chinese ministry discontinued after a short time, some Asian participants became part of the church, helping the congregation realize that they needed to connect with their culturally diverse neighborhood if they wanted to become a relevant ministry again.

Phillip Le came to First CRC as a refugee from Vietnam in 1980. "We were the only non-Dutch couple," he recalls. They moved away for a time, but in 2003 the Les moved back to the city and rejoined First CRC.

By then the church's neighborhood was an urban cross-section of people from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. From homeowners and renters to long-time residents and new immigrants, the church's membership reflects the neighborhood demographics.

"The church has become very multicultural and has strong ethnic diversity. There are almost 20 different languages being spoken in our church today," Le observes.



**Ron Geerlings:**  
"There were people who weren't on board with the changes."

cultures incorporated into the worship service.

At bilingual Sunday-evening services, about half of the worshipers are Latino. The songs and the message are presented in both English and Spanish, and a dinner afterward continues integrating both language groups.

It wasn't always this way. When Rev. Gilbert Varela, a Costa Rican native, first came to preach, his family said they would never go back. "They looked at us from top to bottom," they told him.

But after the church's intentional moves to become more

"My highlight at First CRC was serving the past three years as deacon," he said.

"Almost every year, we have ethnic diversity on our council, in keeping with the demographics of our congregation," said Vanderveen. "This is a work in progress. It's a challenge to be truly multiethnic. We're not there as a church yet."

Trixie Ling represents a younger generation of new members. "I think it is very important to have diversity in the church because that is the reality today, and we need to engage both the younger and older population from different cultures to have that intergenerational and multicultural community in the church," she said.

—Jenny deGroot

## 'Reaching Out' Wasn't Changing Us

**F**ounded in 1875, Kelloggsville Christian Reformed Church in Kentwood, Mich., spent its first century as a traditional white suburban CRC, with a Christian school built on the same property and many members living close enough to walk to worship services.

But as it embarked on its second century, the congregation found its neighborhood changing into a diverse mix of cultures. So the church reached out with a sports club and other youth ministries to attract the neighbors.

"We moved into that stage, but it wasn't changing us as a congregation—at least, not how we worshiped on Sunday," explained Rev. Dan Ackerman, pastor of Kelloggsville.

The church began an intentional discussion on what it would take to become truly multiethnic.

"It took courage and very good leadership to put that in front of the congregation," said Sergio Cira-Reyes, a Kelloggsville member and Mexico native. "There's a huge amount of buy-in from the congregation."

After three months of prayerful consideration, Kelloggsville acted quickly. "[We] switched our Sunday nights that had been all Anglo to a bilingual event in less than 30 days," said Ackerman.

"There were people who weren't on board with the changes, and they felt more comfortable in another place," noted longtime member Ron Geerlings. "There was a sadness to see people leaving."

Today, a Sunday-morning worship service still draws mostly white worshipers, but attendees represent several different countries and occasionally see their

multiethnic, Varela returned. "I came to preach, and the welcoming was amazing. It looked like another church. My family felt so welcome—that was a 'wow' moment for us," he said. Varela is now pastor of teaching and diversity for Kelloggsville.

"In my perspective, there is a risk, and the church has been a risk-taker—willing to take the next step and ready to step out of their comfort zones," said Varela.

In the future, Ackerman wants to continue integrating diversity into more leadership positions and building stronger connections between the morning and evening worship services.

"It's a journey," advises Ackerman. "I think doing the right ministry for where you are at that time on the journey is very important."

—Ryan Struyk

# FAQs

## Church

**Q** When an edited version of the U.S. Constitution was read aloud at the opening of the 112th Congress, some referred to it as “our sacred text.” Such talk confers near-scriptural status on the document and furthers the belief that Americans are God’s chosen people. At what point does American nationalist zealotry become idolatry?

**A** Though some may emphasize the importance of the Constitution by using the word “sacred,” we know it is a humanly crafted and amended document. And saluting a flag or pledging allegiance to a country are legitimate aspects of good citizenship, something to which Scripture calls us when it encourages us to “be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good” (Titus 3:1; Rom. 13:1-7).

It is possible for nationalist zealotry to become idolatry. That was well-illustrated during the Vietnam War when one of the most popular bumper stickers in the U.S. proclaimed, “My Country—Right or Wrong.” Cartoons in daily newspapers showing a person wrapping the Bible in the American flag reminded us of the tendency of all nations to baptize their cause with the name of God and to proclaim “God is on our side.”

The Bible favorably presents people who disobeyed the governing authorities when

the instructions of those authorities were judged to be in conflict with their faith commitment (Ex. 2:1-3; Heb. 11: 23; Dan. 3 and 6; Acts 4:18-19). Our pledge of allegiance to our God and to God’s ways supersedes any pledge of allegiance that we make to the nation of which we are a part.

—George Vander Weit

*George Vander Weit is a retired pastor in the Christian Reformed Church.*

## Faith Formation

**Q** The discipling of teens in our church feels very haphazard. It seems that the catechism classes study new and “improved” materials every year. Some make profession of faith as children, some as teens, and quite a few don’t do it at all. Many go on mission trips, which get them all excited for a while, but the long-term fruit isn’t so clear. The fact that synod has just made it official that a formal profession of faith is not required for admission to the Lord’s Supper makes it all feel even more haphazard.

**A** When I was a CRC teen, it was very straightforward. We studied the Heidelberg Catechism every year from grades 7 through 12. During grade 12, my peer group and I made public profession of faith and began partaking in communion. My sense is that my experience was pretty much uniform throughout the denomination back then.

I know there are congregations where this “straightforwardness” still exists, but they are the exception. We are in a time of “discipleship transition,” and we’re searching as a denomination for ways to bring sturdy wisdom to this transitional period. I would suggest five things that might help.

## Our pledge of allegiance to God supersedes any other.

1. Accept the reality that transitional times are by necessity haphazard. We simply have to navigate our way through them as faithfully and prayerfully as we can. We can’t turn the clock back to “the good old days” (which—let’s be honest—weren’t better than today for most of us).
2. Don’t let the current “messiness” blind you to the blessings that are present within it. I meet teens who love the Lord and are eager to serve and to grow. I also meet teens who are struggling but are (more or less) honest about their struggles and looking for adults to walk with them. There are good blessings in both of these places. (For a primer on haphazard ministry, read the entire book of Acts in one sitting.)
3. Messiness tends to make us anxious while straightforward steps give us a (usually false) sense of security. When this happens, the real spiritual issue is not the messiness but our own anxiety.
4. Quite a few CRC classes are holding discussions about youth discipleship during a public evening session at which congregations share their joys and struggles and encourage each other. Has yours done this? Transitional times need much dialogue between congregations.
5. Have you checked out the resources at the denomination’s faith formation website, [crcna.org/faithformation](http://crcna.org/faithformation)? There’s good stuff there to chew on (and a lot more on the way soon).

Questions about profession of faith are bubbling up all over the denomination. I’ll write more about that in an upcoming issue.

—Syd Hielema

*Dr. Syd Hielema is a professor of religion and theology at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, and a member of the CRC’s Synodical Faith Formation Study Committee. ■*

BY ROBERT EVAN VANDEPOLDER



# Trick or Treat?

OUR HALLOWEEN DILEMMA

**I**N 21ST-CENTURY NORTH AMERICA, you don't need a calendar to tell what time of year it is—just look at the seasonal merchandise of any department store.

Equipment for cookouts or picnics indicates that summer is on its way; fireworks remind us that we're approaching Canada Day or Independence Day. When notebooks, pens and pencils, backpacks, and padlocks become widely available, we know another school year will soon begin. And before back-to-school season ends—sometimes even before it starts!—stores bring out costumes, candy, and ghosts galore.

Halloween has become one of the biggest holidays in North America, now rivaling Christmas in the amount of related merchandise.

We all know trick-or-treating: children dress as characters of their choice and go from house to house, receiving more candy than they get the entire rest of the year. Adults get in on the fun too, by tending their doors and proffering treats or by accompanying their children—sometimes in costume themselves. Homeowners decorate their houses and yards with jack-o-lanterns, spiderwebs, tombstones, and more.

The holiday seems to be a favorite of the mass entertainment industry as well. October is prime time for the release of horror movies. And since “haunted houses” have long been popular attractions, almost every theme park now hosts its own Halloween event, the ultimate probably being “Halloween Horror Nights” at Universal Studios in Orlando, Fla. These

productions offer you the opportunity to face your worst nightmares.

### What's It All About?

Like other cultural phenomena, Halloween comprises many features: pageantry, fall festival, confectionary feast, and a celebration of all things scary and/or supernatural. And, like everything else in contemporary culture, it presents a question to Christians: do we participate or do we not?

We do know some things about the history of Halloween, but not as much as we may think. The name is derived from "All Hallow's Eve," the night before All Saints' Day, or "Hallowmas" (Nov. 1), which is followed by All Souls' Day (Nov. 2) in Western Christianity.

The Roman Catholic Church declared that Christians were to intercede for the deceased in heaven on All Saints' Day and intercede for the deceased in purgatory on All Souls' Day. Popular belief held that the spirits of the dead returned on All Hallow's Eve. As with all superstitions, people performed actions in the hopes of pleasing, appeasing, or warding off those spirits.

## Isn't God's providence great enough to allow blessings to evolve from condemnable practices?

How trick-or-treating developed in this context is unclear, but it is believed to have derived from the practice of a town's poor begging for treats ("Soul Cakes") in exchange for prayers for the benefactors and their families. That practice combined with "mumming," the production of costumed pageants.

Of course, Hallowmas was preceded by pagan occasions, most notably the Celtic *Samhain*. As Nicholas Rogers says in his book *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night*, it is difficult to know what that festival was actually like, let alone whether it was a root onto which the church grafted Hallowmas.

In any case, we clearly see occult beliefs and practices in conjunction with Halloween. For those who celebrated it by praying to and for the dead, it lent itself to preserving superstitions about ghosts. As modernism progressed, those beliefs and practices acquired the allure of quaintness and/or excitement.

### A Little Like Christmas

How do we approach this complicated issue? I suggest that Halloween is, in some ways, similar to Christmas.

We all know that the Christmas season includes a plethora of worthy and unworthy pursuits. It seems beyond question that we should celebrate Jesus' birth, but the Bible gives us no command to do so. And we can never actually know whether the church's designation of Dec. 25 as the date for celebrating the birth of Christ (calculated using spurious conclusions) was motivated by a belief that was in keeping with the gospel or by the church's practice of retaining pagan traditions while giving them Christian meanings.

Many believe that the church's institution of Christmas was an attempt to appropriate the Roman festival of *Saturnalia*. Many groups performed certain rites that time of year in celebration of the winter solstice, and one of those traditions has

become almost essential to Christmas: the northern European *Tannenbaum*, or Christmas tree.

Some Christians, such as the Puritans, totally spurned Christmas. Today we still hear all kinds of complaints about Christmas. Most people would agree that many who affirm celebrating Christ's birth don't go beyond admiring the charming, whitewashed image of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus surrounded by livestock.

Even as we put up the tree, give gifts, and make merry with family and friends, we might all agree that the hassles associated with those customs are numerous. We recognize that many people go to unwarranted and destructive excesses.

Rather than a season for joy and celebration, Christmas can become a time of misery and frustration. Thoughtful Christians use discretion in selecting which practices to adopt and which to avoid.

I think we can take the same approach to Halloween.

Yes, there are aspects of Halloween that we should beware of and refrain from engaging in. We must avoid flirting with

the devil—using Halloween as an occasion for séances, for example. (Some folks consider Halloween the "Satanic New Year." Wiccans celebrate it as one of their most important holidays, but no doubt emphasize that what they do is radically and entirely different from trick-or-treating.)

Whether we're trick-or-treating, hanging mistletoe, or reading *Harry Potter*, we must understand how the pagan worldview differs from the one Scripture teaches us, and we must strive to bring all that we do in accordance with the latter.

Following Halloween customs does not necessarily involve following the pagan beliefs and practices those customs evolved from—just as many people can sing "Silent Night" at Christmas yet remain indifferent to whether Jesus truly lived. Likewise, I think that we can enjoy many of Halloween's exuberant activities while spurning the pagan practices associated with the holiday. Isn't God's providence great enough to allow blessings to evolve from condemnable practices?

I think Christians can affirm many things about Halloween. I have always enjoyed the costumes. They give us the chance to enjoy each other's creativity, imagination, and presentation. And let's not overlook the opportunity Halloween offers to practice Christian hospitality. Trick-or-treaters can be welcomed warmly. You can even purchase "Seed Corn" or other Halloween-related evangelistic products to pass out.

