

# THE BANNER

November 2011 | [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org)

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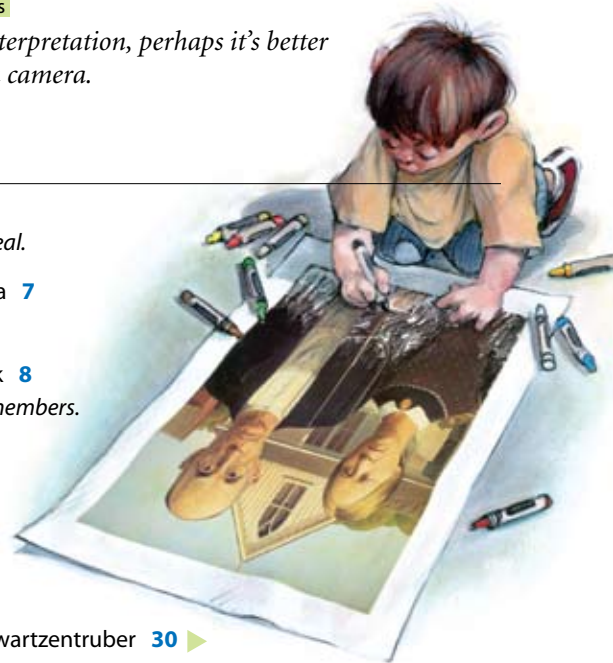


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## Why Play Favorites?

**ON PAGE 32 BRIAN MARTIN WARNS** that global climate change is largely caused by human activity and that we must mend our ways before it's too late.

I alert you to this because I anticipate a replay of what happened several years ago when *The Banner* published a similar article ("Climate Care," April 2007). We received numerous requests for equal time from those who disputed the author's position. We refused. In frustration some of those respondents appealed, as is their right, to *The Banner's* editorial council, demanding that we allocate equal space in the magazine to the contra-global-warming position.

We did print Letters to the Editor and an IMHO arguing the contrary position, but, admittedly, those didn't balance out the initial presentation either in space or in weight. With Martin's article that imbalance only grows. We wish to let you know why we don't, for example, simply publish two articles side by side, one pro, one con. That sounds like the fairest approach, right? Why play favorites, given the inarguable fact that *Banner* editors are not scientists?

We have two main reasons for not allocating equal time to these contradictory positions.

The first is that a side-by-side presentation would make it appear that the judgment of the scientific community is equally divided. It isn't. While there are scientists who still have doubts that the causes of climate change originate in human activity, the overwhelming majority are convinced and alarmed. There are few, if any, reputable scientific associations that take the contrary view. So allowing equal treatment would seriously misinform our readers.

There are many issues where *The Banner* should, and does, give equal opportunity to both sides: the Belhar Confession, Christian day schools, evolution theories, to name a few recent examples. But with climate change the gap is just too large.

Our second reason for not allowing equal treatment of this issue is precisely because we editors are not experts on climate change or global warming. We need to rely on the insight and wisdom of the scientific community as a whole to guide us in making our editorial judgment on this issue. That's why we have sought and received the advice of many scientists in the field. Regardless of our own personal views, we must act on the assumption that climate change is real and that we humans need to make the painful commitment to curb emissions from carbon-based fuels. Given the many strong warnings, we need to act even if some of us still have second thoughts.

Besides, even *if* the vast majority of scientists turns out to be wrong (could happen!), we *still* need to curb our appetite for fossil fuels because we are rapidly running out of them. And on that score there is unanimity.

God calls us to be good stewards of the creation as a whole and of its resources. At the rate we're burning through the carbon-based stuff, our grandchildren will be in serious trouble.

It's time to step up to the plate to do some serious God-imaging. ■

A side-by-side presentation would make it appear that the judgment of the scientific community is equally divided. It isn't.



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## Music of Grace

**F**ROM OUT OF the quiet, the sound of water splashing into the font wakes me up to worship. More than the first song of praise, more than the greeting, more than the shuffle and shift of the congregation, that sound calls me into God's presence.

Usually it's Julie, one of our dancers, who pours a pitcher of water into the font just after we confess our sins. This happens every week during our morning worship. We hear a call to confession, we speak a confession together, and then, in the pause that follows, Julie pours a pitcher of water into the font: slowly, even a little solemnly. Then we hear the promise of forgiveness and respond with a song of gratitude.

Oddly enough, the sound of the water tends to take me by surprise, even after years of experiencing this worship pattern. This is especially true during some seasons of the year, when our habit is to speak our congregational words, then bow our heads and close our eyes for several moments of silent confession. Then a gentle splash—the music of grace—signals us to look up again. It's over. Time to move on.

Confessing sin as a congregation during public worship is not unique to the Reformed tradition, but it was a particular commitment of Reformation worship. Today, some people don't think much of it. After all, when we speak words of confession together, they tend to be rather general: "We have sinned in thought, word, and deed by what we have done and by what we have left undone." That covers everything, I suppose, but it hardly allows us to perform the kind of agonizing individual soul-searching, the ferretting out of our own particular sins, that Christian spirituality commends.

But that is not the point of congregational confession. We can do that kind of soul-work in the course of our private

prayer. In worship we experience patterns that give us a feel, an instinct, for the shape of confession. By ritual repetition we learn the contour of dying and rising, so that it might feel familiar and natural to us outside the sanctuary.

One other important detail: Julie begins her journey at the back of the sanctuary, the bowl of the font in her upraised hands. While the pastor speaks the call to confession, she is waiting. While we are muttering and stumbling through the words, she begins stepping quietly through the congregation to the front. By the time we finish our words, she has placed the font in its stand near the communion table, and her hand is on the pitcher, which was filled with water even before the service began.

That's what gets me every time. Even before we come to worship, the water is prepared. Even before we finish our confession, God is already proceeding toward us with grace. *Even before*—that's the testimony of grace, and that's why Reformed people practice infant baptism at that font: to lay weight on the *even before*.

We remember our baptism through this weekly routine. Not simply the particular occasion of our own baptism, though that's a lovely thing to do. But, far more important, we live into what baptism means, every week, every day. We remember our baptism by letting it shape our identity as a people, letting it form our understanding of what God has done and is doing, *even before* we wake up to that divine work.

Because of the *even before* of God's grace, the confession sequence ends in forgiveness. We move on. A song of gratitude. The Word proclaimed. ■



Debra Rienstra is a professor of English at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.



We emerge  
from repentance  
like a baby  
coming out of  
the bath.

— HENRI BOULARD

# Selling Ourselves Short

**The CRC does not receive a plethora of affection from its members.**



PHOTO BY ISTOCKPHOTO

**IN RECENT YEARS** you've run articles about why young adults leave the Christian Reformed Church for nondenominational churches and about keeping young adults in the CRC. From my perspective as a member of 30-odd years, I think the main thing that turns people off is that members who grow up in the CRC tend to sell it short.

If you don't believe in your product, who do you think is going to "buy" it?

As someone who became a Christian and joined the CRC at the age of 17, I think this denomination has a lot going for it. The warmth of the fellowship is the first thing that comes to my mind, because that's what drew me in the first place. The first day I visited First Christian Reformed Church in Montreal, Quebec—Dec. 21, 1975—one of the minister's daughters, Anneke Geleynse, introduced me to people who included me and made me feel I belonged right away.

I also appreciate the quality of teaching in the CRC. It is biblical and meaty, and the CRC produces a wealth of resource material. Compared to other denominations, our pastors undergo rigorous training to qualify for ordination. For example, they must master both Greek and Hebrew. These are only a few

examples of the wealth at our disposal—if only we would avail ourselves of it, let alone encourage young people to do so.

For the 150th anniversary of the Christian Reformed Church, in 2007, I wrote this magazine a letter in which I challenged fellow members to flood the office of *The Banner* with love letters for the CRC. It never got published, even though this denomination does not exactly receive a plethora of affection from its members. If anything, I see a lot more bellyaching in letters to *The Banner*.

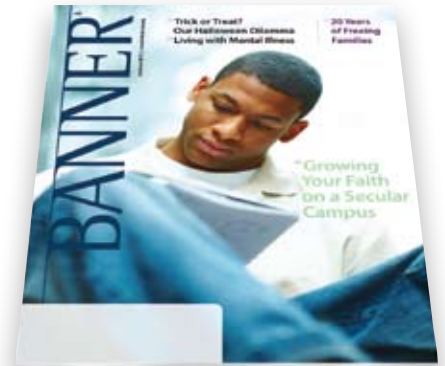
I would have thought a mountain of fan mail would be a problem most people would love to have. After all, who complains at having piles of love letters once in 150 years? Go figure.

I don't understand the attitudes of people born in this denomination, but I'm sure that if we don't do something to change them, young adults will keep leaving the CRC for churches that are more positive.

Let's stop taking what we have for granted. God doesn't owe us anything—not even a rich spiritual heritage! And let's remember, relationships don't just happen. You have to work at them. ■



**Michèle Gyselinck** is an artist and a member of First Christian Reformed Church, Montreal, Quebec.



## Trick or Treat?

I am writing to express my disappointment with the article concerning Halloween by Robert Evan VandePolder ("Trick or Treat? Our Halloween Dilemma," October 2011). The Bible says "the wicked freely strut about when what is vile is honored," and it is written, "I will set no vile thing before my eyes." Christians have a mandate to be a light on a hill. We glorify God by celebrating life, not by participating in a holiday that celebrates death.

—Paula Kamerman  
Manhattan, Montana

## Calvin Profs in the News

It is stunning to read the story of John R. Schneider's exit from the college ("Calvin College Religion Profs in the News; One Alleges College Is Being Dishonest," October 2011). Scary, in fact, that the college cut a deal in the hopes the matter re the historicity of Adam and Eve would quietly go away. It won't unless the college administration exhibits the necessary courage and takes the leap of faith required to promote honest scholarship. . . . Let the hounds of research roam freely in search of truth wherever it may be found. It is the Reformed way of doing business.

—Bill Lenters  
Rockford, Ill.



# LETTERS

In considering colleges, I suspected I wouldn't have an easy time trying to be both a Christian and a scientist, and I feared that attending a Christian institution could make my task even harder. Even if I would be free of the skepticism that secular scientists often have toward people of faith, it would be practically impossible to grow as a scholar if I wound up under the watchful, censoring eye of the sorts of Christians who remain suspicious of science.

I was relieved to find in Calvin a place where it seemed that would not be a problem, a place that would warmly accept and encourage my growth in both areas. It was a place that recognized Scripture and Creation as twin pillars of revelation and promoted the natural harmony between the two. . . .

Unfortunately, it now seems that academic freedom is being slowly limited in areas where modernity and tradition collide. If I loved Calvin less, I would not care. But Calvin stands for something important to me, and it is painful to see it turn away from the values that make it special. . . .

I implore you to reaffirm your commitment to engaging God's world as it is, rather than as we wish it to be.

—Jonathan Walz  
Class of 2010  
Boulder, Colo.

## Evangelism for No One

I found the article "Evangelism for Everyone" (September 2011) disappointing for a number of reasons. First, there is really no biblical basis given for the evangelistic approach advocated. Second, it is impossible to get to know someone "with no strings attached" (try that in a marriage or friendship!). Rather, we need right motivations in our relationships.

Third, to listen or love unconditionally is not in our power to do. Only God is capable of that. Fourth, it is not wrong for us to long that others come to faith in Jesus Christ (thus there is a connection between the Great Commandment and the Great Commission).

Finally, although it sounds great, we must do much more than simply listen to people and ask them questions. We are called to confess Jesus Christ, who is the Son and the Word of God. That will take words!

—Rev. Jo (Johannes) Schouten  
Burnaby, British Columbia

## A Valuable Degree

In your September 2011 issue, a questioner was informed of the practical, business-related aspects of college courses (FAQs, p. 41). All well and good. However, a liberal arts college would introduce this person to new areas (the arts) and new ways of living and thinking (the contemplative tradition) that may well challenge the questioner to options other than "minding his own business."

—Tom Posthumus  
London, Ontario

## Defining Issue

The September 2011 article titled "A Defining Issue for the 21st Century" expressed a "humble opinion" that I view as both disturbing and divisive. . . . Our love for family and young adults should not "trump" the Christian Reformed Church's 1973 biblical position on homosexuality. The Church of Jesus Christ must "master" culture, or culture will "master" it.

—John Workman  
Tinley Park, Ill.

It is our prayer that the defining issue for the church in the 21st century is not necessarily our response to the LGBT

issue but rather the gospel of Jesus Christ, which transforms all of us sinners into his wholehearted followers.

—Council  
Bunde (Minn.) CRC

## Abuse Happens

I read "What If IT Happens in Your Church?" (August 2011) with interest, having experienced something during puberty that was inappropriate but never dealt with. My experience was within my family, but I think if I had been aware of an individual or two with whom I could have safely talked about it, that could have helped.

I agree with the writer's suggestions: (1) Victims must break their silence. (2) Safe people need extensive training in abuse issues. (3) Every church needs a team to reach out to survivors of abuse—to put an end to the abuse immediately and to help victims heal. Healing and restoration can also happen for the abuser, who needs help very clearly too.

—Name Withheld  
Eastern Canada

## More letters online!

See more letters at [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org).

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## Ontario Church Helps Community After Tornado

**T**rinity Christian Reformed Church in Goderich, Ontario, worked with other local churches to provide help and support to their town after it was devastated by an Aug. 21 tornado.

The congregation worked with the Salvation Army to provide meals for clean-up workers, volunteers, and displaced people, and turned the church's sanctuary into a temporary sorting station for donations of clothes, furniture, and nonperishable foods.



ROB ROYCE

**A Goderich, Ontario, street after the tornado.**

Wilma Hiemstra, Trinity's ministry coordinator, said, "The job of feeding so many people—500-600 for supper—was overwhelming. It took an army of volunteers, [but] there was never a shortage of people." In all, the church served 2,500 meals.

The church also hosted a town-wide, all-church worship service. [+](#)

—Anita Brinkman

## Illinois Congregation Merges with Evangelical Presbyterian Church

**W**hen Rev. Jon Hoekema asked God for an additional 40 people to help serve in his church, he did not expect them to come from another denomination.

But Resurrection Presbyterian Church in Westmont, Ill., part of the Evangelical Presbyterian denomination, merged recently with Horizon Community Christian Reformed Church in Downers Grove, Ill., after a nine-month "process of discovery."

"The EPC [Evangelical Presbyterian Church] is almost the same as the CRC," Hoekema said. "In fact, I think the EPC is closer theologically . . . to the CRC than [is] the RCA [Reformed Church in America]."

Rev. Bob Price from Resurrection took a full-time position as a Navy chaplain, so Hoekema is full-time pastor for the new congregation.

Going forward, Hoekema said, Horizon, which is officially a Christian Reformed church, will focus on discipleship through relationships, internally as well as in the community. [+](#)

—Melissa Holtrop



## Back to God Director Passes Away

**R**ev. Robert Heerspink, 57, died Oct. 1, 2011, in Grand Rapids, Mich., three months after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Heerspink was director of Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI), the Christian Reformed Church's media ministry. He held that position for the last six years of his career. Prior to that he served four congregations after his ordination in 1979.

Rev. Peter Borgdorff, deputy executive director of the denomination, said, "Bob Heerspink was an outstanding leader, not only in the ministry of Back to God Ministries International but also in the denomination. His friendship as a colleague and coworker will be sorely missed."

Rev. Jimmy Lin, Chinese language minister at BTGMI, has been named interim administrative director.

—Gayla R. Postma



Tyler Diekevers

## For One Michigan Cadet, Camporee Almost Didn't Happen

**T**yler Diekevers, 14, almost didn't get to attend this summer's Cadet International Camporee, held only every three years.

Tyler, of Byron Center, Mich., needed an emergency appendectomy two days before camp was to begin. He was devastated. But 25 minutes before his scheduled surgery, Tyler and his parents

learned that his surgeon would be attending the Camporee as medical staff.

"His surgeon said, 'We'll get you taken care of. When you feel better, come on up to camp, and we'll keep an eye on you,'" said Greg Diekevers, Tyler's father.

When Tyler arrived at camp two days late, he was greeted by 1,200 cheering boys and their counselors from all over North America.

The next Camporee is slated for 2014, to be held near Lacombe, Alberta. —Daina Kraai



MICHELE VISSER WIKKERINK

A typical food ration meal that feeds someone in East Africa for a whole day.

## Winnipeg Church Leaders Learn About East Africa Food Rations

**O**ne small scoop of refried beans and one whole wheat tortilla is what the World Health Organization says is the typical ration for an adult receiving food aid.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank invited church leaders and media in Winnipeg, Manitoba, to take part in a ration meal in September to raise awareness concerning the food crisis in East Africa

Dr. Ray Postuma attended on behalf of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. "What amazes me is that this small amount of food is all that is necessary to sustain life. And yet children are dying each day for lack of it," he said.

CRWRC communications project manager Kristen Vanderberg said CRWRC is providing emergency food rations to 20,000 people. To donate to the famine relief effort, visit [www.crwrc.org](http://www.crwrc.org).



—Michele Visser Wikkerink



DAN EUSER

## Canadian Man Designs Ground Zero Water Feature

**D**an Euser, a landscape architect from Community Christian Reformed Church in Richmond Hill, Ontario, was part of the team of landscape architects whose design was chosen for the 9/11 Memorial project in New York City.

Euser has designed more than 1,000 water features for public spaces around the world.

Using a full-scale model in his backyard, Euser designed a finer water effect, cut down on noise levels, and used less than one-tenth of the water that was originally needed for the two 1-acre pools on the footprints of the former World Trade Center towers.

"The end result is an elegant visual that resembles a veil of tears and is extremely efficient," said Euser.

Euser said it was an honor to be involved in something that is helping to bring healing where there has been so much hurt.

"Water has so many connotations of cleansing, refreshing, and bringing new growth. There's life there again," he said.

—Monica de Regt

## Michigan Ministry Helps Children with Grieving



CAROLYN KOSTER YOST

Greg and Jolynn Van Wienen

**G**reg and Jolynn Van Wienen started a grief support group for children after the death of their 10-year-old son in 2007.

Starlight Ministries, which meets at Ridgewood Christian Reformed Church in Jenison, Mich., helps children work through their sadness and anger with help of trained adult leaders using art, song, guided conversations, and play.

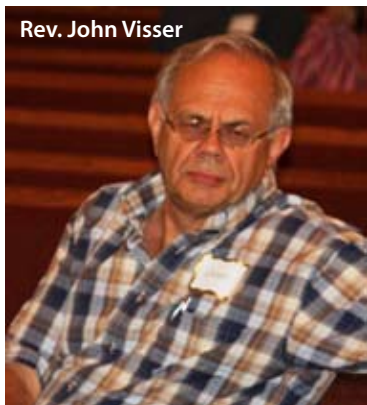
Using backpacks filled with rocks, children gave rocks to the leaders until their packs were empty, symbolizing giving their burdens to God. "God never takes grief away—just lightens your load," Jolynn said.

—Carolyn Koster Yost

# NEWS

## Belleville Church Granted Stay on Suspending Pastor

Rev. John Visser



GAYLA R. POSTMA

**C**lassis Quinte (a regional group of churches) voted to suspend Rev. John Visser, pastor of Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Belleville, Ontario. But the church applied to the denomination's Board of Trustees for a stay of that action while it appeals that decision to Synod 2012. On Oct. 1 the

stay was granted. (The board acts on behalf of synod [the church's annual leadership meeting] when it is not in session.)

The classis is also appointing an accredited independent assessment team to evaluate the policies and practices of Maranatha's healing ministry.

It is Maranatha's healing ministry that is at the heart of the dispute. Members concerned about the healing ministry raised several issues, including lack of confidentiality (see *Banner*, October 2011).

A team of church members primarily from outside the classis assessed the ministry and reported to classis that Visser was guilty of breaking confidentiality and abuse of office, which are grounds for deposition in the CRC.

Also at stake is the possibility that the classis and the denomination could be named in potential future lawsuits filed against Maranatha.

Following the September 13 classis meeting, Rev. John Suk, pastor of Cobourg CRC, said, "This is hard. It was done prayerfully."

Of the classis decision, Visser said, "Obviously I'm disappointed but I have confidence in the appeal process that the issues at stake will be clarified."

The appeal will go through the denomination's Judicial Code process. 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

## Structure Review Underway

**T**he Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture of the Christian Reformed Church's administrative work has begun its work.

Synod 2011 (the church's annual leadership meeting) instructed executive director Rev. Joel Boot to convene the task force following last spring's resignations of the denomination's two top executives.

The task force includes Boot, Rev. Scott Greenway, and Kathy Vandergrift (from the Board of Trustees); Rev. Jul Medenblik, president of Calvin Theological Seminary; Ida Mutoigo, director of CRWRC-Canada; Jane Vander Haagen, Colin Watson, Terry Vander Aa, Rev. Joel DeBoer, and Peter Meerveld, a consultant who reviewed the structure and culture of the denomination's administration for the Board of Trustees earlier this year.

The task force has convened listening events in the denomination's offices in Grand Rapids, Mich.; Palos Heights, Ill.; and Burlington, Ontario, allowing task force members to hear the concerns of those working in that culture.

Anthony Diekema, retired president of Calvin College and now a consultant, spoke about the structure at a dinner attended by senior directors and board members of all the agencies.

Diekema, who spoke at a similar event 11 years ago, said that while concerns about the structure have not disappeared, he felt the situation was greatly improved.

He proposed a moratorium on discussions of structure, urging instead an intensive analysis of the culture. "Structure for too long has been a decoy," he said. "It's time to go after the ducks—kingdom culture and servant leadership. . . . The structure is flexible enough."

The Board of Trustees also set aside four hours for a discussion of structure, including presentations by Rev. Peter Borgdorff, James Jones, Andrew Ryskamp, and Rev. William Veenstra. —Gayla R. Postma

## EPA Funds 'World's Most Reformed' Watershed

**[P**laster Creek] "must be the most Reformed watershed in the world," said Calvin College biology professor David Warners, after tallying the numerous Reformed institutions located along the 26-mile waterway in Grand Rapids, Mich. "But the watershed was unfit for human contact. . . . How could you not do something?"

Plaster Creek Stewards formed in 2006, bringing together Calvin College, the Christian Reformed Church in North America's U.S. denominational building, the West Michigan Environmental Action Council, and a growing number of churches.

Now that group has received a \$58,500 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



Andrea Lubberts, Victoria Proctor, and Andy Ryskamp examine macro-invertebrates in Plaster Creek.

that will allow them to increase their educational outreach, primarily to schools and churches located within the watershed.

Warners said, "If any faith should affect the way we [care for creation], it is the Reformed faith. This is more than an academic pursuit; it gets to our core." 🌱

—Noah J.K. Kruis

## Write for *The Banner*!

*The Banner* is seeking a writer in western Michigan (Holland-Zeeland area) and one in the region that encompasses Wisconsin, Minnesota, Manitoba and northern Ontario. If you have a passion for telling the stories of Christian Reformed people, reporting on activities of interest to our readers, and you like to write, we'd like to hear from you. We'd especially welcome writers from diverse ethnic backgrounds. All expressions of interest should be addressed via e-mail to Gayla Postma, News Editor, at [gpostma@crcna.org](mailto:gpostma@crcna.org). Please include a resume or letter outlining your news-writing experience and some recent samples of your work.

## Korean-American Church Helps Kids in L.A.

For the fourth year Gracious Ark Christian Reformed Church in Los Angeles has partnered with others in the Korean-American community to help children in poverty during the summer.

The program—with a motto of “Today’s Healthy Children, Tomorrow’s Healthy Community”—is run by donations and by volunteers, especially young adults of high school and college age.

Rev. Enoth Kim, an assistant pastor, said the pro-



### Participants in L.A.’s summer program for Korean-American children.

gram has grown to the point where it cannot accommodate all the children, and had to turn away over 50 children.

Joshua Kim, coordinator of the program, said, “This is an excellent experience for volunteers from ninth grade and above to learn leadership and volunteerism.”

—Jonathan Kim

## Texas Church Discusses *The Reason for God*

Rev. Roger De Young liked Timothy Keller’s book *The Reason for God* so much that his church distributed 500 copies to local residents.


De Young is pastor of Hope Christian Reformed Church in Houston, Texas, where the church has NASA for a neighbor.

Church members invited those who received the book to a six-week sermon series, which began Sept. 11.

Jeannie Van Horn was part of a team of 14 members who

planned and implemented small-group discussions as part of the series. She also works as a scientist for NASA. She gave her testimony on the first Sunday of the series.

“This book demonstrated a way I can be more intentional about sharing my faith with skeptics in the workplace,” said Van Horn.

Attendance on the first Sunday of the series was up by 10 percent, De Young said. 

—Sarah Boonstra

## Michigan Church Draws Large After-School Crowd

Millbrook Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., draws 75 kids to its weekly after-school ministry.

Using materials from Kids’ Life Bible Club, children watch puppets, make crafts, and sing songs.

“At my Bible club, we had so much fun there,” said Azari Gordon, age 7. “We have games, and we did all kinds of stuff—and [they] gave us Bibles.”

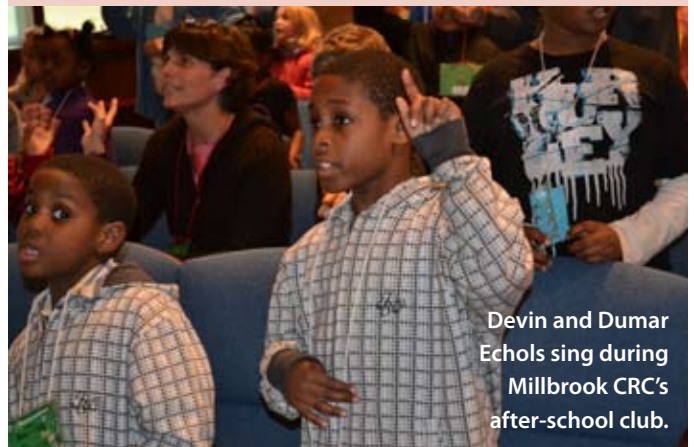
The children attend a charter school next door to the church. About half of them have no church home.

“It’s been a vital outreach for the church,” said Nel Osterwald, one of the coordinators for the ministry.

—Ryan Struyk



A billboard advertises the sermon series based on Timothy Keller’s book.



Devin and Dumar Echols sing during Millbrook CRC’s after-school club.

LAURA MULDER



JEFF ARNOLD

## Safe Church Policies Applied to Denominational Employees

The Board of Trustees decided that allegations of sexual misconduct or abuse by an employee of the denomination or any of its agencies will be referred to that person's church council to be dealt with under the denomination's guidelines for handling allegations of abuse.

Those guidelines include convening an advisory panel that conducts hearings and makes recommendations regarding the probability and seriousness of the allegations. That panel is to include a representative from the denomination as an observer, and the executive director will receive a written report on the panel process and recommendations made.

For cases where the employee of the denomination is not a member of the Christian Reformed Church, a hybrid policy is being developed to ensure an objective panel hearing.

In other actions, the BOT:

- Ratified the appointment of Bonnie Nicholas as director of the Safe Church ministry;
- Decided that the Canadian delegates to the board will meet separately for an hour at the February 2012 meeting to discuss ministries within Canada;
- Heard that ministry share receipts for the fiscal year just ended came in nearly 5 percent over budget.

—Gayla R. Postma

## Kalamazoo Pastor First Woman to Lead Ministerial Alliance


Rev. Denise Posie, pastor of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, Mich., is the first woman to lead the Northside Ministerial Alliance in that city.

Seventeen months into her two-year term, she has introduced monthly educational forums, connecting community leaders with residents they serve. She has made strengthening families a priority, understanding the role a solid home life can play in society.

Posie is also pushing area churches to take a more active role in social justice issues.

But Posie hasn't pushed forward alone. "I need other people to use their gifts," she said. "I want them to thrive."

She hopes that her election will keep the Alliance's door open to women. But whether or not she's leading the way, she'll continue pressing toward a better community.

"I just want to be where God wants me," Posie said. "I know I will be successful according to His terms of success."  —Jeff Arnold

Rev. Denise Posie: "I just want to be where God wants me."

## California 'Lunch Bunch' Welcomes All to Sunday Dinner

For nearly two years, Ross and Sandy Cooper, members of The River Christian Reformed Church in Redlands, Calif., have hosted a lunch gathering every Sunday.

Of those who come, "many are [homeless] or barely off the street," said Rev. Will Verhoef, the church's pastor of family life. The informally named "Lunch Bunch" has grown to more than 50 each week.

"People can visit, eat, hang out, have Bible study, go to church, shower, and do their laundry. It has been called a 'homeless vacation,'" said Sandy Cooper.

"Food just sort of shows up each week, sometimes as gifts from people or leftovers from



The "Lunch Bunch" reaches out to anyone in need in the Redlands, Calif., area.

other ministries, including food distribution ministries," said Verhoef.

Through this ministry, a number of people have become members of The River.

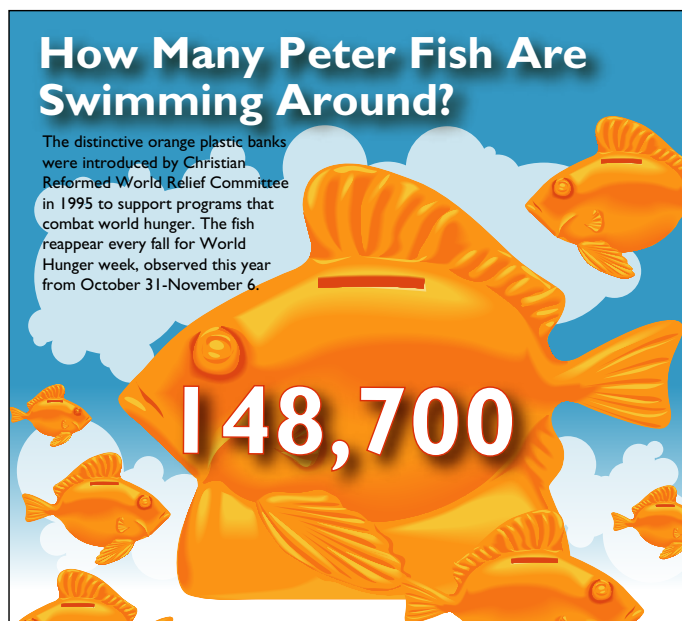
"We are a family who shares with each other," said Ross Cooper.

 —Heidi Wicker

## How Many Peter Fish Are Swimming Around?

The distinctive orange plastic banks were introduced by Christian Reformed World Relief Committee in 1995 to support programs that combat world hunger. The fish reappear every fall for World Hunger week, observed this year from October 31–November 6.

148,700





Jason and Marcie Uelman are in the process of adoption.

## Illinois Church Helps Couples Adopt

Recognizing that the \$30,000 price tag for domestic adoption stretches couples financially, Faith Christian Reformed Church in Tinley Park, Ill., has created an adoption assistance fund to help couples with the cost.

A young couple in the church, Jason and Marcie Uelman, served as the catalyst for the initiative. After unsuccessful in-vitro fertilizations, “we felt our desire to be parents did not go away—it really only grew stronger. Adoption, however, is extremely costly,” Marcie said.

The Uelmans approached their elder, Sandee DeJong, and a fundraiser was suggested. A dinner and silent auction, attended by nearly 150 people, raised more than \$5,000.