I have expressed some of my own views on the holiday. Ultimately, though, the decision whether to celebrate Halloween lies with you. ■



Robert Evan VandePolder is a member of Bradenton (Fla.) Christian Reformed Church.



Babu and his mother working on homework in 1995

## 20 Years of Freeing Families from Poverty

by Kristen deRoo VanderBerg

“I still remember Babu Ali standing with his mom the first time we met the family,” recalls Kohima Daring, staff member in Bangladesh for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC).

“He was so skinny and malnourished, I didn’t think he would live. Now he’s 23 and finishing his master’s degree in management in Jamalpur. God has really blessed that family.”

Twenty years ago, Babu’s family was one of four selected by CRWRC to represent its new Free A Family® program. The program gives North Americans an

alternative to traditional child sponsorship, offering a personal connection to a family in need without the high administrative cost of some child-sponsorship programs. It also provides CRWRC with needed funds for community-level programs in countries around the world.

“CRWRC started Free A Family to provide North Americans with the opportunity to change one family’s story of poverty into a story of realizing their God-given potential,” explains Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, director of CRWRC-Canada. “The reliable and stable support that Free A Family provides to CRWRC is vital for

making such long-term change happen.”

“CRWRC was aware of the attraction that traditional child-sponsorship programs offered,” she adds. “We wanted to provide something similar, while also staying true to our values of partnership and community.”

Rather than depicting individual children in isolation, CRWRC shows them as part of their families and communities. Wanting to be stewardly with donations, CRWRC developed the idea of having “representative families” from each region of the world where CRWRC works. This

“ He was so skinny and malnourished, I didn't think he would live. Now he's 23 and finishing his master's degree. ”

allows supporters a personal connection, yet directs as much money as possible toward community programs.

Twenty years later, the Free A Family program continues. Today more than \$1.1 million annually supports life-changing programs like those that helped Babu.

“Twenty years ago, we wrote to Free A Family supporters to tell them about Babu Ali's family,” said Daring. “Fatima Ali, Babu's mother, was a poor widow with two sons. CRWRC encouraged her to join a women's group in her community, where she received support and training in how to improve her life.

“Today she is still part of that primary group and meets with them each week. She owns a small plot of land and has a

tin-shed house with a separate kitchen and latrine. . . .

“Her oldest son, Feroz Jaman, is now 29 and is married with a 6-year-old daughter. He has a good job at a garment factory and makes 16,000 taka (\$200 USD) a month. His wife also works in the factory and makes about 8,000 taka (\$100 USD) a month.

“While Free A Family supporters heard the family's story for only four years in the early 1990s, their support continues to make a huge difference in this family's life for multiple generations.”

The Sidibe family in Mali is another success story. Like the Ali family, Umu and Habibu Sidibe's family was selected as a representative family for Free A Family in 1991.



Through small steps over the years, Fatima Ali has gradually improved her life. She is proud that her son, Babu, is going to school and that her 6-year-old granddaughter will have a better future.

Back then, as CRWRC staff met with the Sidibes, they told Free A Family supporters about Umu and Habibu being encouraged to vaccinate their children despite traditions that taught otherwise. They also reported on the low levels of formal education in the region and how the Sidibes were learning to read through CRWRC literacy programs.

“Today the family has moved into a new home and farms five hectares of land,” says CRWRC's Mary Crickmore. “This is in large part due to a Millennium Development program in the region that the community advocated for with CRWRC's assistance.”

Many other improvements can also be traced back to the work of CRWRC and its partners.

“The three youngest children, who were born after CRWRC's work began, have all survived, thanks to their getting vaccinations,” notes Crickmore. “Three of the older children are married and earning decent incomes.”



The Sidibe family

Hamady, the second-oldest surviving child, learned to read and write through CRWRC's literacy work. He has read many booklets and learned a lot from his reading. He has also set up a small shop in a town, where he uses his knowledge to run the business and makes a good profit.

"Another impact on the family from CRWRC's involvement is that the villagers got the equipment and training to maintain the pump on their well," Crickmore adds. "They also opened a bank account to save money for replacement parts to do regular maintenance. Because of that, this family has had a consistent, clean supply of water. They have the same kind of pump in the new village, and they will be able to maintain it in the same way."



Umu Sidibe is proud of her grandchildren, all of whom are healthy thanks to proper vaccinations and an improved quality of life.

In addition to the Sidibe and Ali families, Free A Family has followed the lives of 26 other representative families to date. Currently, CRWRC staff report on families from five regions: Asia, East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, and Latin America. They send updates about these families to supporters four times a year for three years, then select new families to report on.

Last year, 2,673 people supported Free A Family, donating more than \$1.1 mil-



Aissata Sidibe was an infant when Free A Family supporters heard about her. Today she is married and has a baby of her own. She will live with her mother for a few more years, according to the local custom, while her husband works to accumulate money to set up a new household.

lion. Through this program alone, CRWRC was able to work with 4,185 families.

"I am amazed and praising God," Darling said after hearing about the Ali family's progress over 20 years. "It is really encouraging to see the generosity of people in the church and also witness the impact of their support over time.

"I remember Fatima talking about her hopes and dreams for her children. They seemed so far off, but now she is realizing them. God has really blessed her. It is a privilege to be part of this ministry."

To learn more about Free A Family, see [freeafamily.org](http://freeafamily.org). ■

## "Free A Family" at a Glance

Launch date: October 1991

Current number of supporters: 2,673

Current recommended donation: \$22/month or \$264/year (USD)—enough to help one family participate in CRWRC programs

Current number of families helped each month through Free A Family support: 4,185

Current Representative Families:

- Yang Taeng family (Cambodia)
- Wanjiku family (Kenya)
- Phiri family (Zambia)
- Bah family (Mali)
- Perez Sontay family (Guatemala)

What supporters receive:

- A "Meet the Family" information card to hang on their fridge or bulletin board
- Quarterly letters from a CRWRC staff member with photos and updates about the representative family
- Prayer requests about specific needs in the region

Special campaign:

- This fall, CRWRC is asking Free A Family supporters to send in a postcard from their hometown with a short personal greeting. These postcards will be shared with the representative families and their communities during the Christmas season. ■



Kristen deRoo VanderBerg is communications project manager with CRWRC.



# Kindergarten Lunch Program Boosts Learning

When it comes to learning, knowledge is best absorbed on a full stomach.

That's what Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) staff in Cambodia observed recently. So they incorporated lunch into their community-run kindergarten program, and the results have been tremendous.

The kindergarten program started last year through a partnership between CRWRC-Cambodia and the Mission Alliance of Norway. The Mission Alliance wanted to help children and selected Cambodia, a country where nearly one-third of the population lives below the poverty line and more than one-fourth of adults are illiterate.

The Cambodian communities in which CRWRC works have government-run primary and secondary schools, but nothing for preschoolers and kindergartners. As it partnered with the existing schools, CRWRC saw the need to get children learning at an earlier age.

"Parents were quick to express their desire that their children have a good start on their education," said Rick deGraaf, CRWRC-Cambodia country consultant. "A pleasant and positive kindergarten experience is a key element to lifelong learning."

With Mission Alliance support, CRWRC worked with villages to build nine kindergarten buildings. Community councils contributed land on which to build the schools. They also suggested community members who could be trained to become teachers.

Once the schools were completed in December 2010, the school year began with about 25 students in each school. Parents and other members of the community contribute to the teachers' salaries

and also toward improving the playgrounds and building fences for security.

"As classes started, the kindergarten teachers noted that a significant number of children had a difficult time concentrating and participating in learning activities that are part of the curriculum we offer," deGraaf reported.

"What we discovered was that some of the children came to school without breakfast, and others arrived having eaten only a very light breakfast. We also noticed that some would snack on foods of very little nutritional value."

Based on those observations, CRWRC studied the nutrition situation more closely.

"We decided that we should provide a nutritious meal to children while they are at school; that way we would know they were getting the nutrition they need," said deGraaf.

"But we didn't want to just give a handout to one child in a family. It's important to us that families learn about the importance of good nutrition and also be able to provide it to their children themselves.

"Since many children are under the care of grandmothers while their parents work, we connected with these grandmothers and taught them to make a healthy stew that we could feed to the children at least twice a week."

The Parent Teacher Association of each school collected eggs, chicken, and vegetables from families in the community.

These were cooked with a little rice and some flavoring.

After just two weeks, the kindergarten teachers noticed a marked improvement in students' energy levels and class participation.

"I had the privilege of being at a kindergarten on one of the days when the meal supplement was served," deGraaf said. "When I arrived, the children wanted to be sure that I got some stew too. So I took a small helping and ate with them. I have to admit, it did taste pretty good."

CRWRC originally worried that the lunch program might discontinue once



Kindergarten students enjoy a tasty stew of eggs, chicken, and vegetables donated by families in their community.

CRWRC stopped supporting it, but it now appears likely that the program will continue.

"Now that the community has tasted this success, I doubt they would abandon the project," deGraaf said. "In fact, we are running into challenges of the opposite nature: parents from surrounding communities now want their children to attend as well." ■

—Kristen deRoo VanderBerg

## ‘Whatever You Did . . .’

**T**he Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. That’s quite a heady title, isn’t it? World Relief! It’s not so much the word *relief* that gives me pause; it’s that we dare claim to bring relief to the world! Really? *World* relief?

Take a look at the world to which we attempt to bring relief. It’s broken. It’s hurting. It’s sick. It’s at war.

It’s wounded by one disaster after another. Its population is big and growing bigger—dangerously bigger, some would say.

Zero in for a moment on one specific area in the world currently in need of relief: Eastern Africa. It’s not the only place that needs relief, but right now it’s among the most critical. Crops have failed. Water is in short supply. Livestock have no food. Inflation is staggering. Conflict rages. Refugee camps overflow. The worst drought in 60 years has dramatically affected 10 million people.

Beginning in August, CRWRC intensified its relief efforts there, aiming to reach 18,300 households (about 135,000 people) by the end of this year. The cost of the program response will be nearly \$9 million, with about 90 percent of that coming through CRWRC’s partnerships. Still, it’s a huge undertaking for a small group like us.

And from one point of view, our efforts are a tiny, almost unnoticeable attack on a seemingly invincible enemy. What difference does helping 135,000 people make when 10 million are at risk? What good is it to bring “relief” to 1 percent of those facing hunger and possibly starvation? My answer: it’s 135,000 more than would be helped otherwise!

You have no doubt read Jesus’ parable about the sheep and the goats. One of the truly amazing things about it is that those who helped did not realize they were helping Jesus. Feeding the hungry, befriending the lonely, clothing the naked, visiting the unnoticed and unknown did not alter the whole world, but

it made an impact and was noticed and appreciated by the Lord of the world. His response to each was: “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Matt. 25:40).

The goal is not to feed all the hungry or befriend all the lonely or clothe all the naked or visit all the imprisoned, but to minister to one at a time. Service to “one of the least of these” is service to me, Jesus says.

And he says that today to us about Eastern Africa. A relatively small gift from any one of us can minister to far more than one person. And that gift can minister to Jesus!

I am thankful for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee and for the countless ways God has blessed it by giving hands and feet to my gifts. CRWRC not only encourages me but allows me to minister to people I could never reach and to go where I could never go and to do what I could never do alone.

It asks me, “If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?” (1 John 3:17). And then it says, “Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth” (v. 18).

The disappointment we may feel over not being able to bring relief—or, better yet, long-term development—to the *whole* world ought not make us despair about bringing *any* relief to the world. The cost to us of a decent meal out will feed a family in Eastern Africa for a month.

Mother Teresa once said, “If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.” I am thankful that God uses the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee to make that possible. The more of us who are similarly grateful, the more the world will receive some relief. ■



“If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.”

—Mother Teresa



Rev. Joel Boot is interim executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

## From Kaila with Love

**K**aila suffered a chronic illness that hindered her quality of life. She lives in a remote northern India village where sickness, economic instability, and treatment by witch doctors are common.

Kaila and several other villagers began listening to “Premey Kanne” (“With Love”), a radio program produced by Good Books Ministries in partnership with Back to God Ministries International and Words of Hope, the media ministry of the Reformed Church in America.

Kaila was initially attracted to the program because of its practical health segments. But it also offered biblical teaching and spiritual refreshment. As Kaila listened, she heard about Jesus for the first time. She continued to listen and



Through BTGMI outreach, Kaila heard about Jesus for the first time.

made the decision to commit her life to the Lord and to serve him.