While the Uelmans will be the first to benefit from this fund, the goal, DeJong said, is for more couples to take advantage of it in the future—perhaps even spurring consideration of adoption by those who now think it too costly. The church plans to host more benefits down the road. [fb](#)

—Melissa Holtrop

## Muslim Teen Comes to Christ, Finds Home in CRC

Malak Alkanani grew up a devout Muslim in Dearborn, Mich., but she is one of the incoming freshmen at Calvin College this year after converting to Christianity.

Her interest in Christianity intensified during after-school discussions with her high school biology teacher, a member of Dearborn Christian Fellowship Christian Reformed Church who asked not to be identified after his interaction with Alkanani nearly cost him his job.

When Alkanani told her family about her conversion, her mother felt betrayed. The youth ministry of Dearborn Christian Fellowship supported Alkanani, but Dearborn youth pastor Brad Stolman encouraged Alkanani not to defy her mother by attending the

## Arizona Churches Launch Training Center for Hispanic Lay Leaders

More than 40 people have enrolled in the first class offered by the Hispanic Ministry Training Center of Arizona.

The center was launched with support from pastors from both the Christian Reformed Church and Reformed Church in America in the Phoenix area to prepare Hispanic church members and others for leadership roles.

Rev. Jonathan Gerstner of Christ’s Community CRC in Chandler, Ariz., is one of the teachers,



Malak Alkanani, left, visits Calvin College for the first time with Dearborn Christian Fellowship CRC youth pastor Brad Stolman and his wife, Lisa.

diately offered space in their homes and are working to raise her college costs not already covered by financial aid.

Alkanani prays for her mother, who has since backed off from her threats to disown her daughter. “I want to see her come to Christ,” Alkanani said. “She thinks [Christianity] is a phase I am going through and that I will get over it. But this isn’t a phase.” [fb](#)

—Jeff Arnold



Rev. Israel Camacho of Nueva Esperanza (RCA) Church of Gilbert, Ariz., translates for Rev. Jonathan Gerstner as he speaks with a class at the Hispanic Training Center of Arizona.

but noted there are things he and his congregation can learn.

“A lot of first-generation [Hispanic] Christians ... excel in evangelism,” he said. Many more traditional congregations can benefit from such enthusiasm

for spreading the gospel, he noted.

Center founders estimate that there are as many as 400 primarily Hispanic evangelical churches in the Phoenix area.

—Larry Edsall



## Women in Ministry: **15** Years Later

**15** YEARS AFTER women were first allowed to serve as ministers of the Word and sacraments in the Christian Reformed Church, approximately 70 women have been ordained, many of whom serve in the CRC.

But equal opportunity for women in CRC ministry remains elusive.

Of the roughly 500 candidates declared eligible for the ministry since 1996, 87 percent are men. But when it comes to positions as a senior or solo pastor, 97 percent of men get those calls.

Women, on the other hand, are getting calls to staff positions and chaplaincy at a rate that far outstrips their presence on the candidacy list.

Churches call only 3 percent of female candidates to senior or solo pastor posi-

tions. Twenty-nine percent receive calls to staff positions such as youth pastors or family life pastors, and 34 percent receive calls to chaplaincy positions, mostly in the medical field. The rest are finding other ways to serve, including on the mission field or in the employ of the denomination.

But that's when women can *find* a position. Of candidates needing an extension because they did not receive a call within one year of being declared a candidate, 31 percent are women, more than double the 13 percent they represent on the candidacy list.

### Women Waiting Longer for Calls

*The Banner* surveyed female pastors and, with only one exception, respondents agreed that it takes substantially longer for women to receive calls than men.

Indeed, fewer openings are available to women. In August 2011, the denomination's Pastor-Church Relations office reported that 59 churches were actively seeking a new pastor. Of those, almost half (26) said they would consider only male candidates.

Rev. Karen Norris served as pastor of congregational life and outreach for West End CRC in Edmonton, Alberta, until recently. "I observed most of my male classmates receiving calls before me," she said. "I was encouraged to apply for chaplaincy positions and youth pastor positions, though I did not feel called to youth ministry. It was an incredibly discouraging time."

Women who have been in the ministry longer recognize that the job search isn't getting easier.



“I have taught amazing women who will be fantastic pastors,” said Rev. Mary Hulst, chaplain for Calvin College and assistant professor of homiletics at Calvin Theological Seminary. “It is heartbreaking to see them have to wait for calls.”

Rev. Thea Leunk, senior pastor of Eastern Avenue CRC, Grand Rapids, Mich., mentors female seminary graduates. “I know that they are often not interviewed for open positions and most often are only considered for associate pastor positions,” she said. “Many have to get creative in designing a call so they can be ordained.”

With so many women in part-time staff or chaplaincy positions, it is tempting to assume that they prefer those positions. And indeed, some do. Many women in chaplaincy are there because they view that as their calling. And many women who are caring for young families are happy to work part-time.

But in terms of making it a generalization regarding all women in ministry, “that’s bunk,” said Rev. Vicki Cok, pastor of Waterloo (Ont.) CRC. “Women go to seminary to be ministers—just like men.”

### Clergy Couples

The women who receive calls sooner rather than later after being declared candidates have often been older graduates, in their 40s and 50s. And those same women were more likely to receive a call to a solo pastor position.

Other women employed sooner are those married to fellow candidates or someone already in the ministry. They are part of a new wave of clergy couples.

While the women who are part of those clergy couples are happy to be working in ministry, it can be a double-edged sword.

One respondent said that once her husband graduated and they started considering team ministry, they found more churches willing to talk to them.

But another said she works basically as a volunteer, whereas her husband is employed. “It’s difficult because his career seems to take precedence,” she said. “The assumption is that I am BOGO [buy one, get one free].”

### Follow Your Calling with Eyes Open

Despite the difficulties they face, most of the women surveyed said they are happy and fulfilled in ministry. Some have found the kind of position they envisioned when they went to seminary. Others have been “surprised by God,” working in roles they hadn’t envisioned but where they have found fulfillment.

They also wouldn’t hesitate to encourage women to enter the ministry if that’s where God is calling them. But, they said, those women need to do so knowing there will be difficulties.

“I don’t think we should discourage women,” said one respondent. “Ultimately God opens doors that no one can shut.”

That said, “we need to not sugarcoat how well we are doing,” said Rev. Chelsey Harmon, associate pastor of Christ Community CRC in Nanaimo, British Columbia. “There are too many candidates who are eligible who are not getting calls.”

Rev. Leanne Van Dyke graduated from seminary a decade before the CRC approved the ordination of women, so she left the denomination to find work. She is academic dean and professor of Reformed theology at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Mich.

“I am concerned about the issue of young women receiving appropriate encouragement and affirmation but then hitting the wall of a resistant denomination,” she said. “It is a terrible affront not only to the women candidates but to the Holy Spirit.”

Rev. Erica Schemper was, until recently, pastor for children and youth at Fox Valley Presbyterian Church in Geneva, Ill. She expresses concern about women who

already have a church position. “I’ve heard stories of women in the CRC who know that if they leave the position they are in, they may not find another call,” she said. “Churches can potentially abuse this power they have over a woman pastor.”

### Change Will Follow Experience

Asked if they foresee a change in the CRC any time soon, respondents’ answers ranged from those not expecting any change to those who hope for change to those who said there will be change, but it will come slowly.

However, they said, change will not come from arguing the issue, but rather from experience. “We have to change our perception of what a pastor looks like, sounds like, and even pastors like, before those of us who are ‘unconventional’ are going to be able to thrive in our ministries,” said Harmon.

“I’ve discovered that most of the time, [attitudes] don’t change from arguing. Instead, amazing changes in attitudes take place [with] some positive experience with a female pastor,” said Rev. Eleanor Rietkerk, senior pastor of Mill Creek (Wash.) Community CRC.

“Churches need to have women regularly come and preach, or hire a seminary student for the summer,” said Hulst. “The more we as a church see the gifts that God has given these people, the more eager we will be to hire them.”

In the meantime, women in CRC ministry will continue doing what God has called them to do and encouraging other women who are called to follow God’s leading.

As one said, “Women need to keep on doing the work faithfully. That is the best testimony.” ■



Gayla R. Postma is news editor for *The Banner* and a member of Williamsburg CRC, Ontario.

BY RICK MAST

# BEST YOUTH MINISTRY EVER!

**YOUR MINISTRY CAN THRIVE IF YOU REMEMBER  
YOU'RE RELATING WITH NOMADS, NOT SETTLERS.**



I

**HONESTLY THINK** that this past year in youth ministry has been the best ever. My wife, Aileen, laughed when she heard me say that. She told me I said the same thing last year—and that I often make that comment.

In youth ministry we aim to make authentic connections. We were created in the image of God to proclaim the love of God to the world by loving God and loving our neighbors. We are hard-wired for healthy and wholesome relationships—but the precise shape of those relationships morphs all the time.

Our dear friend Sophie uses an expression that summarizes the ever-reforming nature of youth ministry: “Nothing never changes.” That is the common ground and grammar of youth ministry today. In more than two decades of practicing youth ministry, I have seen many changes, both subtle and downright staggering. The changing nature of my work is one reason I love youth ministry.

One of the most staggering changes I have witnessed has to do with young people themselves.

Over the past 20 years I have worked with mostly third-generation junior and senior high school children of Dutch immigrants who have generally been white, Reformed/Protestant, and middle- to upper-middle-class. Most have had an education exclusively within a Christian school.

Almost without exception, once they finish their high school education they absent the church of their parents and grandparents—some for a short time and others for a long time, even a lifetime. It seems that some force convinces them to wander away from the flock that nurtured them and offered them identity.

It was not always like this. In the past, young people used to be nurtured within a community, and then as adults were counted on to live in and contribute to that community. They could be thought of as settlers, and their ancestors as pilgrims. The community offered stability, security, and identity, and the young person who was fostered in those traditions accepted those communal benefits.

Today it might be more accurate to think of young people as nomads.

Here are four changes that demonstrate the nomadic paradigm of young people today.

### New Worlds

The young people I have worked with are keenly interested in and drawn to worlds outside their own: the world of movies and TV serial dramas, the worlds opened via the Internet, the generated worlds of video games and connections to online gamers. These foreign kingdoms and distant shores make huge demands on their time and beckon to them like the Sirens in the nomadic tale of Homer’s *Odyssey*.

They learn to live politely and quietly within the rules of their immediate environment and to develop two or three languages (that is, how to speak in church and school, how to speak around adults, and how to converse with peers). They watch all that goes on around them like hawks and boldly inquire about formerly

out-of-bounds, private areas of adults’ lives for ever more information. They master living within these often-differing worlds, all the while searching for authenticity.

A ministry that acknowledges new worlds must include

- rooting itself in authentic worship—an exercise in re-forming life with God as the center of it all, establishing “home” by praising God, giving thanks for God’s creative and redemptive work in our diverse world, hearing God’s Word preached, and receiving the sacraments given to us in Christ.
- interpreting the Scriptures together, particularly in relation to their meaning for our own lives in a changing world, so that our youths live with a clear sense of purpose.
- providing and accepting hospitality and care graciously, not only to and from those we know and love, but also out-of-our-comfort-zone strangers and even enemies.

“NOTHING NEVER CHANGES.”

### Extensive Travel

Today’s young people also wander about the world like never before. I marvel at how quickly they feel at home in different countries. Twenty years ago our youth groups were more than content to travel a few hours from home to camp or take part in an overnight canoe trip. Now, soon after graduation, groups of friends begin traveling the world together—again, more like nomads than settlers.

Here are two examples of how our church ministry seeks to equip our young members before they roam around the world:

- Our congregation supports a trip to Iona, Scotland, where we live within an isolated and ancient Christian community for one week. The periodically grueling trip functions as a pilgrimage, presenting an opportunity for profound spiritual development and also an opportunity to experience sojourning as Christians.
- When our high school seniors indicate that they will be leaving home after high school, we arrange three visits to other church worship services—churches in which they will not be known—to safely experience venturing into a new and unknown Christian community. We do this because the results of a study suggest that if young people do not attend church within four weeks of leaving home for school or work in another city, there is a high probability that church attendance will not be a part of their away-from-home experience. We hope to make the idea of venturing into a new church community less intimidating and more likely. »

## Innumerable Choices

It would be an oversimplification to say that when I was a teen all of my choices were limited. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the choices confronting a young person today are staggering. Young people face innumerable choices about every aspect of their lives: fashion, music, movies, sports, school trips and missions, extracurricular activities, and humanitarian or religious experiences.

I hear some adults claim that the world they grew up in is not really all that different from the world of today's young people. But I suggest that today's world is dramatically more complex and still rapidly changing.

Churches can equip their youths for the vast array of choices by

- struggling together to become conscious of and to understand the nature of the context in which we live.
- criticizing and resisting powers and patterns (both within the church and in the world as a whole) that destroy human beings, corrode human community, and injure God's creation.

## Expanded Communication

Not long ago the telephone provided the primary means of communication between young people, other than face time. As we all know, there are now myriad ways to stay in touch. News—good or bad, uplifting or dignity-robbing—now travels the world at light speed, including up-to-the-minute images. The hunger to get “the latest” on one's contemporaries or strangers overseas can be hard to resist and represents a time-

consuming call for attention at all hours. As a consequence, young minds are restless and vigilant, wanting to keep up with the latest in this ever-widening scope.

We can engage young minds into redemptive action by

- telling the Christian story to one another face to face—fostering the divine/human dialogue, reading and hearing the Scriptures together and telling the stories of the church's experience throughout its history.
- praying together and by ourselves, not only in formal services of worship but in all times and places.
- suffering with and for one another and all whom Jesus shows us to be our neighbors.
- working together to create and maintain social structures and institutions that sustain life in the world in ways that are in accord with God's will.

The examples listed above for equipping contemporary youths are ancient practices that appear consistently throughout the Christian tradition. But these ancient practices are particularly significant for youth ministry today.

The younger demographic has become a moving target for intentional church ministry. It used to be that the “lost sheep” wandered away from the 99; now it seems that the 99 leave—not as lost, but as nomads wandering about the world. This is our new reality in youth ministry.

I have seen a giant shift away from a one-size-fits-all programming model, which is not faith-sustaining, toward a far more relational emphasis in youth ministry. A ministry striving toward healthy relationships will remain dynamic and vibrant for the participants in the long term. We have found salvation in that kind of connecting.

I have also witnessed a move away from the youth ministry model in which young people gather around one attractive personality and many activities. Instead, youth ministry is moving toward the creation of multiple enduring connections within faith communities that are immersed in Scripture and in the person of Jesus Christ.

This new direction of youth ministry no longer takes for granted that young people will settle and stay. Instead what's emerging is ministry that equips those who are on their way to being salt and light throughout the world.

Authentic youth ministry must be shaped not by an antiquated settler paradigm, but by a nomadic one. Striving to recreate the youth ministry of yesteryear is futile. The world has changed.

Interestingly, I find myself more engaged and challenged by nomads than by settlers. It has been exciting to transition from a settler ministry model to a more nomadic one. And that's partly why I told Aileen that the past year in youth ministry was the best ever! ■



**Rick Mast** has served two congregations in the past two decades as a youth pastor. He is currently youth pastor for West End CRC, Edmonton, Alberta.

## 10 Things Young People Want

Here's what young adults said when they were asked what they want from older leaders:

1. **Authenticity, not just putting a good side forward.** Honesty and vulnerability about what really goes on in your life.
2. **Mutuality, not top-down governance—mentors who respect us in return, allowing us to add value in their lives too.**
3. **Inspiration rather than control.** Give us encouragement and room to dream our dreams outside of the boxes you might be used to.
4. **Valid as opposed to trivial involvement in the full body of the church—don't allocate us to “youth stuff” alone.**
5. **Invitations to see, not just be told.** Invite us along to places where we can watch you model ministry skills and character.
6. **Stop praying for us and start praying with us.**
7. **Courage, instead of fearing to evaluate traditional structures.** Let's ask why we do what we do; let's be learners, not protectors.
8. **Walk with us, instead of toeing the party line, through the truth of Scripture.** Invite us to struggle with what is not clear.
9. **Instead of status quo, a desire to grow.** We need you to be moving with us—committing the church's ministry to God.
10. **Resist being patronizing and instead offer genuine support, laughter, and hugs—a sense that you trust us and actually like us.**

## Boundless Familiarity

In your 20s or 30s? We want to hear what's on your mind as it relates to living out your faith in today's world. Please send manuscripts (600 words) to [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org). (And, no, you don't have to be ordained!)

**I ENJOY EXPERIENCING** radically different things. I move regularly. I have friends everywhere. I am not afraid to be a stranger.

Ultimately, I have few deep roots; little is familiar.

While my life has been somewhat spontaneous and unpredictable, I find something oddly endearing about familiarity—something about it that, as I grow older and move more frequently, I desire.

I am living, for a short while, between walls that know my stories more comprehensively than any walls elsewhere. I am surrounded by art that has accompanied me during the dark nights of my soul. I sit on chairs that have held me when I cried, when I expressed joys, or when I just “was.” I am with people who know me so deeply that I don't need to speak to be understood.

In this temporary place I know every wall, every drawer, every implication, every mug, every routine, every individual.

This is the kind of familiarity I desire: to be known in my deepest parts by everything and everyone around me. And to know the deepest parts of everything and everyone around me.

However, unfamiliarity is easier. Much, much easier. You don't have to let people into your inmost being; you don't have to know your walls and break them down or build them up; you don't have to worry about people seeing the inside of your home and running in the other direction; you don't have to put forth effort to know the streets of another place you'll be only momentarily.

Much less scary. Much less vulnerability needed.

But once you've experienced roots, depth, familiarity, you find them life-giving gifts. We all desire to be known, to be understood, to be loved no matter what.

Yet we cringe at the thought of receiving and giving these gifts.

Over the past year my lack of rootedness has begun to make me realize my “unknownness.” I feel an ever-present, stomach-rumbling hunger for intimacy.

But roots are hard to grow; vulnerability is difficult to engage in.

In this context a psalm from a vital part of my childhood rings in my ears, to be digested in new ways:

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise. . . .

You are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue,

You, LORD, know it completely. . . .

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence? . . .

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me.

Psalm 139 speaks of a God who knows me completely, who roots me, who understands me so well I don't need to speak to be known—yet does not run away. A God who loves me more than anyone or anything I know. Who goes deeper and yearns to know me in profound ways. Who is with me everywhere. Who never changes.

I desire roots, familiarity, and all that they entail. I desire this with people, with places, with streets and cupboards. This, I ultimately don't have.

Yet in some strange sense I do—in a God who knows me better than these walls, this art, these people.

This is my reality: I am known. Yet it has taken me 24 years to even begin to see that the God who has been faithful and present to me, actually, truly, and intimately *knows* me.

I rest in that. ■

**Dayna Vreeken** is an M.Div. student at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. She is a member of First CRC, Lethbridge, Alberta, and a graduate of Dordt College.

NEXT



My lack of rootedness has begun to make me realize my “unknownness.”



## Telling God's Story

by Nancy Vander Meer

**H**ow would you reach 3.5 billion people with the story of God's love?

It sounds impossible. But thanks to today's media tools and the support of God's people, Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) shares the gospel with people around the globe—even in small, isolated communities.

Awatar lives in a remote village in the Jammu region of northern India. At one time he might never have learned about the Christian faith. But through a radio program produced by BTGMI's ministry team in India, Awatar heard about Jesus for the first time in his life.

Life is not easy for the people in Awatar's village, located near the Himalayan Mountains in an area marked by political and religious conflict. Ownership of the region is disputed by Pakistan and India. A Hindu stronghold, the area is surrounded by a Muslim majority state. It seems impossible to build a Christian community here. But



through media outreach, people are coming to Christ.

The first time Awatar heard the Back to God Ministries broadcast, "I was glued to the radio set," he told BTGMI's indigenous producers who later visited his

village. “I took in each word as if my life depended on it.”

Awatar continued to listen and discovered that his life did, indeed, depend on Christ as his Savior. He committed his life to the Lord and says, “I now live a happy, Christ-centered life.”

As Awatar’s family and friends observed the transformation in his life, they too began to listen to the radio broadcasts.

### The Power of Media

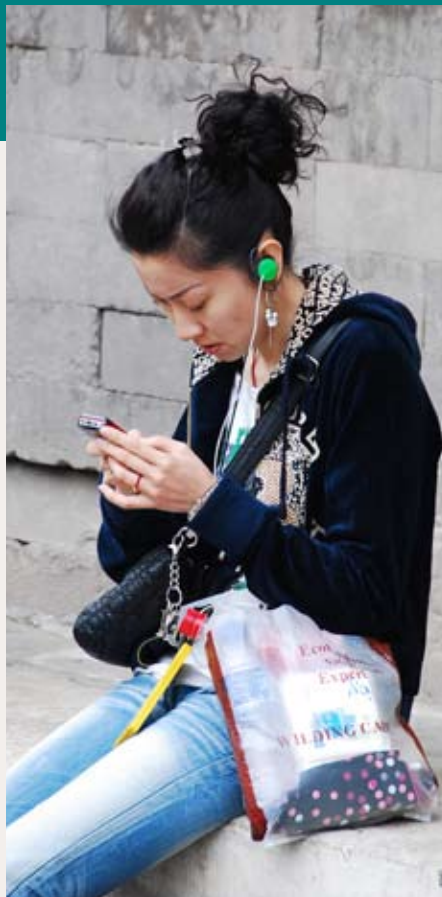
In places where traditional missionaries may be unable to venture, media can penetrate barriers to the gospel. Awatar and the people of his village listen to programs in their own language, produced by Good Books Ministries in India in partnership with BTGMI and Words of Hope, the media ministry of the Reformed Church in America.

BTGMI uses a variety of media to tell of God’s love to people of all ages. In some places, like remote regions of India, Africa, Russia, and Latin America, traditional radio, television, or print media communicate best. But in China, Japan, and the Middle East, the gospel message is powerfully reaching millions through the Internet and cell phones.

Listeners in the Middle East are responding to radio broadcasts, but they do not feel safe making phone calls or sending letters to engage in conversation and ask faith questions. Through text messaging, Arabic staff have personal contact with an average of 700 people each month.

A new believer from Yemen texted, “Already my life is enriched by the beautiful teaching of Issa [Jesus]. This glorious teaching is needed by all people.”

Over the past year social-media ministry made a significant impact in reaching people in China. Thanks to new online and cell-phone social media in China, BTGMI more than quadrupled the number of people who have access to its evangelistic and discipleship program-



Social media outreach is making a significant impact in China.

als to at least 150 others, multiplying the number of people who receive the good news.

### The Power of the Gospel

“In our programs, our goal is to help our listeners discover the practical ways the gospel brings joy and direction to family, community, and social life,” said BTGMI Director Bob Heerspink, who passed away Oct. 1 from pancreatic cancer (see p. 10). “Our message is both evangelistic and disciple making in nature.”

Many people in Latin America, the U.S., and Canada, for example, identify themselves as Christian but do not apply the life-changing implications of the Christian faith.

“The ongoing challenge is to teach biblical truth in today’s culture,” said BTGMI Spanish-ministry leader Guillermo Serrano. “We use new methods to proclaim the gospel, but the message is the same: Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.”

That message resonates with radio broadcast listeners. Maria, a listener from Spain, appreciates the focus of BTGMI messages: “I was educated in a religious school and I understand the language of preachers, but listening to your program ‘Understanding Christianity,’ I can now differentiate between theory and practice of the Christian life.” »

“I took in each word as if my life depended on it.”

ming. In addition, churches and individuals are duplicating and distributing Back to God Ministries’ CDs, DVDs, and devotional materials.

Even as BTGMI staff praise God for the large number of people who have access to God’s Word through media, they recognize that the ministry touches one person at a time. Some of these individuals share their faith and BTGMI resources with others.

One blogger in China wrote, “Today’s devotional is about seeking for spiritual wisdom. It serves as a very good reminder to my spiritual walk. I am resending this to my *weibo* [mini-blog] fans.” Another text message subscriber in northeast China resends the BTGMI daily devotion-

### Quick facts

- BTGMI shares the gospel through media in 10 languages.
- Each month it makes nearly 1.2 million unique contacts with people from at least 189 countries.
- 40 staff members work from North America.
- 205 indigenous staff work from 28 international ministry centers.
- More than 800 local volunteers work in 82 countries. ■

—Nancy Vander Meer

# CHURCHATWORK

## BACK TO GOD MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

### It's Not What You Think

Back to God Ministries International has been around for more than 70 years. Because it initially became familiar to many as a half-hour English-language radio program, many people still assume that's all there is to the ministry. On the contrary . . .

- BTGMI produces 46 audio programs in 10 languages, delivered on more than 2,200 radio stations and accessible through the Internet.
- BTGMI is not just a radio ministry. We have 36 websites and 30 blog sites that offer devotional, Bible study, and discipleship resources. You can find links to all of them at *BackToGod.net*.
- BTGMI produces 12 video programs aired on 235 TV stations in 5 languages. It also distributes these programs through DVD, Facebook, YouTube, and other Internet outlets.
- BTGMI prints and distributes more than 3.7 million devotional booklets in 7 languages, plus tens of thousands of people receive BTGMI's daily devotional messages through email subscriptions, cell phone downloads, Facebook, Twitter, and iPhone, Android, and Kindle apps and their international equivalents.
- BTGMI outreach ministries are not just translations from English. Ten gifted indigenous ministry leaders and their media teams produce evangelism and discipleship materials in the "heart language" and cultural context of the people groups BTGMI reaches.
- BTGMI is not just a media ministry. Follow-up and discipleship are just as important as broadcasting. By God's grace, through listener communities, Bible study resources, text-message conversations, Internet downloads, and committed prayer teams, BTGMI is turning listeners into seekers, seekers into believers, and believers into ambassadors of Christ who share God's good news with others in their communities. ■



**Rev. Sergei Sosedkin meets with people in rural Russia.**

—Nancy Vander Meer

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senator Lusa Bahati's faith motivated her to offer greater service to her country.

Bahati, who lives on the outskirts of Kinshasa, often listened to "Perspectives Réformées," a French-language radio program produced by BTGMI. Through this she learned about a Bible study correspondence course. At a graduation ceremony for 800 people in Congo who completed the course, Bahati testified to the gospel's power in changing her worldview, especially the way she conducts her political activities.

"This study gave me a new perspective on my work as a senator," she said. "My life has been transformed. My faith is now firmly established in Christ, and my Christian witness has been strengthened."

A colleague at the state senate in Kinshasa asked Bahati to serve as the senate chaplain. Now she plans to campaign for the national senate and bring her message of grace and hope through Christ to the whole nation.

"This story is just one illustration of the power of the gospel and the power of media to reach unexpected audiences," said Heerspink. "Through the integration of the Reformed world-and-life view, Bahati is able to



**Senator Bahati seeks to serve the people of Congo.**

make a political impact on her nation."

"All of our international media ministry teams share an unstoppable gospel that is empowered by the invincible Spirit of the Lord," Heerspink said. "Through the tools of modern media, the gospel breaks through every barrier to bring the message of God's love and his kingdom to a fragmented, broken world."

### The Power of Sharing God's Love

Poverty, illiteracy, and cultural religion affect people living in remote regions of Indonesia's vast island nation. Sixty-six-year-old Mr. Dendra

**Mr. Dendra became a believer through a listener community in Bali.**







Villagers in remote regions of northern India have access to God's Word through media.

is illiterate but came to Christ through a BTGMI listener community in Bali.

"I used to be a Hindu," he testified. "But I was exiled by my community because my wife and our son were paralyzed. The community accused me of being a person who was cursed by God. I was so sad and did not know what I should do."

Then Dendra met Pastor Nengah, the listener community coordinator in Bali. "Pastor Nengah became a friend. He has a small and simple house in the middle



of a rice field, and he allowed me and my family to stay with him," Dendra said.

Nengah introduced Dendra and his family to Jesus. Although the home has no electricity, Nengah and his guests listen to the Indonesian program on a battery-powered radio provided by BTGMI Indonesian media missions.

"I am very happy that I learned about the Christian faith," said Dendra. He and his wife and son were baptized, and their faith continues to grow. Dendra testifies

to the wonderful things God has done in his family. "Through the power of prayer, my wife and son are getting better day by day," he said. "I thank God for his wonderful work, especially through Jesus Christ, who saved me and my family."

#### The Power of Partnerships

Back to God Ministries International does not carry out evangelism and discipleship on its own. Whenever possible, it partners with local ministries that provide a vast network of discipleship opportunities for people who respond to the programs. Many of these partners also provide financial resources.

BTGMI collaborates with more than 50 ministry partners, including Christian Reformed Church agencies and indigenous churches and ministries. It also works with more than 800 international volunteers worldwide.

The partnership with the RCA ministry Words of Hope is one example of effective collaboration. Together, the ministries produce "Spotlight," a simplified English-language audio program that discusses a variety of topics from a Christian perspective.

And, through international partners, BTGMI has helped to establish 49 Spotlight English Clubs in 21 countries, providing opportunities to build relationships



BTGMI is privileged to work with gifted ministry leaders for outreach in 10 Languages.

with people who want to know more about the Christian faith. It also partners with Words of Hope in Arabic-, Hindi-, and additional English-language media outreach and is exploring opportunities in Indonesia.

Other crucial partnerships include the Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF), the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (Portuguese outreach), the Indonesian Christian Church, the Reformed Church of Japan, Christians in China and Hong Kong, Evangelical Churches in Russia, India, and French Africa, HCJB radio, and many more.

Without these partnerships—and faithful support from churches and individuals in North America through ministry shares, gifts, and offerings—BTGMI would not have the resources to reach out to and disciple people who are seeking God's good news for their lives. But with your support, people are becoming followers of Jesus ■



Nancy Vander Meer is a staff writer for Back to God Ministries International.

## In the Company of Preachers

**T**he Lord gave the Word,” the basses and tenors boom in unison. Then the choir joins in four parts, “Great was the company of the preachers.”

Handel made this chorus in *Messiah* sound like a great company of preachers by composing it mostly in sixteenth-note runs. I used to love singing it with Calvin College’s Oratorio Society during its annual rendition of this masterpiece. Hundreds of voices joined not only in singing but in “preaching” Psalm 68:11.

For the past 39 years I have been doing that pretty regularly—proclaiming the Word with the never-quite-numerous-enough “company of the preachers.” What a privilege! What a thrill! What a responsibility!

And what an exciting time to be alive, when the “company of the preachers” is greatly increased not only by human involvement but by technological advance. No longer are we dependent on the human voice alone. Now radio and television and print and cell phone and Internet multiply the “company of the preachers” exponentially!

Now, by God’s grace and wonderful provision, that “company” can—and does—include you. The support we give to Back to God Ministries International allows us not only to underwrite a “company of the preachers,” but to join with them! Hundreds of dedicated staff in North America and around the world become thousands—and even more—when, through our support and prayer, we join in bringing as much of the world as possible “back to God.”

God allows us the joy of joining “the company” who proclaims “the Word,” from prophets and faithful believers in the Old Testament to all those welcomed into God’s household when Christ Jesus opened the doors of grace.

And with that great company of the preachers, we respond in faith to the question the apostle Paul asked of the Romans:

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they



have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can [they] preach unless they are sent? (Rom. 10:14-15).

I am sure you will remember another “great company” mentioned in the opening pages of the New Testament:

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:13-14).

You can read on the adjoining pages how God himself is fulfilling that promise to a world as greatly in need of this good news as it was more than 2,000 years ago.