Kaila also prayed about her illness and believes that God miraculously healed her. She now enjoys good health and fearlessly shares God’s gracious love with others.

Kaila’s family does not yet share her faith, but she meets regularly with other listeners in her village who trust in Christ. Together they bring their problems to God and encourage one another to live a Christ-centered life amid their culture’s varying religious practices.

Not long ago, one of the producers of “Premey Kanne” traveled to Kaila’s village to meet with the group of listeners. “Kaila is a strong witness for the Lord among her people,” he reported. “Pray for her and all these dear friends.” ■

—Nancy Vander Meer,  
Back to God Ministries International

## Chronicling Umm el-Jimal

**N**ow it’s an old stone ruin, but it was once the largest and most elaborate of the 150 stone homes built in the Byzantine era in Umm el-Jimal. Calvin College history professor Bert de Vries will travel to Jordan in January to review the site, known officially as House XVIII.

“This is original vernacular architecture that survived in these cultures,” de Vries said. “It’s part of the architectural heritage of the land.”

Funded by an Ambassador Fund for Cultural Preservation grant from the U.S. State Department, de Vries will work to preserve House XVIII. The founder of Calvin’s archaeology minor has been investigating Umm el-Jimal for more than 40 years.

“House XVIII is a representative example of the other 150 houses and how the people lived back then,” he said.

De Vries wants to establish the house as a viable archaeological site by making it both safe and attractive for the general public.

In January, de Vries and students who sign on for his interim class “Field Work

in Archaeology” will tackle the initial planning phase. Working from a rented headquarters, the class will document the building and provide a detailed work plan for its physical preservation.

During phase two, staff from the Jordan Department of Antiquities (which is providing matching funds) and elsewhere will stabilize walls and clear space for walking around the house.

In the project’s final stage, de Vries and his team will publish their docu-

mentation and a visitor’s guide to House XVIII.

Open Hand Studios, which specializes in cultural heritage preservation, will create virtual imaging of House XVIII. Founded by Calvin alums Paul Christians (’03) and Jeff DeKock (’01), who took de Vries’ archaeology class, the organization is also helping de Vries create a virtual museum. ■

—Myrna Anderson,  
Calvin College Communications

The ruins in Umm el-Jimal



## Inaugural Theme Is “Called to Serve,” and You’re Invited!

**O**n Saturday, Oct. 15, at 10:30 a.m., Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) will host a celebration of God’s faithfulness through the inauguration service of Rev. Jul Medenblik as the seventh president of CTS.

The theme of the inaugural is “Called to Serve,” and the event will be held at the Calvin College Covenant Fine Arts Center, with a reception following. To RSVP or get more information, call 1-800-388-6034 or visit [calvinseminary.edu](http://calvinseminary.edu).

Prior to the inaugural, the seminary will host its Bavinck Conference with the focus “After 9-11 . . . What? Reformed Theology and the Church’s Global Mission Today.”

The conference runs from Oct. 12 to 14. On the evening of the 14th, the Bavinck Prize will be awarded to Jan Peter Balkenende, prime minister of the Netherlands from 2002 to 2010.

The Bavinck Prize is for “Outstanding Reformed Contributions to the Church, the Academy or Public Life.” For more

information, please see the Bavinck Institute website ([bavinck.calvinseminary.edu](http://bavinck.calvinseminary.edu)) or the Calvin Seminary website.

Even as Calvin Seminary celebrates its heritage, it is making plans to welcome the first group of students for its online Master of Divinity degree beginning in the fall of 2012. This new program will help CTS reach students who are unable to move to Grand Rapids, Mich., to be trained as pastors and leaders. ■

—*Calvin Theological Seminary Communications*

## Big Birthday for Worship Resource

**F**or 25 years, *Reformed Worship* (RW) has provided valuable tools for pastors and worship planners in the Reformed tradition. Published by Faith Alive Christian Resources, the quarterly journal offers sample worship services and other resources, most of them contributed by readers.

The June 2011 RW celebrated the journal’s 25th anniversary and 100th issue with a major redesign, including the incorporation of full-color printing for the first time. It also reflected on RW’s past and looked to its future.

“It is a delicate balance to offer 25 years of worship resources and articles that support the worship of God without encouraging idolatry of the innovative, the newest. . .,” Rev. Joyce Borger, the editor, writes.

At the same time, Borger says, RW couldn’t exist without contributions from many churches that submit worship resource materials.

In the anniversary issue, Rev. John Witvliet, director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, writes a reflection on Psalm 73 and how it reminds him of what he appreciates about RW.

The psalm, he writes, helps connect and put him in conversation with people who “realize that by the Spirit’s power worship is formative, not merely expressive; it changes our perspectives, shapes our desires, corrects our vision.”

The 100th issue is available in print and, along with previous ones, online at [reformedworship.org](http://reformedworship.org). Consider subscribing today to receive the latest content and access to copyrighted print music and visual resources. ■

—*Chris Meehan, CRC Communications*

## Pastor Peer Groups Rescued

**A** veteran CRC pastor has high praise for the Christian Reformed Board of Trustees’ decision to continue important parts of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program. The SPE program faces the end of its \$3 million Lilly Endowment grant in December.

One element continuing will be pastor peer groups.

“As part of a pastor peer group for quite a few years, I saw personal benefit as well as encouragement for younger pastors. I’m totally in agreement with the decision to continue this program,” says the pastor.

The CRC’s budget for 2011-12 includes funds for peer groups, for conferences for spouses of pastors, and for pastor-spouse learning events. The denomination was awarded \$2 million in 2002 and \$1 million in 2007.

Proposals for peer learning groups for pastors will continue to be accepted by Nov. 1 and May 1. You can find more information on the SPE website: [crcna.org/pages/spe.cfm](http://crcna.org/pages/spe.cfm).

“What we learned . . . is just how necessary and needed SPE is in fostering excellence in ministry in the majority of our pastors and many of our pastors’ spouses,” says an SPE report sent earlier this year to the Lilly Endowment.

The SPE program has become more flexible over time and learned what types of approaches for peer groups work best.

“I believe that SPE is one of the best programs the CRC has designed in years, perhaps decades. Meeting with my peers has been invaluable,” says another pastor. ■

—*Chris Meehan, CRC Communications*



Members of a pastor peer group

## Restarting a New Life

Located in California's Napa Valley, Valley Community Church considered shutting its doors. The congregation's membership had dwindled.

But then a turnaround began in 2009, when Valley Community elder David Buurma met Rev. Ron Vanderwell, who planted a Sacramento-area church in 2000 with support from Christian Reformed Home Missions.

Vanderwell sensed that God wanted the two to work together. The men and their spouses prayed about this and eventually moved ahead, deciding the church needed a restart.

After hearing the idea, the 40 members of the church prayed and considered the proposal, then unanimously decided to close for a time and restart.

Over the next nine months, members met in homes, prayed, planned, and strategized. The process proved difficult. Many did not have the energy to continue, and membership dropped to nine people.

The church returned to its building on Easter 2010, but the struggles remained. Two more people left. Discouragement set in. Was God still calling them to this?

After praying for a month, the Valley Community congregation was convinced God wanted this restart. Within a month of recommitting, the congregation received grants from the denomination and classis (regional group of churches).

"We started with nine people and now average about 25 to 30 on a typical Sunday morning," says Buurma. "We continue to see new people almost every Sunday, which is very exciting."

The church offers one daytime and one evening Bible study, a chronic pain support group, a "20-Somethings" group, and a community garden.



David Buurma and his wife, Laurie, who helped restart Valley Community CRC

Home Missions, its West Coast Regional Team, and Classis Central California are partners in this rebirth.

Buurma attended the Sierra Leadership Development Network, a local Home Missions-funded and mentor-driven church-based leadership program. He became an ordained ministry associate and was installed as Valley Community's bi-vocational pastor.

In February, Buurma and his wife, Laurie, attended the Fresh Start training event, a joint effort of Home Missions and the Reformed Church in America Church Multiplication and Revitalization Team.

"This church is a miracle," says Buurma, "but if we really want to see God work in a huge way, we need people to pray for this ministry." ■

—Laura Posthumus,  
Christian Reformed Home Missions  
Communications

## Nigerian Church Official Thanks CRC

The Christian Reformed Church in North America has today "become a big tree providing enduring shades of salvation and love" for the Reformed Church in Nigeria (RCCN), says Rev. Risae Yakubu Shamaki, president of the RCCN.

The CRC began working in Nigeria during the early years of the 20th century. That work continues, although different from the early years.

Shamaki says CRC agencies have helped to build and sustain his 100,000-member denomination by, among other things, supporting the Veenstra Reformed Theological Seminary and granting scholarships to RCCN students at the Reformed Theological Seminary, Mkar, and the Theological College of Northern Nigeria.

The CRC has been involved in many other efforts as well, such as funding evangelism outreaches and supporting the welfare and training of widows, orphans, and vulnerable children.

"It's the RCCN's prayer that the CRC will remain a vital vessel in God's hands to bring his light to those in darkness, restoration to the lapsed, peace and joy to the groaning world," Shamaki said in an address to Synod 2011. Synod is the CRC's annual leadership meeting. ■ —Chris Meehan, CRC Communications



Rev. Risae Yakubu Shamaki, president of the Reformed Church in Nigeria

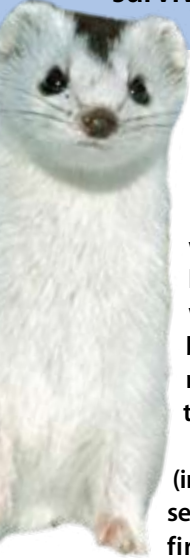
# What to Do with Woolly Bears

Did you ever wonder how some animals make it through the winter? What happens to caterpillars and frogs? How do deer survive without a parka?

In North America in the fall, animals start getting ready for winter. Of course, none of them know what they're doing or why. They can't think like humans can, but God gave them instincts so

they know what to do. Those instincts are a spectacular show of God's care for his creatures.

Want to see the show? Read these pages for hints.



## Survival Tail

The fur of some weasels turns snowy white for winter. They're camouflaged while they're hunting . . . or being hunted. But while their whole body is white, the very tip of their tail is black. Why? The black tip really shows up against the white snow.

That's the whole (inspired) idea. The weasel's predators notice the tail-tip first and pounce on that. Usually the weasel can slip away unharmed.

If you live in a place where there are weasels, you're lucky. You can help them by giving them some shelter in a brush pile or even a crawl space under a shed. Next spring you can watch their coat change back to brown.



## Great Goose Bumps

When you're cold, you get goose bumps. But did you know that deer get goose bumps too? When it starts getting cold outside, deer grow an extra layer of hair under their outer coat. It's like instant winter underwear!

Each hair is filled with air. That's good insulation, like a down blanket. Each hair is also attached to a tiny muscle. When the deer becomes chilly, those muscles contract, making goosebumps and raising the hairs. All those hairs standing on end can trap air between them. That's more insulation, like adding another blanket.

You'll probably never see deer goosebumps. But you can look for their thicker, duller coats when they put on their winter underwear.



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY



## Frogsicles

One of the biggest winter mysteries is “What happens to all the frogs?” Some frogs, like the wood frog, actually freeze like frogsicles. In the fall, it eats things that put a lot of sugar into its blood. Then when the weather turns cold its body freezes from the outside in.

Its skin will freeze solid. If you pick the frog up, it will feel like an ice cube. Drop it and it will “clink.” But its blood and vital organs are so sugary that they’re frozen mushy instead of solid, just like a popsicle.

In the winter, look for tiny frogs under dead leaves. But don’t try to keep them in your freezer. Being frozen outside is much better for these little creatures.



## Supercool Ladybugs

Some kinds of ladybugs try to come into your house to stay warm in the fall. Other kinds gather in huge red groups. Chemicals in their bodies “call” to each other when they find good gathering spots. Some people say that they crowd together to share body heat. But they have no body heat to share—they’re cold-blooded.

Yet they don’t freeze in winter—they “supercool.” That means they get rid of all extra liquids that could freeze inside their bodies. Then, like the woolly bear, they make a freeze-resistant chemical.

Temperatures can drop to 5 degrees Fahrenheit (-15 Celsius) or even -31 degrees F (-35 C) for a while and they won’t freeze. And that keeps them alive! So why do they gather together? They don’t know. We don’t know. Only their Creator knows.

Did you know that you can keep ladybugs over the winter? Visit [naturescontrol.com/ladybugs.html](http://naturescontrol.com/ladybugs.html) for instructions.