The “company of the preachers” is growing even greater. God is using technology, along with our gifts and prayers, to do exactly what Handel has the choir sing next, after celebrating the “great . . . company of the preachers”:

Their sound is gone out into all lands,  
and their word unto the ends of the world  
(Ps. 19:4, Rom. 10:18).

Celebrate what you read about here. Thank God. Pray for those whom God is using to make the preaching possible. Ask God for generous hearts and hands to make the “company” even greater. Do your part to let the Lord use you to bring this world “back to God.”

I really appreciate the way Eugene Peterson paraphrases the text with which Handel and we began:

The Lord gave the word;  
thousands called out the good news  
(Ps. 68:11, *The Message*).

I am so thankful “the Lord gave the word.” I am so grateful it is God’s Word and not ours. I am thrilled God gave it to us to share. And I am overjoyed that you and I are privileged to join that “great . . . company of the preachers” today to bring our world “back to God.” ■

“That company can—and does—include you.”



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

## Calvin Program Aids Local Schools

This past summer more than 50 teachers from three schools spent four days at Calvin College, improving their skills in reading pedagogy. The conference was funded through a \$200,000 Teacher Quality Grant from the Michigan Department of Education—Calvin’s fourth Teacher Quality Grant in seven years for improving the teaching of reading in local schools.

The grant project is geared to building professional learning communities by enabling Calvin faculty to meet regularly with teachers from the three schools, all in Grand Rapids, Mich.

“Mainly, it’s a way that teachers can support each other, so it’s not just left to individual teachers to determine how to apply something or figure out whether it’s working,” said Calvin’s grant coordinator Megan Cooke.

Faculty from Calvin’s education, communication arts and sciences, English, and information technology departments participate in the learning communities.

Teachers are trained to help students spend quality time in both teacher- and self-directed reading. They also learn to teach students to write more thoughtfully, to design curricula flexible enough to meet individual needs, and to incorporate appropriate technology with reading.

The teachers will assess their results collaboratively and with Calvin educators. ■

—Myrna Anderson, Calvin College

A Calvin faculty member works with reading teachers.



## Planting Trees in Nigeria

For World Environment Day, Christians in Nigeria planted 1,000 tree seedlings in the rural community of Saya in Plateau State, Nigeria. They distributed an additional 1,000 seedlings to churches and schools for families to take home and plant.

“The importance of tree planting in Nigeria can never be overemphasized,” Danladi Musa, director of Tearfund Nigeria, a Christian international relief-and-development agency, said on World Environment Day. “We need them for our survival.”

Over time, Nigeria has lost nearly 60 percent of its primary forests—more than any other country—to logging, subsistence agriculture, charcoal production, and the collection of firewood. This environmental degradation has had harsh consequences.

“When trees are cut, topsoil is lost and crops can’t grow as well. When mass deforestation happens, rains don’t come and crops can’t grow,” said Andrew Gwavamingh, executive director of one of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee’s partners in Nigeria.

World Environment Day was sponsored by Micah Challenge, a global coalition of Christians committed to cutting extreme poverty in half by 2015. One of its goals is to “ensure environmental sustainability.”

As an active member of Micah Challenge, CRWRC engaged churches, Christian leaders, and schools to take action on World Environment Day.

“If CRWRC wants to help people address poverty and injustice, and if we believe that community transformation lies at the heart of this ministry, we must also include caring for the physical environment of which that community is a part,” said Ida Kaastra Mutoigo, CRWRC’s director in Canada.

For World Environment Day, CRWRC-Nigeria worked aggressively with Micah Challenge to organize a poster art competition and a trash art competition for students. A coloring book with basic environmental concepts was produced and distributed in schools. Jingles encouraging tree planting played on the radio. CRWRC staff spoke on one radio and two television programs.

Events culminated with the tree planting, which may have seemed small, but “when billions of people join forces in common purpose, we can make a tremendous difference,” said a Nigerian geology professor, quoting U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. ■

—Talitha Tukura Pam, CRWRC Constituency Bridger, Nigeria



CRWRC-Nigeria’s John Orkar plants a tree.

## Calvin Seminary Serves Global Church

**B**oth inside and outside the classroom, international students enrich and inform the life of Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Mich.



A Korean singing group performs at CTS.

Koreans bring a contagious zeal for prayer and evangelism and unrivaled passion for study. They also bless the seminary with powerful, passionate singing. And Korean missionaries serving in Uganda, Nepal, and the Philippines share the joys and struggles of work in their contexts.

Nigerian, Ethiopian, and Indonesian students speak

about the persecution of Christians and destruction of churches by radical Muslims.

Students from Sierra Leone and Liberia share stories about God's preservation amidst horrific civil war. Students from China, Japan, and Malaysia tell of facing political and social difficulties as Christian minorities in their countries.

A student from Myanmar recounts how God miraculously

led him to escape the clutches of his military captors.

And the contagious joy of students from Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico infects the whole seminary community.

About one-third of this year's 352 students comes from nearly 30 countries.

Through the CTS International Friends Program, Americans, Canadians, and international student families

learn about each other's countries and cultures. The bonds formed often last a lifetime.

God has called Calvin Theological Seminary to serve not only the Christian Reformed Church in North America, but his church around the world. ■

—Richard Sytsma and Matthew Cooke, Calvin Theological Seminary

## New Church Planting Leader Appointed

**C**hristian Reformed Home Missions has appointed church planter Rev. Larry Doornbos as leader for the agency's Church Planting and Development Leadership Team (CPDLT).

Doornbos is the founding and senior pastor of EverGreen Ministries in Hudsonville, Mich. He will continue to serve in that role while working half-time for Home Missions. As CPDLT leader, he will lead a team that seeks to help plant 30 churches each year in North America, help train and evaluate future leaders, and work on the new joint CRC and Reformed Church in America Church Multiplication Initiative.

"I am looking forward to working with [Home Missions] Director Moses Chung and the Home Missions team across North America as we pursue a vibrant future for the CRCNA by renewing communities together," says Doornbos.

"Larry's gifts, experience in church planting, and leadership capabilities make him the right fit for this job, both now and for the future," says Chung.

Both Chung and Doornbos see the CPDLT as instrumental in helping to cast a vision for the entire denomination in participating in God's mission in North America.

Doornbos is excited about the intersection of the church planting team with the new Church Planting Institute at Calvin Theological Seminary. "I see this as a great oppor-



Rev. Larry Doornbos

tunity for deep theological discussion, conversation about missions, and sharing knowledge on the best ways to plant churches in North America and the world," he said.

With support and commitment from the leadership, staff, and members of EverGreen to live passionately for Christ, Doornbos and his wife, Linda, have enjoyed watching EverGreen grow and develop for the past 18 years. Larry also served Rehoboth CRC in New Mexico for eight years.

Larry and Linda have two children. ■

—Ben Van Houten, Christian Reformed Home Missions



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## Sierra Leone Church Keeps Growing

A group of Temne people wanted to start a church in their community of Rothen Mara, Sierra Leone. But with few leaders, the believers said they needed “organization, a better understanding of the gospel, and some training in how to get a new church growing.”

Having heard about the growth of the Christian Reformed Church of Sierra Leone (CRCSL), they approached Pastor John Phiri for help.

Phiri, a missionary of the Reformed Church of Zambia, has served in Sierra Leone since 2006 through a partnership with Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM). His ministry focuses on developing Sierra Leonean church leaders. In August he traveled to Rothen Mara with 25 members from the CRCSL in Kabala to assess the church’s needs.

They learned that village leaders have welcomed the church and given it five acres of land. About 230 people want to be part of the new congregation in Rothen Mara. Many are eager to be trained to reach out to their community.

“One of the many challenges in a pioneer mission field such as Sierra Leone is to train excellent local leaders,” says Paul Kortenhoven, a former CRWM missionary in Sierra Leone who remains involved with the country as a volunteer, promoter, and friend.

Kortenhoven, Phiri, and others have found that the practical, reproducible nature of Timothy Leadership Training (TLT), a program based at Calvin Theological Seminary, is an effective leadership development tool.

In the past six years, TLT has trained more than 65 Sierra Leonean leaders. Moreover, three leaders have begun training at seminaries in Nigeria and Sierra Leone. In time, believers in Rothen Mara will train with TLT as well.

The CRC of Sierra Leone, which has 60 churches and more than 5,500 believers, began among the Kuranko people, expanding to include the Mende and Limba people, and now the Temne people. ■

—Sarah Van Stempvoort,  
*Christian Reformed World Missions*

**Pastor John Phiri baptizes a new believer.**



EMILY LOBEK

# Living in a Colorful World

Can you imagine a world without the colors of the rainbow? How would you like to eat a gray apple or pick a bouquet of dust-colored flowers? What if all the clothes in

your closet were beige? A one-color world would be so boring!

God loves color—just take a good look at God’s world and you’ll see beautiful colors everywhere. Sometimes

colors pop up in the most surprising places, like on teeny beetles or poisonous frogs. Sometimes they decorate underwater creatures that most people will never see. But if you look, you can find God’s artwork all around you.

## Crayola Trivia

In 1903 when Crayola crayons were invented, they came in only **eight colors**: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, brown, and black. Here are some other fun facts about our favorite wax sticks:

- The Crayola company estimates that by age 10, the average American kid has worn down about **730 crayons**.
- The famous artist **Grant Wood** won a Crayola coloring contest in the early 1900s—and he said that encouraged him to become an artist.
- According to a study by Yale University, the **smell** of Crayola crayons is no. 18 of the top-20 smells most easily recognized by American adults (no. 1 is coffee and no. 2 is peanut butter).
- In 1962, the color “**Flesh**” was renamed “**Peach**,” since there are many, many different skin colors in our world. (In fact, people we usually refer to as “white” or “Caucasian” make up less than 20 percent of the world’s population.)

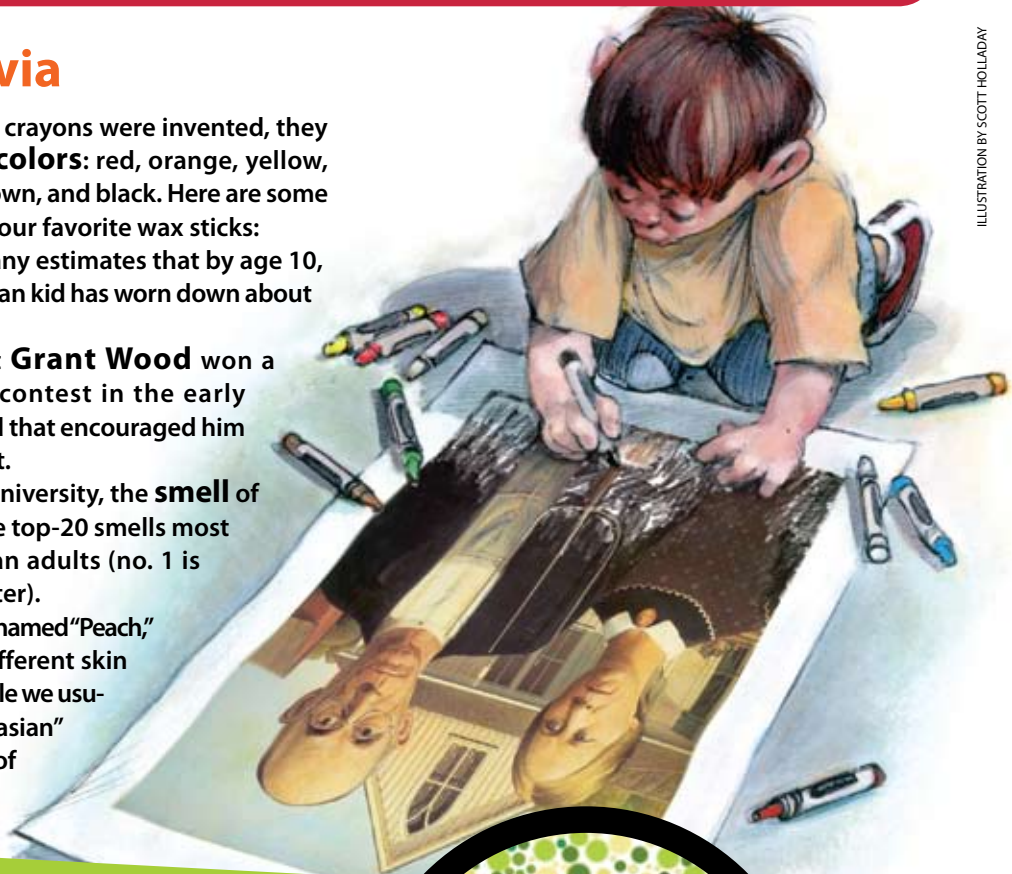


ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY



## True Colors?

Did you know that apples aren’t really red? It’s true. Objects don’t really have color on their own. Light is what makes our eyes able to see colors.

For example, an apple *looks* red in the daylight because when the light bounces off it, the apple reflects the red part of the rainbow and absorbs all the other colors. So your eye sees only the red color.

Some people are “color-blind.” That’s pretty common, especially in boys (about 8 out of every 100 boys are color-blind). If you’re color-blind, it doesn’t mean you can’t see colors—it’s just hard to tell the difference between certain colors, like red and green. This happens because certain cells in your eyes, called “cones,” are wired differently than usual.



## Color Chips

The inside of the Cathedral Basilica in St. Louis, Missouri, uses color to glorify God. It's decorated with millions of tiny colored glass or stone tiles that make beautiful patterns and pictures showing God's work in history and today. This kind of artwork is called "mosaic," and it's been used to decorate things since about 3000 B.C. For fun, try making your own colorful mosaic. For ideas, visit [familyfun.go.com](http://familyfun.go.com) and search for "mosaic."



## Find These Colorful Creatures!

The world God made is full of flashy, fabulous, colorful creatures. Find and circle the names of these 10 multicolored animals. Look for words horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or backwards.



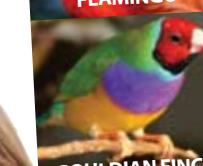
CHAMELEON



CORAL SNAKE



FLAMINGO



GOULDIAN FINCH



MANDARIN DUCK



MANDARINFISH

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



MANDRILL



NUDIBRANCH



PEACOCK



POISON DART FROG

## Tie-dyed Milk



Here's a fun color-mixing experiment to do at home.

### What you need:

- 1 cup whole milk or cream in a small bowl
- red, blue, and yellow food coloring
- liquid dish soap

### What you do:

- Step 1: Let the milk or cream warm to room temperature.
- Step 2: Carefully put drops of food coloring on the surface of the milk or cream.
- Step 3: Add one drop of dish soap to the middle of the bowl, and watch the colors swirl! When they stop, you can add another drop of dish soap and start the swirls all over again.

*Note: Do NOT drink the tie-dyed milk. The soap tastes terrible and isn't good for you.*



Sandy Swartzentruber works for Faith Alive and is a member of Church of the Servant CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich. Her very favorite color in the Crayola box is "Inchworm."

# GLOBAL WARNING(S)



**T**WENTY MINUTES before midnight on April 14, 1912, the alarm “Iceberg right ahead!” echoed across the *Titanic*. The view from the bridge must have been terrifying, along with the sickening realization that a ship the size of the *Titanic* could not maneuver quickly or nimbly enough to avoid collision.

Less than one minute after the alarm sounded, the collision occurred. Within three hours one of the most iconic of naval disasters was complete. The tragedy was made even more poignant by the fact that the most important warning, a mes-

sage from another ship that there were icebergs in *Titanic*'s path, was never relayed to the bridge.

Could the *Titanic* serve as a metaphor for Earth and Earth's climate? I would like to argue that, unlike the crew of the *Titanic*, we've been receiving warnings from many quarters that we sail on troubled waters. Warnings have trickled into the “bridge” of our understanding for more than a century, but the most alarming warnings have come in the past 20 years. Is the message getting through, or are we too headed for disaster?

The warnings about Earth's climate come from a rich diversity of research fields. We've received warnings that tell

us about carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, changes in global temperature, mass extinctions of critical species, sea-level rise, and changes in ocean chemistry. Acting on these warnings may well be one of the most faith-full acts we can perform as God's people.

## Weather and Climate

It's easy to scoff at claims about future climate change with dismissive comments about not being able to predict the weather tomorrow. *Weather* refers to the short-term behavior of air temperature, humidity, and pressure. This is inherently difficult—if not impossible—to predict over long periods of time.



*Climate*, on the other hand, is the long-term average of weather in which all of the chaotic and unpredictable bits are smoothed out. Farmers and gardeners understand climate very well. It is important to keep this distinction in mind when talking about climate change. Said differently, “Climate is what you expect. Weather is what you get!”

## The rise in CO<sub>2</sub> levels from 1750 to the present matches very closely our use of fossil fuels.

### Our Fragile Atmosphere

It may seem odd to describe the atmosphere as “fragile.” Indeed, when you see the destructive potential of weather, it’s easy to doubt that humans can have any influence on weather and climate. Understanding the fragility of our atmosphere is one of the first steps needed to understand how we can and have influenced Earth’s climate.

Our weather and climate originate, for the most part, in the layer of the atmosphere called the *troposphere*. When flying across the continent you are at the top of the troposphere. Think of this thick layer of air as equivalent to a glossy layer of shellac on a schoolroom globe—that’s about the right proportion between the thickness of the atmosphere and the size of the Earth.

Seen that way, it becomes less surprising that we might affect Earth’s atmosphere. We are completely dependent on this fragile layer for all complex life on the planet, and it’s easy to quantify both the mass of the atmosphere and how much stuff we put into it each year. This is where we encounter our first “global warning.”

### What Carbon Dioxide Tells Us

The graph shown in Figure 1 is one of the most significant graphs ever produced. It is the Keeling Curve (named after Charles Keeling) and shows the

atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the air from 1957 (when the first measurements were made) to the spring of 2011.

The graph’s gentle up-and-down wiggles provide a wonderful “picture” of our planet breathing. Each spring as the Northern Hemisphere greens up, plants absorb carbon dioxide, and the concen-

tration of the gas drops in the atmosphere. As we enter winter, plants die and CO<sub>2</sub> is returned to the atmosphere. Such wondrous balance in creation!

Yet there is an ominous side to this diagram. The steady growth in the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> is alarming. Why?

Even in small amounts of parts per million (or ppm), CO<sub>2</sub> plays an essential role in our atmosphere. CO<sub>2</sub> is called a “greenhouse gas” (or GHG) because of

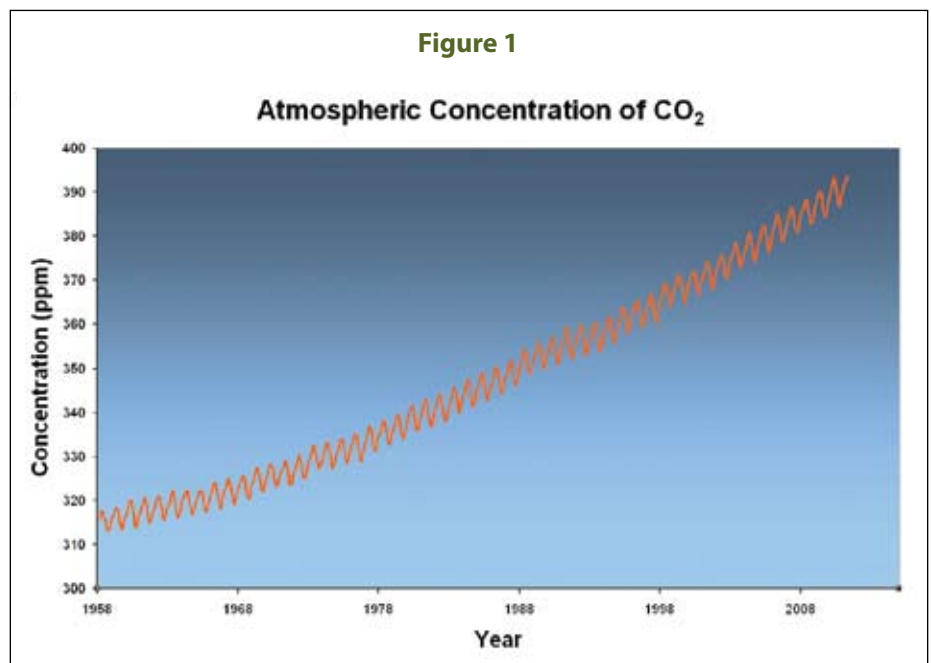
its important warming function in the atmosphere.

The Earth receives energy from the sun in the form of light. The Earth warms and achieves a balance with its cosmic environment by emitting energy back to space. This is a basic fact of physics: the net energy in must balance the net energy out. The energy leaving Earth emits not as visible light but as long wavelength infrared (heat) waves. Greenhouse gases (which include water vapor, methane, nitrous oxide, and others) are able to trap some of this outgoing heat energy. Without the benefit of greenhouse gases, our atmosphere and Earth would be much colder!

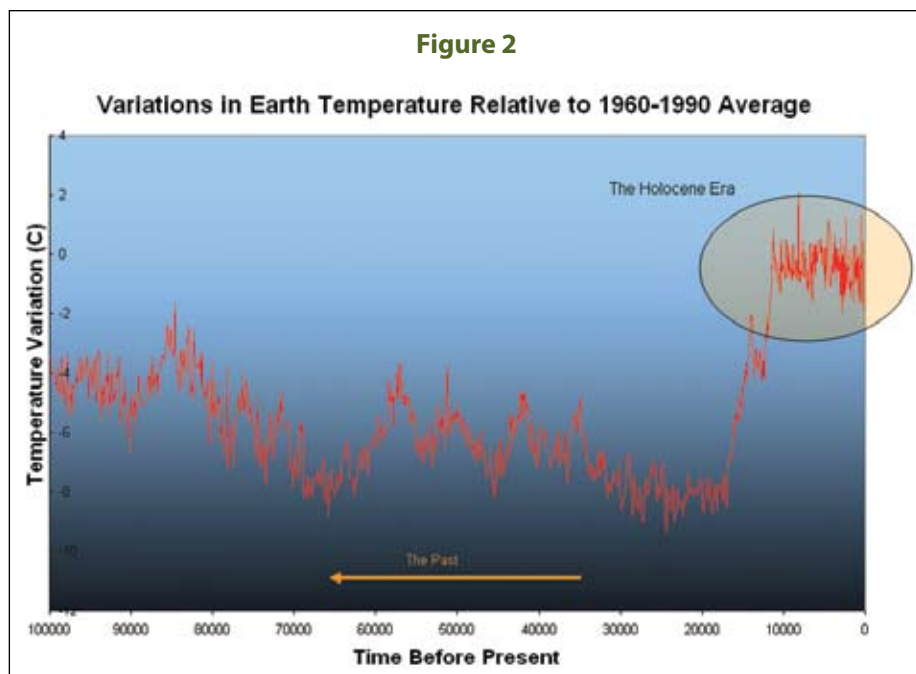
BUT if we have too much CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, then we have a different problem: the atmosphere warms up too much.

For most of human history the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere has been around 270 ppm. Beginning with the industrial revolution (roughly around the year 1750) there has been an accelerating rise in CO<sub>2</sub> levels, which has resulted in serious changes in global temperature.

We can take this just a bit further. The rise in CO<sub>2</sub> levels from 1750 to the present



**Figure 2**



matches very closely our use of fossil fuels. It is a simple calculation to show that the amount of extra CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is almost entirely due to the release of CO<sub>2</sub> from fossil fuel combustion. The first alarm has sounded: we need to change course with respect to greenhouse gas emissions!

### Warning from the Past

Tree rings, coral reefs, and ice cores allow us to peer back in time to understand what Earth's climate was like hundreds of thousands of years ago. The current level of CO<sub>2</sub> in our atmosphere (about 390 ppm) is much higher than at any time in the past million years of Earth's climate. In this lies a warning. We understand how CO<sub>2</sub> and temperature are related—it's a subtle feedback effect with CO<sub>2</sub> playing the role of the atmosphere's "thermostat." By increasing the levels of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases, we're setting the Earth's atmospheric thermostat higher. The danger is that by doing this we're in effect running an experiment that we poorly understand.

Figure 2 shows us what may be at stake. This graph shows 100,000 years of Earth's climate history, a history marked by large-scale changes in tem-

perature. The exception to this is what has happened over the past 10,000 years. This is the Holocene Era (circled on the graph) and is the time in which Earth's climate has been remarkably stable. This has permitted the development of agriculture and flourishing civilizations.

The warning from the past is this: Earth's climate tends to be much less constant than it has been for the past 10,000

## Acting on these warnings may well be one of the most faith-full acts we can perform as God's people.

years, and we, by affecting climate, may well be heading back to "climate chaos."

### What Our Thermometers Tell Us

The once majestic ice fields of Glacier National Park and other regions of the Rockies are melting. I first visited the Columbia Ice Fields more than 50 years

ago. Today, this once vast glacier has retreated and is only a fraction of its former self. The lovely Angel Glacier (Figure 3) in Jasper is all but gone. In Africa the fabled "Snows of Kilimanjaro" will disappear by 2030.

Glacier retreat is a worldwide phenomenon that has accelerated noticeably over the past century. Temperature change in the Arctic is even more extreme. Polar ice is thinning rapidly, and it is almost certain that by the end of this century the northern polar cap will disappear in the late summer months.

Understanding temperature data over the past 1,000 years is challenging. Daily variations in temperature (weather) can easily hide the much smaller, gradual shifts in average temperature (climate). Despite this, numerous techniques tell us that from about A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1500, Earth was in the "Medieval Warm" period, with a gradual decline in global temperature that bottomed out in the "Little Ice Age" of the 1600s. Since then, global temperature has started to rise. The current rate of temperature change is almost 10 times the rate observed in the past, and it provides a graphic illustration of what is now a virtual certainty: Earth is heating up, and the rise in temperature

cannot be explained completely by natural phenomena. Sea-level rise and an increase in frequency of extreme weather events (including tornados and hurricanes) appear to be a consequence of the increase in global temperature.

Human-caused temperature change over the past 50 years is approximately

0.9 degrees F, with a possible total increase of between 3.5 to 9 F by the year 2100.

A 1-degree shift may not sound like much, but that is believed to be about the size of the temperature shift that occurred during the Medieval Warming. It is also believed to be a major cause of the collapse of the Mayan civilization and that of the mysterious Anasazi of Arizona.

A temperature change of 9 degrees would be about the magnitude that took Earth from the last ice age to present global temperatures. We don't know where we are headed here, except that global mean temperature increase will, by 2100, be somewhere in the 3.5 to 9 F range. A change of 2 degrees F would be significant; a change of 9 degrees F would be catastrophic.

of aquatic life. However, as the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> increases in the atmosphere and more is absorbed into the oceans, the oceans become increasingly acidic.

The oceans are more acidic today than they have been in the past 20 million years. The change in ocean acidity correlates directly with increased CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere. It is becoming clear: the oceans are providing an urgent warning that we must change our CO<sub>2</sub> habits. Put simply, the minute organisms that are the base of the aquatic food chain and produce 70 percent of Earth's oxygen (our planet's "lungs") are in grave jeopardy.

### Heeding the Warnings

We are stewards of a wonderful creation. As a scientist I am humbled that God has

## It's not too late for us to change course.

learn some of the fundamental science behind it. It's not too late for us to change course, but to do so we all must understand the basic causes of human-induced climate change.

Second, we can encourage our political leaders to work with us to find ways to reduce our CO<sub>2</sub> "footprint." Yes, we can do our part as individuals, but we must also act as nations. Write to your political representatives and encourage them to "do the right thing."

Third, act in faith that we are called to be stewards and that we can make a difference.

*To learn more about climate change and to access online resources including those created by The King's Centre for Visualization in Science, please see [www.explainingclimatechange.ca](http://www.explainingclimatechange.ca). ■*



### What the Oceans Tell Us

"Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying" (Hosea 4:3).

Our oceans are ill. Atmospheric carbon dioxide is absorbed (and regulated) by the oceans. When CO<sub>2</sub> dissolves in water, a mild acid (carbonic acid) forms. Eventually CO<sub>2</sub> is sequestered in the shells and bodies

given us the insight, intellect, and tools to understand, in part, this subtle and ever-surprising planet. What we know clearly is that we are having a profound and potentially catastrophic effect on the climate of Earth.

What can we do about that? Perhaps the first thing is to become knowledgeable about climate change. We need to get past the rhetoric and emotional language and



An astrophysicist by training, Dr. Brian Martin is professor of physics and astronomy at The King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta. He also

codirects the King's Centre for Visualization in Science and, with colleague Peter Mahaffy and a team of gifted undergraduate students, produces web-based resources to help students, teachers, and the general public understand the complex science of global climate change as well as other areas in science. He is a member of Fellowship CRC in Edmonton.

# How Should We Read the Bible?

... especially when science and faith collide



## HOW SHOULD WE READ THE BIBLE?

**H**You might say that a more important question is *Should we not read the Bible more?* I will not quarrel with you. But in view of recent developments, we must face the question of the proper way to read Scripture.

The developments I refer to are the results of the Human Genome Project, which indicate strongly that the human race, as now constituted, did not descend from one human pair (Adam and Eve), as the early chapters of Genesis portray. Surely, many people will conclude that either Genesis is right or science is right. Articles quoting persons saying as much have appeared in several conservative and evangelical magazines.

I'd like to attempt, as briefly as possible, to offer a response that, I hope, deals responsibly with the matters in dispute that hit closer to home.

## Calvin in the Fray

Calvin College has been drawn into the fray. Two Calvin professors wrote articles in the journal *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*. While the professors' research was done under the auspices of the college, there was not a unanimous acceptance of their conclusions. Information concerning the college's reaction has received media attention, including from National Public Radio, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Grand Rapids (Mich.) Press*.

From Sunday school classrooms to theological seminars, Christians often face questions regarding the Genesis story: Where is Eden? Where are the rivers? Where did Cain get his wife? Who are the people seeking to kill Cain? The answers to those questions rarely satisfy the teachers or the students. On the one hand some doggedly insist that Genesis is plain, literal history, while others declare it a myth and, therefore, not historical.

Is there another option? Some observations indicating how our culture affects the way we read the Bible may be helpful:

- Our culture is obsessed with information, while the Bible writers were more interested in personal relationships.
- We assume that information is best transmitted in simple and exact language, while the Bible writers were skilled in figurative language.
- We assume that plain, literal human language is adequate to describe history and human experience, while the Bible writers seem often to prefer the metaphor and other figures of speech.

Further, if we analyze human interests and human communication, it becomes clear that some people are interested in the what and the how, while others are interested in the who and the why. Is it fair to say that our culture, so influenced by technology, is interested more in the what and the how than the who and the why? (Would that not explain why our culture has made such enormous strides in technology?) Is it fair to say that the Bible writers were more concerned with the who and the why than with the what and the how? If so, then perhaps we “moderns” need to shift gears intellectually and emotionally when we read our Bibles.

### The Trouble with Inerrancy

Our tendency to read the Bible in a literal way is borne out in the insistence by some that the Bible is inerrant.

Now, I trust that none of us would maintain that the Bible has errors—especially so when we see the list of noble evangelicals (among them such venerable names as Carl F. H. Henry, James Boice, and J.I. Packer) who in 1978 produced *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*. We would wish only to join with them.

It is noteworthy, however, that in Article XIII of the statement, these evangelicals “affirm the propriety of using *inerrancy* as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.” The stricture that the word *inerrant* be limited to theological purposes is helpful and appropriate. In the statement’s next paragraph, the signers “deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to the standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. [They] further deny that inerrancy is negated by biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern mechanical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of materials, variant selection of material in parallel, or the use of free citations.”