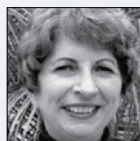
## Hungry Hornets

This fall, have you seen a lot of wasps and hornets? Maybe they’re hanging around your garbage pail or picnic table, or finding rotten fruit beneath your apple tree. Hungry hornets and wasps are a sure sign of fall.

All summer they’ve been out hunting bugs and feeding bug burgers to their young. But now they’ve stopped raising young, so they’ve got time to hang around and snack on rotten fruit.

But they’re not going to last much longer. Most of them will die with the first frost, except the queens. Like the woolly bears and ladybugs, they’ve made antifreeze inside their bodies. They’ll crawl under bark and logs for the winter. Next spring, they’ll start new colonies.

If you want to look for abandoned wasp nests, wait until your area has had a hard frost. Then visit [tinyurl.com/hornetnests](http://tinyurl.com/hornetnests) for instructions.



Joanne De Jonge is a member of West Valley Christian Fellowship in Arizona and a former teacher and National Park Service ranger.

## Winterized Woolly Bears

Seen any woolly bears lately? They’re those fuzzy black and orange caterpillars you’ll find creeping down sidewalks or across your yard in the fall. Some people say that you can tell how hard the winter will be by the amount of black on a woolly bear’s coat. That’s nonsense. Caterpillars don’t even know winter’s coming.

But they are “winterizing” themselves (getting ready for winter) right now. Each fat little caterpillar tanks up on just the right food. Eventually it will become a moth. But first it has to live through the winter. So it makes its own antifreeze! The woolly bear’s body makes chemicals that protect it from the cold.

If you look under a cozy rock or some bark, you might find a woolly bear curled up and snoozing away the winter, half frozen. Next spring it will uncurl and get on with its life.

Did you know you can keep woolly bears over the winter? Visit [tinyurl.com/woollybears](http://tinyurl.com/woollybears) for instructions in the section called “Rearing and Collecting Tiger Moths.”



BY SHIAO CHONG WEB Q'S

# Growing Your Faith on a Secular Campus





**I**'S TRUE. Some young Christians *do* lose their faith while in college or university. We've heard the stories and statistics. But higher education is not inherently hostile to Christianity. With proper support, even secular campuses can be powerful fields for growing faith. I know firsthand. I suffered my own faith crisis as an undergraduate student at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. Today I'm a campus minister.

### Death by a Thousand Cuts?

Yes, some professors are hostile to the Christian faith, but they are a minority. Most professors, even those who are atheists, are not overtly anti-Christian. Most operate with tolerance, even respectful tolerance, of religion. It's just that they run their classrooms under the assumption that religion doesn't matter.

Religion often gets ignored rather than attacked. The intellectual environment on most secular campuses is not explicitly anti-Christian; rather, it's based on an unbiblical worldview. That worldview creates assumptions, ideas, and practices about life, society, values, truth, and justice that at points prove incompatible with a biblical worldview. The resulting friction—in thought and deed—*indirectly* undermines a student's faith.

My experience both as a former undergrad and graduate student and as a campus minister on secular campuses suggests that most young Christians do not lose their faith through any single, fatal intellectual attack. Rather, their faith bleeds to death from a thousand cuts.

I suffered a major depression during my undergraduate years, partially brought on by a faith crisis. The accumulation of a hundred minor nagging issues caused the crisis, but it wasn't only intellectual questions that cut at my faith.

I now recognize four major sources of cuts to a young Christian's faith on a secular campus:

**1. Loss of Christian Community.** Many young Christians leave home, church, and Christian friends when they move to a secular campus. Losing our faith community means losing a major source of encouragement, accountability, support, spiritual nourishment, and joy. These are cuts from omission.

**2. Poor Lifestyle Choices.** By this I do not mean only the usual suspects of sex, drugs, and alcohol, which can lead a young Christian into an ungodly and self-damaging lifestyle. I also mean greed and materialism. Some students focus so much on getting the right grades for the right degree for the right job for the right money, they neglect considering how to use their gifts and learning for God's kingdom. They leave so little space for God, they never fully recover.

**3. Christian Offenses.** By this I mean past and present offenses by other Christians. When Christians commit atrocities in the name of Jesus (the Crusades, for example), or even when they do something stupid or disrespectful (burn the Qur'an, say, or predict the rapture), these are cuts to a

young Christian's faith. They are sources of embarrassment that only add fuel to any anti-Christian rhetoric and further support the "best-leave-religion-out" environment on campus. These are also sources of doubt: "Why would a gospel of grace and love produce such hateful and judgmental practices and acts?" Young people could very well conclude that it isn't a gospel of grace in the first place. For many youths, actions speak louder than words.

**4. Insufficient Intellectual Framework.** Young people are curious. They have tons of questions and want to learn for themselves why and what they should believe. But often they have never been given a safe environment for asking honest, deep questions. Whenever they ask tough questions, they are either given cliché answers, dismissed and ignored, or silenced for not having enough faith! Often this leads to a rather limited or narrow intellectual framework that supports their Christian faith. And the questions they have prior to college not only resurface with a vengeance in college, but many, many new ones emerge. Eventually, an insufficient intellectual framework can crumble under the weight of all these questions.

## Secular higher education is not inherently hostile to faith.

### Growth Factors

So how do young people heal from the many cuts to their faith?

Just as there is no one fatal blow to faith, there is no one magic formula to help you grow in faith either. But I can name four major sources, or supports, that a young Christian needs on a secular campus in order to grow in faith:

**1. A Christian Community.** College students, especially those away from home, need to find a new Christian community, either on campus or in a local church—preferably both. This community should, ideally, allow young people to voice their tough questions without judgment. Providing thoughtful answers will help, but answers are not an absolute necessity. Exploring, journeying, and dialoguing together can do more than simply lecturing or preaching to young people.

Finding a new Christian community is never easy. A student's original community can help by suggesting churches or campus ministries. It's intimidating and also time-consuming for college students to find a new Christian community. Churches need to be intentionally hospitable and student-friendly in order to ease college students into their communities. Invite students to your homes. Give them free meals. Allow them to ask questions, even if you don't have the answers. Allow them to serve in the church—to play music or lead worship—if they »

# In most cases, their faith starts to bleed to death even before they enter college.

so wish. Make it as easy as possible for them to feel at home and to belong.

**2. Personal Integrity.** Of course, college students still need to make the choice to seek out a Christian community. This is where personal integrity comes into play. Students, you need to learn to make choices based on who you are, to be internally and not externally motivated. You need to remember and know that you are a child of God and, therefore, choose to behave out of that reality. You need to have integrity to make your spiritual walk a priority, to practice the disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, worship, and service. The foundation for such personal integrity is laid in the family home; it cannot grow overnight in the midst of a busy college schedule. Parents need to help their children develop this personal integrity long before they set foot on campus.

**3. A Holistic Christian Worldview.** In order to choose wisely and to discern between competing ideas, we need a biblically informed worldview that is wholistic, equipping us with a sufficient intellectual framework to engage all our questions. This worldview does not need to have all the answers, but it must provide a sufficient framework that can help us either find the answers or carry the questions without causing our faith to break. Such a worldview needs to be learned and caught from within a Christian community that embodies it.

**4. A Wise Christian Mentor.** An important way to learn and clarify a Christian worldview is to have a wise Christian mentor. A good mentor is someone who can help you think for yourself, give you good resources, model a healthy faith, and allow you to express doubts and ask questions—even if he/she does not have all the answers. Mentors can be campus ministers or chaplains, Christian professors, pastors, or any mature Christian. College students, you may find it helpful to have a mentor who understands college life and the kinds of questions you will face in the academic setting.

Finding a good mentor is not easy. It can be just as intimidating as finding a new Christian community. But student-friendly churches or on-campus Christian groups make mentoring part of their ministry. In addition, campus ministers or chaplains are often available as mentors. And if you listen and watch carefully, you might be able to find a Christian professor, even one in your area of study.

Yes, finding a mentor takes work and time, but I can't emphasize its importance enough. Every Christian needs a mentor at some point in his or her life.

Again, the home church can help. I read once about a church that gives each of its college-bound youths a Starbucks gift card with the condition they use it to take out a potential mentor

for coffee and conversation. Creative ideas like that encourage and empower college students to find mentors. Churches can also make suggestions and referrals. They can match high school youths with mature Christian members. And when the youths enter university, those mentors can, at least, continue to contact them and provide spiritual support.

## Before You Reach Campus

With these supports in place, Christian students can grow, even flourish, in their spiritual life on secular campuses. I had a good mentor and a good on-campus community. It was through a Christian Reformed campus ministry that I learned the Reformed Christian worldview that helped me recover, along with relational support, from my depression and faith crisis. In many ways, I owe my faith life to the Christian Reformed Church, which was also a major factor in my becoming a campus minister.

Not every Christian student has such a happy ending to his or her college years. Many feel alone and isolated, confused and disillusioned, hurt and guilt-ridden. Not all the sources of their frustrations occur on campus. In most cases, their faith starts bleeding to death even before they enter college.

Church communities that do not allow youths to doubt and question, that do not take them seriously, or that exclude or hurt them can be far more fatal to a young person's faith than any secular campus.

But faith flourishing also begins before students reach campus. An inclusive, safe, and honest community that invites questions and explorations, that encourages youths to serve, that provides mentoring relationships, that teaches the Christian faith and the biblical worldview best equips young people to face the challenges of not only a secular campus but a secular world. Indeed, they can even flourish and grow. ■

## Recommended Reading

- *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving Together Belief & Behavior During the University Years* by Steven Garber (IVP, 1996)
- *Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning and Living* by Cornelius Plantinga Jr. (Eerdmans, 2002)
- *The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness* by Donald Opitz and Derek Melleby (Brazos, 2007)



Shiao Chong is a Christian Reformed chaplain for York University, Mississauga, Ontario, and director of Leadership, Culture & Christianity, a student club at YU.

## Antidote to Chaos

**MARTIN LUTHER WAS EXCOMMUNICATED** by Pope Leo X three years after he posted his 95 theses on a church door and subsequently showed no remorse for doing so. When he received the papal bull, Luther burned it in a huge bonfire ritual. But few people are aware that he burned something else along with it: the entire *Codex Iuris Canonici*, the four volumes of canon law or “church order” of the medieval Roman Catholic Church.

In a newfound freedom those restrictive rules had to be thrown out the front door. The irony is that some of the same old rules had to be smuggled back in through the back door in order to combat disorder and anarchy in the now-Protestant churches.

There was no escaping that. The church is the body of Christ, a creation of the Holy Spirit, but it is also a human institution. And human organizations of whatever kind require order. As John Calvin said, without some well-chosen laws churches are soon deformed, not reformed. Canon law may have been too restrictive, a case of too much human invention instead of clear divine imperative. But do away with it altogether, and the challenge is then to find a new order that flows from God’s Word and is fitting for Christ’s church on earth.

Calvin led the way in this search. He decided to frame a renewed constitution for his Genevan church, one that has served as a model for Reformed churches ever since. He insisted on a minimum of laws that were clearly drawn from the Scriptures and manifestly based on biblical principle. So, for example, the order he left for us features officebearers who are more than mere functionaries in congregational life: they are Christ-representatives called to provide leadership to God’s people (apostolicity). Calvin’s order features local churches accountable to one another in broader assemblies (catholicity); it features church discipline exercised to maintain the purity of the church (holiness); and it features provisions for experiencing oneness in Christ, within the denomination and also with the broader church (unity). In the CRC’s Church Order we confess one holy catholic and apostolic church.

What mattered most to Calvin was that the laws and structures of church government would edify the body. The purpose of each and every article is to enhance the ministry of Christ’s church. If any article proves a hindrance to that ministry,

Biblically based  
**church order** keeps  
us from repeating  
history’s mistakes.

damming the flowing rivers of the Spirit at work, then it must be revised or abolished.

Without articles of church order as banks along the way, the waters of ministry flow chaotically. As Paul told the Corinthians, having no order at all is not an option—not in worship and not in the broader life of Christ’s church. Biblically based church order keeps us from repeating history’s mistakes, prevents us from being overwhelmed by controversies that paralyze us, and actually enhances the mission we’re on.

For 25 years I’ve listened carefully as people divulged the pickles they’ve gotten themselves into—situations that suddenly overshadowed their unity in mission, their love and enthusiasm for Christ’s cause, and the sacred trust they once had in each other. If I’d received a thousand dollars for each conversation, I’d be retiring with a multi-million-dollar nest egg. Many of those developments were perfectly avoidable. Even a casual acquaintance with church order might readily have provided the way to keep their pilgrimage alive and thriving.

In short, well-founded church order allows Christ truly to be “the only head of the church” and “the only universal bishop” of our souls (Belgic Confession, Article 31). ■ **WEB Q’S**



Rev. Henry De Moor is professor of church polity emeritus for Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich. He is author of the *Christian Reformed Church Order Commentary* (Faith Alive, 2011), which interprets the CRC’s Church Order and offers practical advice on how to apply it.

## Putting a Face on the Facts



Mark Volkers and Dordt student Pete Hessels (seated) of St. Catharines, Ontario, film a family living under a bridge in Manila.

**IN MY EXPERIENCE**, reading statistics about poverty has a unique effect on people. It creates a slight rise in blood pressure as people read about “1 billion living in slums,” but then the effect dissipates as the enormity of that number—1 billion—seeps in. “I don’t know any of those people. It’s just a statistic, just a number,” we seem to tell ourselves.

Wrapping our brains around some of the huge issues of the day is a struggle, especially when those issues are given to us in print. But what if we stripped away the glaze of statistics and got more visceral, more real, more personal?

That’s what some of my students and I have tried to do in making *The Fourth World*, a documentary produced by Prairie Grass Productions of Dordt College. We filmed individual slum dwellers in Guatemala City, Manila, Nairobi, Mumbai, and Managua to help tell the stories of the “1 billion” people we sometimes hear about.

People who live in slums have names, dreams, aspirations, and personalities.

In Manila we spent a week with a family who lives under a bridge near a garbage dump. They are José and Elvie Alquino, and their oldest daughter, Jovelyn, wants to be a nurse. In Nairobi, we filmed Felix, a 16-year-old boy who works eight hours a day for 17.5 cents an hour. In Guatemala City, Tanya begs at a busy intersection. Her story forever changed the film crew’s attitude towards beggars.

It’s almost impossible for filmmakers—students or not—to come away from such experiences without being deeply moved. People who live in slums have names, dreams, aspirations, and personalities—just like we do. Working with Christian organizations in the areas where we filmed, we were able to zero in on *individuals*, not statistics.

Paraphrasing Chaim Potok, “the universal is made known in the specific.” Documentaries can do an excellent job of telling specific stories to help us understand the macro-story. ■



Mark Volkers is the digital media production instructor at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. *The Fourth World* is in post-production. For more information, go to [slumdoc.com](http://slumdoc.com) or visit the “Slum Documentary Film Project” Facebook page.

## THE LOWDOWN

More documentaries that will open your eyes.



**Born into Brothels:** A photographer gives cameras to children of brothel workers to help them document their lives and express themselves. (Think Film)



**Reparando:** Ministry in “La Limonada,” an enormous slum in Guatemala City, brings healing to people who had given up hope. (Athentikos)



**Emmanuel’s Gift:** A young man in Ghana with a deformed leg bikes around

the country to help raise awareness and build relationships in a culture that ostracizes those with disabilities. (First Look Pictures)



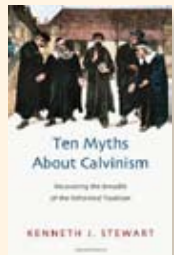
**Waste Land:** An artist leads an art project using materials salvaged from a

landfill in Brazil. See a fuller review at [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org). (New Video Group)

## Ten Myths About Calvinism

by **Kenneth J. Stewart**

reviewed by **Steven VanZanen**



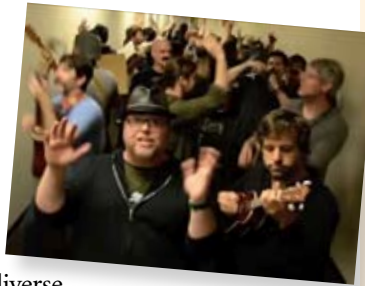
Many Calvinists were surprised to read in *Time* magazine that “The New Calvinism” was one of the “10 Ideas

Changing the World Right Now” back in 2009. Of course, defining Calvinism can be tricky. Kenneth Stewart (a theologian at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Tenn.) provides a fine addition to that debate with *Ten Myths About Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition*. The subtitle clearly communicates Stewart’s goal. Both advocates and detractors of Calvinism have often shrunk it down to a few easily explained or criticized points. The reality is much bigger and much more interesting. Thoroughly researched and accessible, this book has much to teach even lifers in the Reformed tradition. (InterVarsity)

## MercyMe’s Cover Tune Grab Bag

reviewed by **Ron VandenBurg**

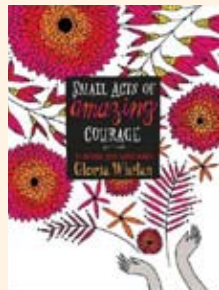
Since their debut in 2001, Grammy-nominated group MercyMe has been a regular presence on Christian radio, garnering huge hits like “I Can Only Imagine.” Now with *Cover Tune Grab Bag*, this group shares their love of life and diverse music with a series of short YouTube videos available at [mercyme.org/tag/cover-tune-grab-bag](http://mercyme.org/tag/cover-tune-grab-bag). Join in the fun and share MercyMe’s cover versions of “Thriller,” “Dead or Alive,” or “Footloose.” My favorite is their cover of The Beatles’ tune “Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da” featuring Jars of Clay, Thousand Foot Krutch, The Afters, and more.



## Small Acts of Amazing Courage

by **Gloria Whelan**

reviewed by **Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**



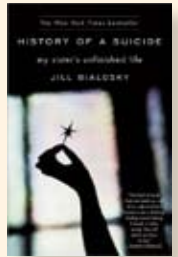
In 1919 India, 15-year-old Rosalind, who is British, learns about Gandhi and India’s desire for independence from Britain. Several small courageous acts land Rosalind in trouble with her father. He sends her to England, where she has never been before, to live with her two aunts. While there, Rosalind encounters injustice of another kind. Again, her courageous acts lead to life-changing consequences for her and others. This juvenile novel realistically portrays a strong, ethical protagonist engaged in the cultures of both India and Britain during a crucial stage in their history. Ages 9-12. (Simon & Schuster)

## History of a Suicide

by **Jill Bialosky**

reviewed by **Wayne Brouwer**

Jill Bialosky’s sister Kim took her own life at age 21, shattering meaning for family and friends. Kim was the product of a hopeful second marriage (after Bialosky’s father, the cornerstone of her mother’s existence, died young and suddenly), the darling of her sisters, and someone who seemed to have reserves of resilience to match her extended gifts and passions. In the vacuum of loss, Bialosky’s great grief needed answers. None satisfy, yet good grace is found in hitchhiking on her restless quest. (Atria)



## Alone in the Classroom

by **Elizabeth Hay**

reviewed by **Jim Romahn**

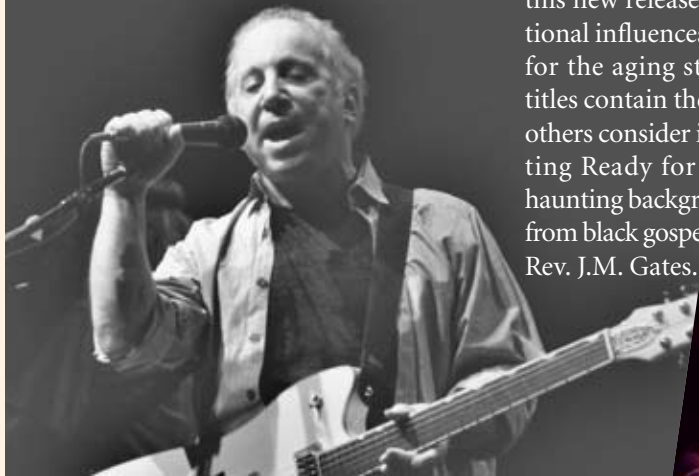
Elizabeth Hay, winner of the Giller Prize for her first novel, *Late Nights on Air*, is an even better writer in this novel about a young teacher in the 1930s on the bald prairie of Saskatchewan. Connie Flood is intrigued by her principal, Parley Burns, but suspects he may have raped a student. Hay unfolds a matrix of relationships with a poetic mastery of sentence structures and language; it’s a great novel. (McClelland & Stewart)



## So Beautiful or So What

by **Paul Simon**

reviewed by **Robert N. Hosack**



At almost 70 years of age, the iconic Paul Simon returns with *So Beautiful or So What*. Reminiscent of his world music classic *Graceland*, this new release is once again full of international influences. A dominant theme emerges for the aging storyteller. Three of the song titles contain the word “love” and most of the others consider its many manifestations. “Getting Ready for Christmas Day” includes a haunting background sample—a 1941 sermon from black gospel singer and Christian preacher Rev. J.M. Gates. (Hear Music)



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

BY MARIE SINCLAIR AND NELLY SINCLAIR



# Living with Mental Illness

**T**HESE ARE MY THOUGHTS. I find no satisfaction in life. All it does to me is take and take till it sucks the joy out of everything.

I have no motivation. I sit in math class and I listen—and I don't. What I'm really doing is waiting. I don't know why, because as soon as I'm done waiting for this to finish, I'll be waiting for social studies or lunch or break or for the weekend to be done or to see Dave.

It's hard not to ask, "What's the point?" I'm like a hamster on a wheel. I keep running forward, hoping for something new, but all I'm doing is going in circles.

I've kinda given up on listening. I have no energy. And then that little voice wakes up and pounds in my head and all my thoughts go rushing through, bouncing from side to side in my brain. The anxiety awakens, stretches its fingers into cooler, lighter thoughts, darkening them with poison till all I know is doubt and fear: *I'm better than this, look what everyone else can do, you can control these thoughts, stop feeling sorry for yourself, you're not trying hard enough, you have no future, look at everybody you keep hurting, look at all those mistakes you make, you know better, you don't deserve forgiveness, look at all those pretty girls, her hair is always perfect, why can't I do that to my hair, you are ugly, you are different, you are worthless, you are selfish, damaged, pathetic, crazy, confused . . .*

My thoughts spin out of control; my anger at myself, at life, at God grows and grows, swelling inside my chest.

The anger is easier than the empty, numbing desperate hole that forms under my ribs. Anger—powerful, hot, furious,

exploding anger—I can understand. It's familiar, it's dangerous, but it's common.

Emptiness is different. It's scary. It's lonely. It's freakishly quiet. It creates desperate feelings that cause desperate actions. It turns colors gray and my food bland. Satisfaction disappears, and I am left traveling a watercolor in which all the paints have dripped down and mixed together.

I panic, grasping for things that used to make me happy, people who made me smile. I draw a beautiful picture, watch a good movie, take a long bath. Nothing works. I am let down, unsettled, unhappy. I draw closer to my family, desperately seeking an arm around me, protection, someone to just hold me and take care of me. I want to lie back and never move because when I walk I feel like I'm wading through water.

My body aches, my heart breaks, my head hurts. Sharp objects catch my eye. I find myself thinking about all the ways I could hurt myself. The morbid thoughts are always running through my mind, yet I know I never could . . . it would be easy for me . . . but the people around me . . . I am trapped.

I am always plotting, always dangerously close to death. Death is my ultimate fear, haunting my dreams, poking its head into my thoughts. I am merely an idiot on a conveyer belt, slowly headed toward my own destruction. So why not tease it a little? When life is hell and death is hell, what do I have? My twisted logic says that gives me the right to get as many sh-ts and giggles from it as I can.

Whatever that takes.

But something about it still isn't right. . . . »

### Stories of Grace and Truth

Our stories matter to us and to one another. The Mental Health Task Force of Disability Concerns is initiating a story project called "Stories of Grace and Truth."

This Christian Reformed Church ministry wishes to collect stories from people who have mental illnesses and from people who support them: How has the hard-hitting truth of mental illness impacted you or your family? What are the challenges, the struggles, in your life from day to day? Where have you experienced moments of grace or difficulty in your faith journey? With each author's permission, these stories might be used in print and online to build greater understanding about mental illness.

The goal of the Mental Health Task Force is to promote safe dialogue about mental health within the body of Christ. The task force comprises therapists, parents, and chaplains from both Canada and the United States, including resource consultants for Faith and Hope Ministries of Classis Quinte. We invite you to share your story with us. Please send it to [stories@crcna.org](mailto:stories@crcna.org) or to Disability Concerns, Attn: Stories, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560.

Stories will be kept private until released by the author. When necessary, authors may request anonymity.

It's hard not to ask, "What's the point?"