That view seems very close to what we in Reformed circles usually call “the organic view of inspiration.”

Having said that, I find it necessary to also point out that our common understanding of the word *inerrant* may be somewhat misleading when we speak of “scriptural inerrancy.” Have we benefited from the limitations the authors of *The Chicago Statement* placed on the word?

Synod 1959 of the Christian Reformed Church appointed me, among others, to the Committee on Infallibility. The com-

mittee discussed at some length the usefulness of the word *inerrant* to describe the Bible. We concluded that it is not the most felicitous term to express the unique character of the Scriptures. We agreed that *infallible* and *trustworthy* fit the nature of the Bible more appropriately.

What’s wrong with *inerrant*? Well, it tends to characterize the Bible as an encyclopedia of unsailable facts on which we can build a case in any field of learning. *Inerrant* also tends to lead to an interminable discussion on the apparent “discrepancies” in Scripture. Finally, the term emphasizes the accuracy or exactitude of the Bible, while the Scriptures themselves emphasize the power of the *word*—Isaiah 55:10, for example: “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return until they have watered the earth . . . so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (NRSV).

### Camera vs. Artist’s Brush

During discussions within the Committee on Infallibility, one of the members, the late Louis Praamsma, informed us that theologian and politician Abraham Kuyper maintained that the historiography of the Bible was not that of a camera but more like that of an artist’s brush.

That was an eye-opener for me. It suggested there is more to reality than the camera can capture. The concerns of the Bible are deeper than a camera can see. To put it more simply: human language often fails us in our relationship with God. As I once heard someone say, “What is worth saying cannot be said.”

The function as well as the limitations of human language came forcefully to my attention while I was working on a sermon on the prophet Nathan’s famous visit with David.

Nathan tells a story—most Bible commentators take it to be a parable—about a rich man stealing a lamb from a poor man in order that the rich man may entertain his friends. David, whom the Bible portrays as a king who judged his people with equity, is furious. But Nathan has news for him: David is the rich man!

In a sense, parables (even though they may not have happened literally) are history in an even more profound way than we usually understand history. In Nathan’s story the “lamb” is used instructively, demonstrating how skilled and subtle the ancients could be with metaphor.

At first the “lamb” is Bathsheba, but once slaughtered it becomes something else: the corpse of a loyal, innocent man—»

**Are we interested more in the what and the how than the who and the why?**

# Are the advances in science a fearsome enemy to faith?

Uriah. Consequently it is much, much more than a chunk of mutton and wool. Tragically more historical!

Abraham Kuyper's distinction of the camera vs. the artist's brush helped me to understand that Nathan's story teaches us one more thing about the Bible's historiography: it is *pastoral*, it is God reaching out to the sinner.

David was not so stupid as to say, "There never was a lamb." Instead, he pours out his soul to God in inexpressible regret: "Against you, you only, have I sinned" (Psalm 51:4). Hardly inerrant words. What about David's sins against Uriah and others? Nathan's story and David's words inform us, as we try to understand the Scriptures, that human language is often inadequate to express what we want to and must say.

Stories like Nathan's, and parables in general, tell us that parables are more "historical" than we might recognize. As one student put it, "God's historiography is three-dimensional, or in three tenses: It refers to an event (past tense) according to the reader's/hearer's need (present tense) for guidance to appropriate action (future tense)." Nathan's story surely demonstrates that.

Another student's high school teacher noted that Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Topsy" was more historical than any living African American girl. If Harriet Beecher Stowe could create a literary figure who profoundly affected the course of history (remember the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation) more than any flesh and blood girl, can the Holy Spirit not do that and more? Do we have the right to tell the Spirit how to write the Bible?

Another student pointed out his pastor's indication of a clear symmetry in the Bible: the first chapters deal with the distant past, and the final chapters deal with the distant future. The pastor felt that both should be recognized as literature of a distinct type (*genre*, the scholars call it)—that in both the first chapters and the final chapters it's important to see that history is told in a different, probably more metaphorical, way.

Throughout the Bible we must recognize that metaphor is a better vehicle for conveying the "deep things of God." In John 3, for example, Jesus puts Nicodemus through his hermeneutical paces. "You must be born again," Jesus says. What crazy language is that?! We wonder at how Nicodemus fussed. But what a thrill to meet Nicodemus again at the cross. He acts in a most "born again" way. He caught on!

## What About Perspicuity?

Some may demur and say, "But did not the Reformers emphasize the perspicuity [clarity] of the Scriptures?"

Yes, they did. But that was in opposition to the Papists who wished to deny people the blessing of reading God's Word for themselves. It does not mean the Reformers considered interpretation unnecessary.

In reading John Calvin's commentaries on Scripture, there is one formula we encounter again and again. It goes like this: "Church

father X understands the passage to mean . . . but I prefer the meaning that . . ." (Admittedly, when Calvin takes on the Papists, another more caustic, vituperative formula appears.)

And Scripture itself indicates the need for interpretation: when Philip asks the eunuch whether he understands what he reads, the eunuch replies, "How can I unless someone explains it to me?" (Acts 8).

Yes, the plain and simple reading of Scripture is a blessing to all, but that does not mean we have no challenges. The Christian Reformed Church at its inception insisted on an educated clergy. Acts 15 makes clear that when there are interpretation problems, we must deal with them communally under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And that does not mean that professional theologians or the church are infallible.

The "Galileo affair" should also be instructive for us. I think there is a pretty firm consensus among Christian historians that the manner in which the church handled it was not a service to Christianity.

## Trust the Spirit

I wish I could offer a simple and convincing solution to our present challenge. Should we not see it as a means by which God calls us to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that we may communally ponder these issues in faith and humility? Are the advances in science a fearsome enemy to faith? Or may we view them as a God-sent prod for the "theological orchestra" to pause and take note of whether the strings need tuning?

If Kuyper's distinction between the camera and the artist's brush is valid, can we view scientists as providing a more photographic account of history, while the Bible gives us the Artist's account of history?

That would not mean one is valid and the other is not. It would mean that the photographs help tell us more clearly what the Artist is saying.

I was taught that science is the process of human thought in which theories are proposed and then tested to determine their validity. The result is constant review and revision in science. Theology too is a science. Theologians receive data from natural revelation and special revelation. Can theologians ignore the efforts and conclusions of those who work in the natural sciences? Could they learn from those findings, however tentative they may be?

It would seem that the need of the hour is prayer, openness to the Spirit's leading, and an expectation that in the end our Christian faith will be more vital than ever! ■



Rev. Clarence Vos is a retired minister in the Christian Reformed Church and a professor emeritus of religion and Old Testament at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.



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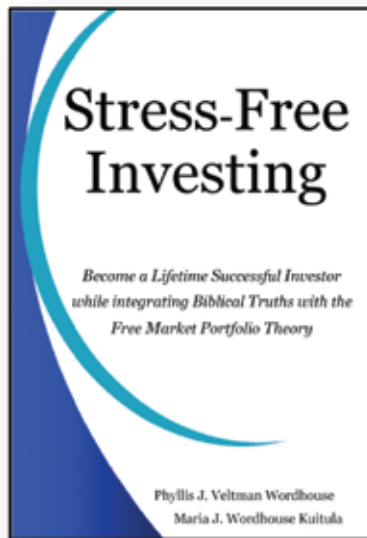
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## A True Friend

**LOOKING BACK, STACEY EDGAR REALIZES** how God has blessed and guided her to establish Global Girlfriend, a business that started in her Colorado basement and grew into a multimillion-dollar enterprise distributing hand-made, fairly traded products and clothing made by women throughout the world.

During her children's early years, three events—the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the Columbine High School shootings in 1999, and the terror attacks of 9/11—filled her with terror for their future.

When paralyzing panic ensued, Edgar called 911 and was taken to the hospital. In the following days, she thought, "What is this world I've brought three children into? And what can I do to change it?" However, she realized that her anxiety was nothing compared to that of other women worldwide who deal with poverty, homelessness, illiteracy, financial powerlessness, sex trafficking, and HIV/AIDS. She concluded that "the women of the world needed their own 911 call."

In 2003, with a \$2,000 tax return, Edgar began to import women-made, fair trade, eco-friendly products that North American customers would find attractive. Initially her customers were her girlfriends, neighbors, family, and mothers of her children's friends. An e-commerce website, mail-order catalog, and wholesale business followed. In five years, the customer base grew to 20,000 American women "who eagerly used their purchasing power to help their girlfriends



around the world gain economic security."

In her book, *Global Girlfriends* (St. Martin's Press), and on her website ([globalgirlfriend.com](http://globalgirlfriend.com)), Edgar shows that "we have an opportunity to shop according to our values." When we do so, each item we purchase recognizes that a person, valued in God's sight, needs to be afforded dignity and given a fair chance to make a meaningful living.

Global Girlfriend donates a charity royalty from each purchase of apparel, bath and body products, handbags, accessories, jewelry, handmade papers, and more to Camfed (Campaign for Female Education), "a nonprofit organization dedicated to eradicating poverty in Africa through the education of girls and the empowerment of young women."

Edgar founded Global Girlfriend because she believed that small, seemingly insignificant acts can change the world, one person at a time. God has blessed her act of obedience. What small, seemingly insignificant activity is God calling you to participate in? ■



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

Small, seemingly insignificant acts can change the world.

## The Pastor

by **Eugene H. Peterson**  
reviewed by **Mary S. Hulst**



Peterson's new memoir informs, delights, challenges, and convicts. From planting a church to

building a church building, from being new in a city to creating a circle of friends who helped shape his pastoral identity, he tells the story of his life in ministry. At times warm and a bit folksy, there are also passages that ring with the zeal of someone who loves the church and refuses to see it sold out as anything less. A great gift for pastors, and a wonderful read for anyone who loves the church. (Harper-One)

## Psalms Unplugged

by **The Psalm Project**  
reviewed by **Robert Keeley**

The Psalm Project is a group of musicians from the Netherlands who have taken Genevan psalm tunes from the 1500s and updated them with arrange-



ments for piano, guitar, and strings. They have created a beautiful

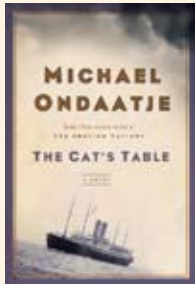
and inspirational album of songs that are both familiar and fresh. Many of these tunes are historically important but are also sometimes difficult to sing. In these new versions, though, the psalms come alive so that we can engage them in new ways. ([thepsalmproject.com](http://thepsalmproject.com))



# Tuned In Christmas Tips

## The Cat's Table

by Michael Ondaatje  
reviewed by Jim Romahn

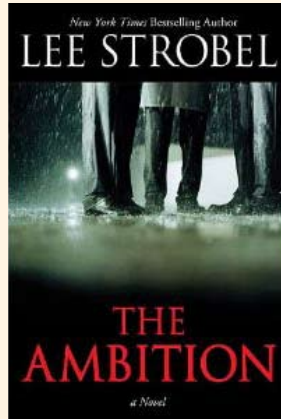


As the *Oronsay* sets sail for 21 days from Ceylon to England, three preteen boys find themselves assigned to the Cat's Table—the table furthest from the Captain's Table. Mynah,

Cassius, and Ramadhin manage to get into plenty of trouble, but they also spy out the secrets of an eclectic collection of passengers. This much-anticipated novel for adults, by award-winning Canadian Ondaatje, is bound to be a favorite of many. (Knopf)

## The Ambition

by Lee Strobel  
reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema



When a U.S. Senate seat becomes available, the lives of divergent Chicago leaders converge. Megachurch pastor Eric Snow, newspaper reporter Garry Snider,

lawyer Tom O'Sullivan, and Judge Reese McKelvie have one thing in common: ambition—which leads to corruption, violence, and murder. Strobel, who was an award-winning legal editor of the *Chicago Tribune* and a teaching pastor at two of America's largest churches, gives readers a compelling insider's view and critique of megachurches and newspaper publishers. Though somewhat predictable and preachy, *The Ambition* is an entertaining novel. (Zondervan)

## Dwelling with Philippians

by Elizabeth Steele Halstead, Paul Detterman, Joyce Berger, and John D. Witvliet  
reviewed by Nick Schuurman



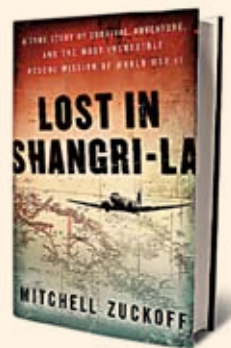
In an age of instant results and quick fixes, the slow, deliberate labor that a practice of devotion requires is increasingly difficult.

While there are many meditations that have been penned to fit fast-paced lives, this unique volume on Philippians was written in order to slow readers, pastors, and small groups down. Combining the work of scholars, artists, poets, and authors, the book walks through the letter in a way that gives space to its mystery, beauty, and unflinching calls to obedience. (Eerdmans)

## Lost in Shangri-La

by Mitchell Zuckoff  
reviewed by Ron VandenBurg

While searching WWII newspaper archives, journalism professor Mitchell Zuckoff found an amazing story that few today had ever heard. Twenty-four servicemen and women boarded a plane in 1945 for a sightseeing tour of a recently-discovered valley that was rumored to contain headhunters deep in Dutch New Guinea. The plane crashed, and the survivors encountered the valley's indigenous people, who were steeped in superstition and tribal warfare. This true-life adventure will keep you reading with a rescue plan that seems too remarkable even for a Hollywood movie. (Harper)



## Of Gods and Men

reviewed by Otto Selles

Is your Christian vocation strong enough to stand firm by your neighbor in any circumstance? Such is the question debated by eight French monks committed to serving a remote Algerian village caught between Islamic terrorists and corrupt government forces. Based on a true story, the film treats the brothers' faith with great respect through beautiful images of worship and community. At the same time, the superb cast raises profound questions about the nature of love, leadership, and courage in the face of thoughtless violence. In French with English subtitles, rated PG-13. (Sony Classics)

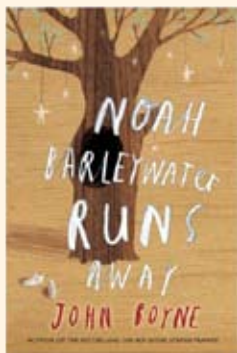


Check [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org) for links to find out more about these titles.