**T**HREE YEARS AGO my eldest daughter began exhibiting some strange symptoms and behaviors.

It began with unexplainable stomach pains and descended from there to extreme depression and anger.

Our journey into mental illness began officially the day we received a call from the Christian school, informing us that our daughter had handed out a suicide note. She had managed to disrupt and disturb her entire class, and the school asked us to pick her up.

We took her straight to the child and adolescent mental health unit of our local hospital. By this time in our journey, we had already experienced cutting and other self-harm, running off in the middle of the night, threats, and violence directed toward us and our belongings. She had also attempted to jump out of the car as we were driving at highway speeds. Things were truly out of our control.

Over the next two years our daughter spent, on average, five months of each year in the child and adolescent psych unit: the first year in Lethbridge, Alberta, and the second year in Calgary, since the hospital in Lethbridge had reached the end of its resources.

During this time our daughter's behavior escalated to more severe cutting, running away for up to five days at a time, and a complete breakdown in school. My reaction was to work harder and harder to control her illness and get my daughter back. I researched, read, studied, and drilled numerous doctors and social workers to learn about her illness, which is bipolar affective disorder, formerly known as manic depression. I pushed every professional I came into contact with in order to get the best care for my child.

All of that was for naught. Even when things were "better" (my daughter wasn't

running off), other painful signs of mental illness were fully present. Because of the dual nature of bipolar, we fluctuated from anger and dangerous behaviors to depression and suicidal behaviors. It was hard to decide which was worse. The help we received from the hospitals and professionals was at first quite questionable: my daughter was clearly overmedicated and couldn't think straight at all; and she suffered greatly from numerous side effects: a debilitating and demoralizing skin condition, as well as digestive problems so severe that she needed surgery.

### After two years of living this nightmare, I began to fall apart.

After two years of living this nightmare, I began to fall apart. I felt I was losing the battle for my daughter and the rest of my family and myself. My life was like the *Titanic*: slowly sinking. I struggled with depression and no longer had any perspective. I lost hope.

It was at this point that God reached into my life and rescued me. He led me to a 12-step program that required me to spend 30 minutes of quiet time in God's presence every day, no matter what. God taught me that he is God and I am not—and that it is not my job to determine how things turn out. That is God's job. God taught me that all he requires of me is 1 percent of effort: full obedience to his will. The other 99 percent of success is trusting in God to work things out.

This is where I now sit. My daughter's last hospitalization ended Jan. 21. She is

presently the most stable that she has been since our journey began. But we are not done. Bipolar is not curable and can only be managed. It is a cyclical illness, which means we can count on it to return again and again.

When I say my daughter is doing well, I mean that she is physically and psychologically safe. But with the severity of her illness, that can and will change as the seasons pass and life throws its stressors at her. Doing well also means that she is not pregnant, not running away from home, not doing drugs. We have lowered our expectations for her and released her into God's hands. For the time being God has chosen to allow our family a season of peace, but I know that every good day is a day to give thanks for, because we never know what the next day will bring. The only thing we can count on is God's providence.

I used to think of God's providence as something that took over only after my extreme hard work—and only if I deserved it. But now I know that God is in control and loves and provides even when my hard work leads to no effective good at all. I am learning to look to God for instructions about my 1 percent and to leave the other 99 percent in God's very capable hands. ■



**Marie Sinclair** attended Immanuel Christian High School in Lethbridge, Alberta. She presently works at Tim Hortons.



**Nelly Sinclair** is a pastor's wife, a CRWM missions mobilizer, a violinist, and a mother of three teenagers and a college student.

She is a member of the Mental Health Task Force of Disability Concerns.



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## Denominational and Classical Announcements

### Candidates for the Ministry

**QUALIFYING PERSONS** who wish to be candidates in 2012 for ordained CRC ministry should request application procedures by December 15, 2011. For further information, please email Karlene Werner at [kaw5@calvinseminary.edu](mailto:kaw5@calvinseminary.edu) or write her at Calvin Theological Seminary, 3233 Burton Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

## Congregational Announcements

### Call Accepted

**CORNERSTONE CRC, CHILLIWACK, BC** is pleased to announce that Rev. Bill Veenstra has accepted our call to become our Lead Pastor. Praise God from whom all blessings flow. We also would like to acknowledge all those who expressed an interest in the position. Thank you all. Council and Search Committee of Cornerstone CRC.

### Church's 50th Anniversary

**CALVARY CRC OF EDINA, MN** will celebrate 50 years of God's faithfulness on October 9, 2011 with a day long celebration including a church service led by Pastor John Bylsma, catered lunch with program and a Festival of Music directed by Pastor Randy Engle at our former site in Bloomington. All friends and former members are encouraged to attend and RSVP. For more information visit [www.calvarycrc.net](http://www.calvarycrc.net) or call the church office at 952-831-6264.

**FLEETWOOD CRC** of Surrey, BC, formerly Surrey CRC, is celebrating their 50th anniversary, November 5-6, 2011. Former members and friends are invited to attend. Information available at [www.fleetwoodcrc.org](http://www.fleetwoodcrc.org)

**HANLEY CRC** of Grandville, MI is celebrating 50 years of God's faithfulness on October 23 & 30, 2011. We invite all friends and former members to join us. Visit [hanleycrc.org](http://hanleycrc.org) for more information.

### Church's 25th Anniversary

**FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH**, in Milford, NS, will be celebrating 25 years of God's faithfulness. Sunday, October 2nd, we invite friends and former members to gather with us at a potluck supper to be held at 4:30pm. Supper will be followed by a time of musical entertainment and an evening service.

### General

**CHANGE IN TIME OF WORSHIP** The morning service of the Pine Grove Community Chr. Ref. Church of Pinellas Park FL, has been changed to 9:15 AM.

## Announcements

### 60th Anniversary

**60TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION** On October 4, Rev. Leonard J. Hofman will observe the 60th anniversary of his ordination to minis-

try in the Christian Reformed Church. Rev. Hofman served five congregations as pastor and then the entire denomination as General Secretary. His four children, 11 grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter thank God for his lifelong service to the Lord and the church.

### Retirement

**RETIREMENT: REV. NORMAN STEEN** Washington, DC CRC would like to announce the retirement of Pastor Norman B. Steen after nearly 12 years of faithful service to our congregation and 35 years of ministry service to the Christian Reformed Church. Our congregation will be hosting a celebration dinner for the Steens on November 6, 2011. For more information, contact [transition@dccc.org](mailto:transition@dccc.org).

**REV. RONALD D. DE YOUNG**, pastor of the Oakland Christian Reformed Church, Hamilton, MI is retiring, concluding 40 years of ministry. Friends and members from Pastor Ron's previous charges are invited to join our congregation for a special farewell worship service of praise and thanksgiving, on October 30, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. Thank you Pastor Ron and Elaine, for your many years of faithful service.

### General

**GLOBAL OUTREACH CONFERENCE** Christian Reformed World Missions is sponsoring a GO Conference at Elmhurst CRC in Elmhurst, IL on November 19, 2011. Anyone interested in global outreach is invited. Visit [www.crwmm.org/goelmhurst](http://www.crwmm.org/goelmhurst) for more information.

## Birthdays

### 100th Birthday



**SALLY KOENES (SPRIENSMA)** 2121 Raybrook SE, #247, Grand Rapids, MI 49546, will celebrate Her 100th Birthday On Nov 7, 2011. Children: Clarence (Deceased), Henry And Ina Kramer, Mike And Micky, Art And Brenda. 12 Grandchildren, 32 Great-Grandchildren And 5 Great-Great Grandchildren. We thank God for her many years. Open House On Saturday Nov 5, from 2-4 pm In the Friendship Room at Raybrook Manor, 2121 Raybrook SE.

### 95th Birthday



**BERDELLA (VANDER MEULEN) De Boer** will celebrate her 95th birthday on Oct 31, 2011. Her 7 children, 22 grandchildren and 62 great-grandchildren celebrate her life. We thank God for her Christian example and ongoing prayers for each of us. You can greet her at 605 E 4th St, Hills, MN 56138

**ADRIANA JOHANNA DEKKER** (Tiemersma), of 3460 Saratoga Ave, Unit 141, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515-5737, will celebrate 95 years on God's earth, nearly 47 with Dad. You kept six homes through Roseland, Oak Forest, Orland Park and Downers Grove. You are "Ada" or "Mrs. Dekker" to faithful pastors and friends in Orland Park CRC and to staff at the homes where you nursed for 40-plus years and where now you contentedly abide. You are "Auntie Ada" to nieces and nephews whose lives you brighten with feisty love. You are "Ma" to Marilyn & Peter Roeters, Betsy & Henry Kluck and James & Rose Dekker; "Grandma" to Beth & Robert Medema, Daniel & Maria Roeters, Erika Dekker & Tim Postuma, Anna Dekker & Jason Grootenboer; Jessica

Dekker & Elizabeth Lucas; "Great Dekker" to Stephanie and Emilia Medema, Angelina Roeters, Lucas, Ella and Caleb Postuma, Adele Grootenboer. Ma: You worry about "losin' it," but in God's Grace you're a beloved winner. What a lady of God. Thank you and to God for you.

### 90th Birthday

**LES BEIMERS**, 2105 Raybrook #3059, GR, MI 49546 celebrates his 90th birthday Oct.7. His family wishes him God's blessings. Happy birthday, Dad. We love you!

**MORRIS DRIESENKA**, will celebrate his 90th birthday on Oct.25. There will be an open house from 1-4 pm at Holland Heights CRC on Sat. Oct.29. His wife and children invite his many friends to join in honoring him on that day.

**LOUISE DYK**, 6151 Shadyrest St. #17, Manhattan, MI 59741 celebrated her 90th Birthday on Oct.9. We thank the Lord for the blessing she has been to all of us, from her 3 children and spouse, 2 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren.

**MARIE RILLEMA** will celebrate her 90th year of blessings on October 26 at 1950 Bauer Rd., Jenison MI 49428. Happy Birthday - We thank God for you! Love from your children Glenn & Robin, Gail & Paul, 7 grandchildren & 14 great-grandchildren!

**STEPHENA (DEWIT) VANDER WERFF** will be celebrating her 90th birthday with a card shower on October 31, 2011. She is a member of the Sanborn Christian Reformed Church. Her address is: Christian Retirement Home, 1414 Elm Court, #205, Sheldon, IA 51201

**WESLEY W. PONTIER** 2105 Raybrook SE, Apt 1033, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 celebrates his 90th birthday Oct 4. Love from children Roy, Nan & George Dykstra, grandchildren Jordan & Allison, Sara, great-grandson Kaiden.

### 80th Birthday

**OKKE BOUMA** (45 Kingknoll Dr., Peace Tower # 503, Brampton, Ontario, L6Y 5P2) will celebrate his 80th birthday on Nov 13th. His wife Nita, their 4 children & spouses, 13 grandchildren (3 spouses) and 5 great-grandchildren are thankful to God for His continued blessing and faithfulness. To God be the Glory.

## Anniversaries

### 70th Anniversary



**VERHOEVEN** Hank and Lorraine (Brouwer) of 9909 Belfair St in Bellflower, CA will celebrate their anniversary at home on September 10, with their children (5), grandchildren (10) and great grandchildren (5). To God be the glory!

### 65th Anniversary

**DEBOER** Richard and Edith of Royal Park Place, Zeeland, MI (formerly from Chicago) celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on August 30. Children: Richard and Janice, Jack and Jennifer, four grandchildren, two great-grand children. We rejoice and praise the Lord for His faithfulness!

**MUSCH** Jack & Grace, 725 Baldwin #2065, Jenison, MI 49428 will celebrate 65 years of marriage on September 28. Their children Laura & Doug Aldrink, Tom & Jill Musch, Ruth & Tim Dillon, Dave & Jan Musch,

10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren thank God for their devotion to each other and their family.

**PAUL** Matthew & Wilma of 1015 Heather Circle #4, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273. The Lord willing, we will celebrate our 65th wedding anniversary together on Oct 2. We are thankful to the Lord for his blessings of a lifetime together and good health.

**VAN NOORD** Henry & Ada, 456 W. Central Zeeland MI 49464 will celebrate their 65th anniversary on October 16. Their children Alan and Dr. Collene VanNoord, Phyllis and Mark DeHaan, Carl VanNoord and Trish Kavaluskis and 4 grandchildren give thanks to God for His faithfulness.

#### 60th Anniversary

**KNOL** Gerald & Hilda, along with their children & grandchildren, are grateful for 60 years of marriage October 17. 2500 Breton Woods Dr. SE Apt 1031, Grand Rapids, MI 49512.

**MULDER** Carl & Milly, Sept. 4, Orange City, IA. Your family and friends are grateful for your constant faithfulness to each other and God through life's challenges and joys. Thank you for your example of graceful living.

**VAN REKEN** Stanley & Harriet (Essenberg) of 2931 Acorn Rd, Bloomfield, MI 48302 are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary on Sept 28, Children: Hope, Calvin H and Randall S and 7 grandchildren. Thanks be to God for many blessings. 248-253-7133.

**VISBEEN** Al and Janet of 1313 Old Lake Ct., S. E. Grand Rapids, MI 49546 will celebrate 60 years on Oct. 3 Children: Bob & Cheryl La Fleur, Glenn & Yvonne Visbeen, David & Cynthia Visbeen, Wayne & Marcia Visbeen, Jonathan and Lisa Lehmann, 16 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. Thank God for his love and faithfulness.

**WIGBOLDY** Richard & Betty (Teunissen) 507 Briar Hill St., Nampa, ID 83607 celebrated their 60 years of marriage on July 26th. We thank God for His love and faithfulness to our parents - Rose Vander Schaaf (Nampa, ID), Carl & Lori Leep (Beaverton, OR), Rick & Sharon Wigboldy (Nampa, ID), Jeff & Judy VanGroningen (Ripon, CA) & Bill & Sue Pastoor (Caldwell, ID), 19 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren!

#### 50th Anniversary

**KAMP** Ron & Donna (Van Dellen) Cascade, MI will celebrate their 50th anniversary Nov 3. Their children Lori & Ed Davis (Ben & Nate McLeskey), Debi Kamp (Nick), Dan & Lauren Kamp (Ashley, Katie & Austin) will host an Open House @ Cascade Fellowship CRC, 6655 Cascade Rd SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 on Nov 5, 2-4 pm.



**KLEIN** Alvin & Lois (Adema) 1337 E Erie St Gilbert, AZ 85295 will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct 6. Children: Pam & Don Hoekstra, Alleen & Kevin DeBoer, Lisa & Jonathan Gross, Lori & Chris Huisken, Jeff & Lyndi Klein and 18 grandchildren.

**VANDER TUIN** Happy Anniversary Bob and Alice Vander Tuin (9/29)! Thanks for blessing us with your love and commitment to God and to each other. Love, your kids and grandkids.

**VENHOUSEN** Andy and Sharon (Stob), 1307 S Luther, Lombard, IL 60148 will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on October 27. Their daughter Patricia and son-in-law Al Tobin, along with their children Alyssa & (Billy) Ridder, David, Brooke, Kaitlyn, Daniel & Benjamin are thankful for their love and the Christian example they have been to all of us. We Love you.

**ZOETEWY** Jim & Sharon (Broersma), Bellflower, CA, celebrated 50 years of marriage on August 30. Children: Jim (deceased); David & Yvonne (Derek & Tessa); Mike & Sharon (Eli).

## Obituaries

**BLAAUW** Antoinette (Tien) age 92 of Holland, MI, went to be with her Lord on August 16, 2011. Her husband, Donald, preceded her in death in 2001. She will be missed by her children Kenni Blaauw, Pat and Rog Becksvoort, grandchildren Bob and Jen Becksvoort, Tim and Michelle Becksvoort, and Dave and Kathryn Becksvoort, great-

grandchildren, in-laws, and many nieces and nephews. We thank God for giving us a wonderful Christian Mother.



**DECKINGA** John A. "Dub" Deckinga, Sr., age 74, went to be with his Lord on August 25th 2011. Beloved husband for 54 years to Marilyn, nee Bulthuis. Loving father of Gary (Wendy), Denise DeWitt, and John Jr. (Mary Pat). Cherished grandfather of Brandyn (Emily), Skyler, Jantzen, and

Mykela Deckinga; Kelly and Katie DeWitt; George, Kevin, and Spencer Deckinga. Dear brother of Jennie (late Clarence) Laning, Tracy (late Peter) Herlein, Ida (Ray) Boss, Arthur (Lorraine), Derk (Jan), Peter (Yvonne), Marilyn (Bill) VanHowe, the late Clause "Bud" (late Alice) and the late Hank (Dena). Dearest uncle of many nieces and nephews.

**GREIDANUS** Jessie (Mellema) widow of Emil Greidanus, passed away at the age of 99 on August 12, 2011, in Visalia CA (formerly from Delavan, WI). She is survived by her six children, Mr. Jacob (Lillian) Greidanus of Delavan, WI; Dr. Ted (Donna) Greidanus of Visalia, CA; Mr. August (Linda) Greidanus of Schaumburg, IL; Dr. Ida (Michael Ley) Greidanus of Ringwood, NJ; Mr. John (Regina) Greidanus of Lake Geneva, WI; Prof. Anna Elizabeth Greidanus of Lowell, MI; and by her fourteen grandchildren and twenty six great-grandchildren. She was born on January 14, 1912, the eldest of a family of 9 children, in Raard, Friesland, the Netherlands.

**HAMSTRA** Audrey (Hoekstra) age 75, Phoenix, AZ, went to be with her Lord on July 22, 2011. She was preceded in death by husband Peter and will be missed by children Peter (Linda), Patty (Nate Eggink), Pam (Chuck Jongert), and Paul (Tiffani), 15 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren, and sisters Joan Cooper and Doris Kooyer

**HULSMAN**, Jan Willem (Bill), age 81, of Ponoka, Alberta went to be with his Lord on Aug 1, 2011. Predeceased by his wife Gerry in 2009. Survived by 5 children, 13 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild, 4 siblings in Holland and numerous friends.

**KAMP**, John age 88, on August 26, 2011. 500 Parkside Dr. Apt. 157 Zeeland, MI, 49464. Survived by wife, Audrey; daughters Diane (Mike) Clayton, Denise (Randy) Evans; grandchildren, Dana Tuinier and Jonathan McMahon; brother Tom (Janette) Kamp and many nieces and nephews. Preceded in death by his parents, sisters Frances and Hani; brother Jim, and daughter Debby.

**KEARNS** Thomas, 73, on July 22, 2011. 1873 Elizabeth Ln. Jenison, MI 49428. Survived by siblings: Margaret Kearns, Des (Kathryn) Kearns, Joe (Mary) Kearns, 3 nieces & 1 nephew, all of Ireland & longtime friend: Stan Blom

**KONING**, Alvin J, 83, June 24, 2011. 1108 16th St. SW, Willmar, MN. Survived by Marianne (Duininck) wife of 59 yrs, children: Janet (Bud) Bonnema, Gerry (Laura) Koning, Marcia (Pete) Roorda, Jim (Trisha) Koning, 13 grandchildren, and 9 great grandchildren.

**KUIPER**, Donna age 57 went to be with the Lord on May 17, 2011. She was the beloved daughter of Art and Helena Kuiper. She is survived by three sisters Barbara VanVliet, Beverly Mulder, and Jeanne Annema and one brother Arther, one infant brother deceased.

**LAMAIRE**, Martin 91, 1040 Erie St. Oak Park, IL 60302, went home to his Lord on August 20, 2011. Husband of Annette (Buurstra) and the late Johanna (Gelderloos). Children: Martha (Frank) Hules & Paul (Linda) LaMaire. 5 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Member of Ebenezer CRC, and former news correspondent for the Banner.

H. Henry Meeter Center

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The H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies is pleased to offer the Emo F.J. Van Halsetra Fellowship for pastors from within the Reformed tradition.

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## Church Positions Announcements

**PASTOR:** First CRC in Hanford is a multigenerational church in the Central Valley of California seeking a full time pastor as Director of Congregational life. Candidate will serve as Co-Pastor alongside currently filled position, Director of Public Ministry. Candidates must be ordained and committed to biblical teaching and preaching. He should possess exceptional relationship, communication, and leadership abilities and a love for training and mentoring volunteer leaders and youth. For more info or to submit resumes with letter of interest, please email: [callingcommittee2011@hotmail.com](mailto:callingcommittee2011@hotmail.com)

**PASTOR** Knapp St. Ref. Church in Grand Rapids, MI is accepting resumes for senior pastor position. Job description & contact info is available at [knappchurch.org](http://knappchurch.org) under the 'About Us' tab.

**FULL TIME PASTOR** Phoenix CRC in Phoenix, AZ is seeking a full-time pastor. We are a small congregation located in the central Phoenix area. We desire a pastor who is committed to sound biblical teaching and able to interact with the youth as well as the neighboring community. If interested, or would like to send a resume contact Andy Keizer, [search@phoenixcrrc.org](mailto:search@phoenixcrrc.org), 623-875-5871, website: [www.phoenixcrrc.org](http://www.phoenixcrrc.org)

**DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP & MUSIC** Park CRC in Holland MI, a vibrant and welcoming family of believers, is seeking an individual who has a passion and giftedness for planning and implementing authentic worship to serve as our Director of Worship and Music. We place a high value on worship and spiritual growth, both as individuals and

as a congregation. Candidates should be persons who demonstrate a sincere Christ-centered life, have at least three years of experience in worship ministry, and preferably have a college degree in worship or music. For a complete job description and to learn more about what God is doing at Park, please visit [www.parkchurchholland.org](http://www.parkchurchholland.org) or contact [office@parkchurchholland.org](mailto:office@parkchurchholland.org).

**PASTOR** El Buen Samaritano CRC is an established Hispanic church seeking a bilingual part-time pastor. We desire a pastor who is committed to sound biblical teaching and able to interact with youth as well as the neighboring community. Please send inquiries to: [cjboer@bellsouth.net](mailto:cjboer@bellsouth.net) before Nov. 1, 2011

**PASTOR SEARCH:** First CRC located in Zeeland, MI is prayerfully seeking a full time pastor to come along side of our congregation as we seek to spread Gods word among our neighbors. We will be celebrating 150 years of God's faithfulness to us next year. For more information, or to submit a resume, please contact Mike VanDeVusse at [vusse@charter.net](mailto:vusse@charter.net). Website: [firstzeeland.org](http://firstzeeland.org)

**INTERIM PASTOR:** Washington, DC CRC seeks an interim pastor for 3-6 months, beginning in January 2012, to provide preaching and pastoral care following our pastor's retirement. We are a small, diverse congregation drawing members from DC, MD, and VA. Candidates with interest/experience in helping a congregation clarify its mission/vision are particularly encouraged to apply. Please send inquiries to the Transition Committee at [transition@dccrc.org](mailto:transition@dccrc.org).

## Employment

**BETHEL CRC** (Lansing, IL) seeks an ordained part-time Minister of Pastoral Care and a full-time ordained Associate Pastor with a heart and passion to grow and disciple the segment of the congregation and community often referred to as the "Millennial Generation." For more info on these exciting positions email [Pastorcandidates@gmail.com](mailto:Pastorcandidates@gmail.com).

**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.

**HELP WANTED** A Christian-based home for moderate developmentally disabled adults is looking for a live-in caregiver. Northern Michigan area. Must be dedicated, reliable and mature. Experience required. Serious applicants only. Send resume to 423 Stimson St., Cadillac, MI 49601.

**HOUSE PARENT(S)**: Unique opportunity to become House Parent(s) for Christian Group Home in Holland. You will serve as live-in support for residents in exchange for free room and board. 616-498-2587

**UNITY CHRISTIAN (MI) High School**, with the announced retirement of current Principal Jack Postma effective June 2012, is searching for a Principal to lead its dynamic high school community beginning July 2012. She or he will be a passionate follower of Jesus Christ, a leader, and a communicator who loves young people and seeks to develop them as followers of Jesus through their Christian education. A Masters Degree in Educational Leadership (or equivalent) is expected along with experience in teaching and administration. Unity serves 700 students in grades 9-12 in central western Michigan. Confidentially email [unity@unitychristian.org](mailto:unity@unitychristian.org) for more information or confidentially call Dave Baatenburg, Search Committee Chair at work (616)454-4401 x222, or cell (616) 485-6196. School number is 616-669-1820.

## Real Estate: Sales and Rental

**CONDO FOR RENT** Scottsdale, AZ. McCormick Ranch 3br, 2 bath, recently renovated, pool, 2 car garage. \$2800/month. Email: [kens117@aol.com](mailto:kens117@aol.com) or 630/243/8519

**FOUNTAIN HILLS, ARIZONA CONDO** Nicely furn. 2-bdrm, 2-bath 1450 s.f. 2nd fl. w/pool, spa, garage & views. Oct-Dec/Apr-May. 800/wk to \$1800/mn. Details 231-924-5652

H. Henry Meeter Center

### Scholarships for High School Seniors

The H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies is pleased to offer the Hugh and Eve Meeter Calvinism Awards for High School Seniors. Awards are given annually for research papers on a topic pertaining to John Calvin and Calvinism. Awards are payable to student tuition accounts at the following colleges: Calvin, Dordt, King's (Canada), Redeemer (Canada), Kuyper, and Trinity Christian. The topic for 2012 is "John Calvin and the Role of Providence in Human Suffering." There is a first prize of \$2,500 and a second prize of \$1,250. Papers must have a **January 16, 2012**, postmark.

For application guidelines and information on the research paper, please visit <http://www.calvin.edu/meeter> or contact

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**LINDEMULDER** Herman, age 94, went to be with his Lord on Nov 11, 2010. He is survived by his wife Wilma, children Diane Sinnema; grandson's Jeremy and Shane; and Dean and Marilyn Lindemulder and grandson's Jason and Christopher and grand daughter's Hailee, Alexis and Chloe. Step children - Carolyn Coon, Bill and Joan Alberda, Barbara Van Egmond, Keith and Ann Lyn Alberda, Shirlee and Lee Van Dyk and grand children.

**LOOMAN**, Rev. John H., 78, on August 9, 2011. 1649 Lisa Dr., Byron Center, MI 49315. He was preceded in death by his granddaughter, Melissa Zuverink; and brother, Ken. Surviving are his wife of 60 years, Berdena (Steigenga); children, Jack (Cheri) Looman, Jeff (Lynda) Looman, Jodi (Ron) Zuverink, Jon (Brenda) Looman; 12 grandchildren, 3 great-grandsons; sister, Donna (Herm) Brower; several sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law; and many nieces and nephews.

**LUYK**, Barbara (DeVries), aged 93, went to her heavenly home on June 29, 2011. Preceded in death by her son David Bruce and husband Hubert, she will be dearly missed by her family: Mary Anne (Thomas) Culbertson, Jean (Stefford) Veltema, Ruth (Paul) Tebrake, Daniel (Kristina) Luyk, 9 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, and sisters-in-law Nellie Poelstra and Eileen DeVries. We give thanks for her love and her example of service to others.

**LUYK**, Marguerite (Margie) aged 99, August 16, 2011 Grand Rapids, MI. She was preceded in death by her loving husband Marinus Pat in 2005. She is survived by daughters: Mary and John McDougall of Santa Rosa, CA, and their children, Heather (Brandt), Patrick (Irene) and Craig (Mika); Carol and Nelson Van Elderen of Rockford, MI, and their children, Jason (Lyndsay) and Sarah; and great-grandsons, Jaysen, Ben, and Ryan.

**MODDERMAN**, Wilma (Pott) age 93, of Ripon, CA went to her eternal home on August 20, 2011. Preceded in death by her husband John Modderman, daughter Gertrude Verver, grandson J. Peter Modderman. She is survived by her son Samuel (Barbara) Modderman and son-in-law Sherman Verver; grandchildren: Amy (Todd) Engle, Sara (Rick) Corliss, Philip (Debbie) Verver, Steven (Harmony) Verver, Tricia Verver, Nathan Verver; and ten great-grandchildren.

**SCHOON**, Stephen Grant; aged 62; August 15, 2011; 842 Giddings S. E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506; Steve leaves his wife: Ruth; children: Chris and Hennie Schoon, Tammy and Ryan LaRue, Amy and Jeremy Gavin, and Megan and Brandon Dodds; 12 grandchildren.

**SMIT**, Larry, 72, on July 25, 2011, 5520 W. 41st Ave., Gary, IN 46408. Survived by wife of 52 years, Trena (Huizinga) children; Terry (Debbie) Smit, Linda (Stanton) Visser, Debra (Jason) Hubers, Diane (Tim) Bakker; 10 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren; Sisters-in-law, Shirley (George) Bouma, Elaine (Ron) Wagner, Barbara Bailer, and Marian (Steve) Price.

**STERK** Elizabeth (Betty), was born Dec. 19, 1914. Betty loved the Lord Jesus Christ and went home to be with Him Feb 7, 2011. She was preceded in death by Henry her husband of 54 years. Betty is missed by her family: Carolyn & David Santos, Ruth & Jim Eigenhuis, Faith & Wayne Van De Brake, Judy & Tom Kamstra, Janna & Jon Vanden Brink, 16 grandchildren and 34 great grandchildren. "You have made known to me the path of life: you will fill me with joy in your presence." Ps. 16:11

**VAN THOLEN** Alice, nee Van Der Dyke. 5 Meadowood Dr., Oakbrook, IL 60523. Wife of the late John Van Tholen; mother of Steve (Sherr), Scott (Kimberly), Mark (Stacy) Van Tholen; daughter-in-law of Margaret Van Tholen; grandmother of Blake, Sydney, Tyler, Olivia, Sarah, Hanah, Jesse, Daniel, John, Benjamin, and Noah; sister of Allen Van Der Dyke.

**VEENSTRA**, Tracy, 97 of Corsica, SD went to be with the Lord on July 16, 2011. Her husband, John and one son, Sherwood preceded her in death. She will be missed by her six children: Betty (Chester) Vander-Zee, Katie (Bob) Hoogwerf, Janice (Dennis) VandenBerg, Shirley (Jerry) Isakson, Eunice (Alan) deHaai, George Veenstra, her 16 grandchildren and 26 great grandchildren, and 3 sisters: Minnie Bosch, Marie Veldhuizen and Dorothy Bos.

**VEGTER**, Alvin James, age 93, went to be with his Lord on Sunday, August 14, 2011. He was predeceased by his wife of 68 years, Margaret Laman Vegter; and is survived by his children, Albert J. Vegter (Jean) and Gretchen M. Bush; grandchildren Christopher Vegter, Suzanne Vegter, Katrina Vegter, Megan Diercks (David), and Jeffrey Bush (Heather), and great-grandchildren Anika Diercks and Nathan Bush.



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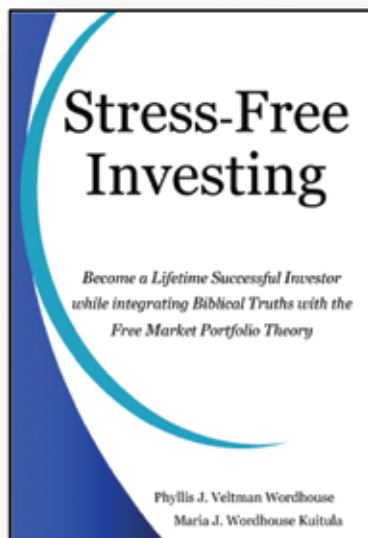
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The Board of Trustees of Hope College announces the search for the College's twelfth president. The search is being launched in response to Dr. James Bultman's decision to retire following the 2011-2012 academic year after thirteen years of distinguished service as Hope's president.

Hope College places a high priority on sustaining a supportive environment that recognizes the importance of having a diverse faculty and staff in order to best prepare students for successful careers in a multi-cultural and global community. Applications of persons qualified for the position of president of Hope College are welcome regardless of gender or race. Hope College complies with federal and state requirements for nondiscrimination in employment.

Prospective candidates are encouraged to review the Presidential Search Profile which contains essential information and outlines the application process at: [www.hope.edu](http://www.hope.edu) or [www.academic-search.com](http://www.academic-search.com).

Although applications will be accepted until the time that a new president is appointed, candidates should submit materials by September 30 for most favorable consideration. The Presidential Search Committee, comprised of trustees, alumni, faculty, staff and students, is led by trustee David W. Lowry, MD.

All inquiries should be directed to:

**R. Thomas Williamson, Senior Consultant**  
Academic Search, Inc.  
[tom.williamson@academic-search.com](mailto:tom.williamson@academic-search.com)  
757-903-4462



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Dr. Erik Hoekstra, Provost  
Dordt College  
498 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE  
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697  
Fax: (712) 722-6035  
E-mail: provost@dordt.edu  
Web: www.dordt.edu/prospective\_employees/faculty/

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Kindly direct nominations and applications in confidence to:

VP, Administration and Finance Search Committee  
Mrs. Magda Beukes, Executive Assistant to the President  
Redeemer University College  
777 Garner Road E.  
Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4  
or  
[vpafsearch@redeemer.ca](mailto:vpafsearch@redeemer.ca)

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## Punch Lines

What has made *you* smile lately? Got a joke or funny incident you'd care to share with your wider church family? Please send it to *The Banner* at 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560; or email it to [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org). Thanks!

**T**wo men were shipwrecked on an island. The minute they reached shore, one of them started yelling, "We're going to die! We're going to die! There's no food! No water! We're going to die!"

The second man sat down and propped himself up against a palm tree, acting so calmly that it further agitated the first man, who exclaimed, "Don't you understand?! We're going to die!"

The second man replied, "You don't understand. I make \$100,000 a week."

The first man looked at him, quite dumbfounded, then shouted, "What difference does that make?! We're on an island with no food and no water! We're going to die!"

The second man answered, "You just don't get it. I make \$100,000 a week, and every week I tithe 10 percent. My pastor will find me."

—Clarence Wildeboer

**A** new reporter was sent to cover the visit of a Christian Reformed minister. Before his speech, the minister said to the reporter, "When you do your

write up, please don't mention the anecdotes I use. I want to include them in other speeches I'm giving in town." Thus the reporter wrote, "The good Reverend told several stories that can't be repeated here."

—George Vander Weit

**M**arian had just celebrated her 85th birthday, and in a few months I would celebrate my 87th. For 58 years we enjoyed living in a home built by my father, but we thought it was time to inquire about moving to a local care facility where a number of our friends lived. We made three or four visits, then put our names on the waiting list.

Shortly after that, we visited a funeral home to pay our respects to the family of someone who had died. A friend of ours, who lives at the care facility to which we intended to move, worked part time as a greeter at the funeral home. As we were leaving, she asked us, "So, what's your target date for coming?" It was the wrong place to ask that question!

—John and Marian  
Vanden Berg

**D**uring a visit, a member of my congregation spoke to me about some of the hardships she had faced in her long life. Those included illnesses, the deaths of family members, and other difficulties. At the end, as a summary of her faith, she said, "I just figured that each one was a bear I had to cross."

—Larry Fryling

**A**s Noah went around the ark one last time after the flood, he noticed two snakes. He approached the snakes and asked them, "What are you still doing here? You're supposed to go out into the world and multiply."

One of the snakes replied, "But, Noah, we can't. We're adders."

—Phillip Baton

**W**here did Noah keep bees on the ark?

In the archives.

—George Vander Weit

**I**'ve been one of the teachers in our church's Children and Worship program for several years now. I especially enjoy the second- and third-grade room, because the children are old enough to think about the Bible story and give some input. So when I taught

one September morning, on our third straight day of rain, I decided to use the weather as a springboard for discussion.

First I asked the children if they were having a nice weekend. Not much response.

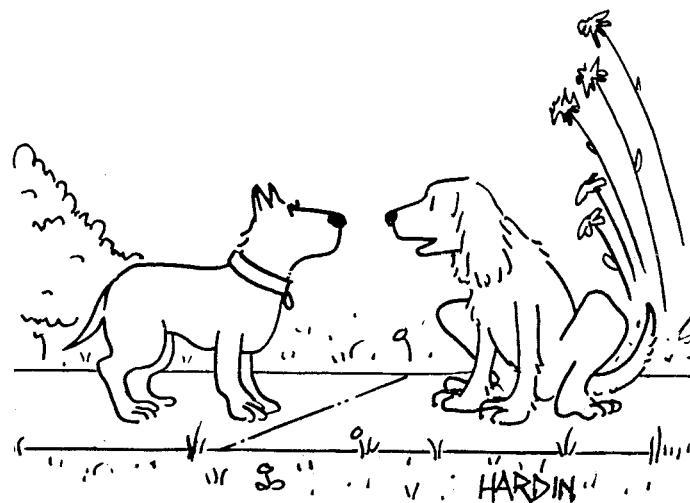
"The rain is making it a little difficult to do outside activities, isn't it?" Still nothing.

"So do you think it will rain in heaven?" They looked at me, a little puzzled. I explained that we need water to make things grow, so if there are flowers and trees in heaven, maybe . . .

"So what do you think, kids, will it rain in heaven?"

Finally one second-grader answered my question: "I guess you'll be the first one to know!"

—Judi Holland



"If you bark your head off all night in a forest and no one hears you, are you still a bad dog?"



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