## Noah Barleywater Runs Away

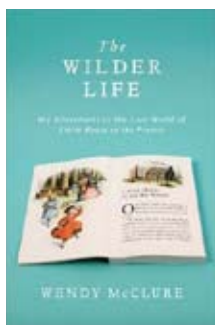
by John Boyne  
reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema



When 8-year-old Noah confronts an overwhelming problem, he runs away from home to a nearby forest and discovers a magical toy shop and an extraordinary toy maker. Noah refuses to tell the toy maker why he has run away, so the old man shares stories of his past, especially how a broken promise detrimentally affected his life. This sensitive juvenile novel, a fairy tale with a satisfying surprise ending, effectively deals with the difficult issues of broken promises, grief, and dying. Ages 9-12. (Doubleday Canada)

## The Wilder Life: My Adventures in the Lost World of Little House on the Prairie

by Wendy McClure  
reviewed by Sandy Swartzentruber



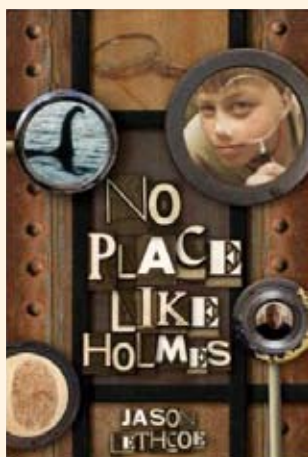
When, as an adult, Wendy McClure rediscovers her beloved childhood Little House books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, she's driven to experience "Laura world" again as deeply as humanly possible. Obsessed with her quest, McClure visits each of the books' locations, churns her own butter, and eats salt pork, all the while searching for that ineffable feeling she had when she first read the books. "Little House" fans will enjoy this funny, quirky trip down memory lane. (Riverhead)

## The Little Christian

reviewed by Kristy Quist



This small, sturdy magazine for young children is filled with colorful art, stories, prayers, and activities that encourage them to think about God and the world he created. Put out by the Augsburg Fortress Press, it is available as a 10-issue annual subscription and will offer parents or grandparents something new to share with children throughout the year. Ages 6 and under. (Augsburg Fortress/ELCA)



## No Place Like Holmes

by Jason Lethcoe  
reviewed by Francene Lewis

Twelve-year-old Griffin Sharpe prides himself on his gift for observation. When he visits his uncle, a private detective living at 221 Baker Street in London, Griffin is sure Uncle Snodgrass is really the great Sherlock Holmes. Instead, he finds his uncle lives at 221A Baker Street and bears a grudge against the more famous detective in 221B. Griffin will need all his astuteness and the power of prayer to win over his uncle and solve a mystery before the summer is through. The fast-paced story will keep you reading until the very last turn of the page. The second in the series is due out December 6. Ages 9-12. (Thomas Nelson)



## Soul Surfer

reviewed by Kristy Quist

Bethany Hamilton was a 13-year-old competitive surfer when a shark attack severed her left arm. *Soul Surfer* is the story of her physical and spiritual recovery. The film both entertains and encourages young people to look to the plans that God has for them rather than those of the world. The shark attack scene is unsettling for the youngest viewers. This movie is guaranteed to produce a new generation of young girls who are torn between their desire to learn to surf and a deeper fear of sharks. (Sony)



## Advertising Information

**Deadlines:** Dec. issue is 10/31/11; Jan. 2012 issue is 12/5/11. Visit [www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org) for complete details.

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

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

Publication of advertisements implies neither endorsement nor approval by *The Banner*, Faith Alive Christian Resources, or the Christian Reformed Church. We reserve the right to refuse or edit any ad for appropriateness.

## 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.

### Eligible for Call

We are pleased to announce that **Aaron Gonzalez** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word. Rev. Joel R. Boot, Executive Director

We are pleased to announce that **Brian Kornelis** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word. Rev. Joel R. Boot, Executive Director

We are pleased to announce that **Chad Haan** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word. Rev. Joel R. Boot, executive director

We are pleased to announce that **Jan Anthony Westrate** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word. Rev. Joel R. Boot, Executive Director

We are pleased to announce that **Nick Bierma** has now completed his academic requirements and is eligible for call as a candidate for the ministry of the Word. Rev. Joel R. Boot, Executive Director

### Financial Aid

**CLASSIS GRAND RAPIDS SOUTH** invites students from their Classis who are planning to pursue full-time ministry in the CRC (undergraduate or graduate level) and are in need of financial assistance for the academic year 2012-2013 to apply for a classical grant. Applications must be received prior to February 15, 2012. For information and application forms, please contact Rev. Paul Sausser by phone at 616-530-9143, or by email at [pastorpaul@discoverycrc.org](mailto:pastorpaul@discoverycrc.org).

### Meetings of Classis

**CLASSIS HOLLAND** will meet in regular session January 19, 2012 at 6:00 PM at Niekerk CRC, Holland, MI. Agenda items are due by December 8, 2011 and should be sent to: Rev. Tony Louwerse, Stated Clerk. Email: [louwerse@macatawa.org](mailto:louwerse@macatawa.org), Fax: 616-494-6054

## Announcements

### Retirement

**REV. JOHN WANDERS**, pastor of the Greene Road Church, Goshen, IN is retiring, concluding over 33 years of ministry. Friends and members from Pastor John's previous charges are invited to join our congregation for a special farewell worship service of praise and thanksgiving, on December 18, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. Thank you Pastor John and Ann for your many years of faithful service. For more information contact [nancy@dyksenandsons.com](mailto:nancy@dyksenandsons.com)

### 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.cwrm.org/goelmhurst](http://www.cwrm.org/goelmhurst) for more information.

**BELHAR CONFESSION: PRO & CON ADOPTION DISCUSSION**, everyone is invited Thurs., Nov. 3, 7:00 p.m. hosted by Classis Illiana at Bethel CRC, 3500 Glenwood Lansing Rd., Lansing, IL. Speakers will be Peter Borgdorff and John W. Cooper. A Q & A period will follow their presentations. This event is designed for a broad audience – council members, congregants, pastors.

**LK. ALFRED MINISTRY-CRC/RCA** winter ministry-join us in worship of our Lord Nov. 13, 2011 thru April 22, 2012, 10:30 A. M., 5:50 P. M. Located on Rt. 17/92 in Lk. Alfred, FL, close to Winter Haven and Route 27. Phone: 863-422-2187, 863-422-6442.

## Congregational Announcements

### Church's 60th Anniversary

**CRC OF STRATFORD ONTARIO CANADA**, is planning to celebrate 60 years of God's goodness and faithfulness. All friends and former members are invited to attend a special service to commemorate this occasion with us on Nov. 20, 2011 at 9:30. DVD [www.stratfordcrc.org](http://www.stratfordcrc.org)

### Church's 25th Anniversary

**LANGLEY IMMANUEL CRC** will celebrate 25 years of God's grace and faithfulness on November 5th and 6th, 2011. All former members and friends are invited to join us. Please contact the church 604-530-6022 or the website at [www.langleyimmanuelcra.ca](http://www.langleyimmanuelcra.ca)

## Birthdays

### 95th Birthday

**JENNIE (BUIKEMA) DRYFHOUT** will celebrate her 95th birthday on Nov.30. Her children; Carol and Marv Venema, Connie and Dale De Groot, Neil and Roxie, and Chuck and Maria, along with her 23 grandchildren, and 28 great-grandchildren are thankful to God for the many healthy and loving years He has blessed you with! Prov. 31. 216 124th Ave. Shelbyville, Mich. 49344

### 90th Birthday

**ELIZABETH/BETTY (RELING) BOXUM** of Meadow Greens, 301 Homstead Blvd., Apt. 309, Lynden, WA, celebrated her 90th birthday with an open house on October 30. Happy Birthday from your 4 children, 12 grandchildren, all the spouses, and 12 great-grandchildren! We love you!

**EMMA RIDDERBOS** celebrates 90 years on Oct. 28, 2011. Address: 210 Mall Dr #207 Portage, MI. 49024. Happy Birthday Mom, Grandma, and Oma!

**JACOB "BUD" STOIT**, 10310 Village Circle Dr. #203 Palos Park, IL 60464 celebrates his 90th birthday Nov 19, 2011. We praise God for our beloved dad, grandpa, great-grandpa!



**ELLA (HUIZENGA) TAYLOR** 145 Columbia Ave. Room 1580A, Holland, MI 49423. Long time member of 1st CRC of Cicero, celebrates 90 years of love, laughter and family on September 18. Happy Birthday from your brothers and sisters, 14 nieces and nephews, 33 great nieces and nephews and 18 great-great nieces and nephews.

**ALICE (ZUIDEMA) VANDENBOSCH**, 500 Parkside Dr #265, Zeeland, MI 49464 will celebrate her 90th birthday on November 22. Her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren wish her a happy and blessed birthday.

**ESTHER WESSELS** (Slager) 725 Baldwin, Jenison, MI 49428 will celebrate her 90th birthday at an open house on Nov. 26. Her 7 daughters and their families give thanks for her faith, her love, her prayers.

### 80th Birthday

**LUKE SCHAAP** (originally from South Holland, IL - now of Lansing, IL) will celebrate his 80th birthday on Friday, November 11. Birthday blessings from wife Pauline, children Paul and Lori Schaap, Ruth and Dave Dykstra, Jean and Rod Korthals, Mary and Brent Yurschak, and 11 grandchildren.

**JEAN ANN (HOLLEMANS) GRITTER** 1350 Ala Moana Blvd. #1507, Honolulu, HI 96814 will celebrate her 80th birthday on 11/11/11 mainly due to the clean air of Hawaii, as compared to San Jose, CA, that has given her many years to live. Her husband, Dr. Roy, and daughters Suzanne (Dr. Matthew Gritter, son), Marianne, Hollianne, Louanne Ginnochio (Michael, husband) and Julianne Coggan (James and Jeffrey, sons) trust that we will enjoy her and her personality for many more years.

## Anniversaries

### 70th Anniversary

**VANDERBY** Dick and Martha (Vandermolen) celebrated their 70th anniversary October 6 and Martha's 90th birthday on Nov 21. Their children, Dwayne (Wilma), Doris (Paul), Wilson (Shirley), John (Sherri), Terry, Dirk (JoAnne), 36 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren thank God for his faithfulness.

### 65th Anniversary

**TERMAAT**, John & Theresa (DeVries) celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary on Sept 27th. Their Children: John (deceased) & Jacquelyn, Joanne, Evelyn & Rich Loerop, 6 grandchildren & 5 great-grandchildren Thank God for their love and faithfulness that they have shown us and to everyone that knows them.

**VANVUREN** John & Eva of Crete, IL celebrated their 65th anniversary on October 2. Their children Gary & Sandy VanVuren, Bob & Judy VanVuren, Bill & Linda Greendyke, John & Kathy Griffin, 10 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren give thanks for generations of faithfulness.

**VISSER** Peter and Muriel (Hogan) of Sioux Center, Ia will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on Nov 18. Children: Stanton and Sharon, Ruth and Scot, Dean and Roxanne, Melissa and Scott, thirteen grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren. Thanks be to God for His faithfulness.

## Church Positions Announcements

**PASTOR:** Ellsworth CRC located in scenic Northwest Lower Michigan is seeking a full-time pastor. We are a small town congregation with numerous outreach possibilities. We desire a pastor who is committed to sound Biblical teaching and able to interact with the youth and the community. If interested, please contact Carl Veenstra at (231) 599-2392 or email [secretary@ellsworthcrc.org](mailto:secretary@ellsworthcrc.org).

**DIRECTOR OF MINISTRIES** Second Byron CRC is seeking a part time individual to provide support for the ministries at Second Byron CRC. You can request a job description by email at [office@secondcrc.org](mailto:office@secondcrc.org)

**FULL TIME PASTOR** Phoenix CRC, Phoenix, AZ. We are a growing congregation located in a central Phoenix neighborhood. We desire an experienced pastor who is committed to passionate preaching

and able to work with all age groups as well as the neighborhood community. If interested, contact Andy Keizer, [search@phoenixcrc.org](mailto:search@phoenixcrc.org), 623-875-5871, website: [www.phoenixcrc.org](http://www.phoenixcrc.org)

**YOUTH DIRECTOR** Second Byron CRC is seeking a part time individual who will be responsible for developing, promoting, and supervising the youth ministries of our church. A job description can be requested from [office@secondcrc.org](mailto:office@secondcrc.org).

**ANN ARBOR** Campus Chapel, the CRC campus ministry at the University of Michigan, seeks a Pastor of Community Life as part of a team team. Responsibilities include: relational ministry/pastoral care, discipleship/small groups, outreach, worship/preaching. Inquiries to CC Board president, Ian Phair ([ian@gamllc.com](mailto:ian@gamllc.com)); 616-485-7599) by 11/20/2011.

### 60th Anniversary

**KUIPERS** Gordon and Shirley (Faber) North Haledon, NJ celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on October 3rd. Children: Bernie & Eileen, Regina & Dennis Englishman, Pete & Geertje, Sharon & Henry Vogel, Janice & George Hoogenhuis, Richard & Laurie, Stanley (in Heaven), Marcia, 24 grandchildren & 8 great-grandchildren. Proverbs 3: 3-4.

**VANLEEUWEN** Gerrit and Eleanor (Doornbos) celebrate God's grace with 60 years of marriage on October 25. Blessings overflow in the lives of Jan (Alv-d), Gary(Sharon), Randy-d(Terri), Ken, Mary(Don) as well as 13 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren. 7524 Thomas St. Jenison, MI 49428

### 55th Anniversary

**TEKRONY** Henry and Henrietta (Hoogwerf) 307 Davis Ave E. Estelline, SD 57234, Celebrated October 19. Thanking God with their 4 children, 15 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren.

### 50th Anniversary

**DOUMA** Fred and Narleen (Tubergen) of Ripon, CA celebrated 50 years of marriage on October 5, 2011. Children: Susan and John Vander Schaaf, Sheri and Dale Struiksma, Beth Anne and Neil Brouwer, and Pam and Jim Auman. Grandchildren: John William Vander Schaaf (deceased), Debbie (Vander Schaaf) and Tim Anderson, Joey and Monica (Vander Lugt) Vander Schaaf, David Vander Schaaf, James Vander Schaaf, Brad and Jenna (Prins) Struiksma, Matt Struiksma, Wade Struiksma, Cole Brouwer, Zachary Brouwer, Jimmy Auman, Kayla Auman. Great Granddaughter: Riley Struiksma.

**KAMP:** Ron & Donna (Van Dellen) Cascade, MI will celebrate their 50th anniversary Nov 3. Their children Lori & Ed Davis(Ben & Katie 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, 2-4pm.

**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 Huiskens, 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.

**VERBRUGGE,** Calvin & Pauline (Koene) of Racine, WI celebrated their 50th anniversary on Sept. 24, 2011 with their children Helen & Garry and Susan & Chris and 6 grandchildren.

## Obituaries

**BOEREMA,** Anne, nee Bulthuis, 98, went to be with Our Lord on September 20, 2011. 1620 Westview Ave, Lombard, IL 60148. Wife of the late Harry Boerema; Mother of Janice (James) Vander Velde, George (Margie) Boerema and Roger (Leona) Boerema; Grandmother of nine; Great-grandmother of twenty-two; Great-great-grandmother of six; Sister of Florence (the late John) Stob, Jeanette (the late Jack) Meyer, the late Talena (the late Lawrence) Stavenger, the late Grace (the late Ben) Slager; Sister-in-law of Ann Robertson and the late James (Ann) Boerema.

**DEVRIES** Clarissa Jan (VanderLaan); aged 62; September 15, 2011; 537 Greenwood SE, Unit A, East Grand Rapids, MI 49506. Criss was born in Oak Park, IL, and preceded in death by her parents: Janet and Clarence VanderLaan. She is survived by her husband: Rev. William DeVries; children: Jane Van Hof, Jeremy (Jill) Van Hof, Christopher (Andrea) Van Hof; step-children: Heather (Stephen) Briody, Cori (Bradley) VanderLey and Rachel (Matthew) Sterner; sister: Linda VanderLaan; brother and sister-in-law: Dr. Burton and Kathy VanderLaan; and grandchildren: James, Michael and Matthew Eerdmans, Theodore and Lucy Van Hof, Devin Fisher, Sofia and William Briody, Natalie and Tanner VanderLey, and Samuel and Leo Sterner. Isaiah 55:12-13.



## Reformed Scholarship

Since 2005, Providence Christian College has been educating students from a biblically-grounded, Reformed perspective.

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1.866.323.0233

**DINUCCI, GRACE** (Iwema) age 89 of Westchester, IL on Sept. 10, 2011. Children: Joyce, (Ken, Diane: Deceased) Pam, Carol. 9 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren. Brother: Richard (Jane) Iwema.

**GEERS** Gerald, 80, went to be with Our Lord Sept. 28, 2011. 351 Kings Cove, Lisle, IL 60532. Husband of the late Catherine Geers, nee DeBoer; father of Cathy (Marshall McKay) Geers, Cindy (Glenn) Van Beek, the late Garry (Catherine Allen) Geers, and Laurel (Robert) Townsend; Katie and Betsy McKay, Michael and Christy Van Beek, and the late Leah Geers; brother of Esther Saul and the late Dorothy Fleis; uncle of many nieces and nephews. Memorials to World Vision or Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.

**KEMPERS** Anna (Calkhoven) age 96 went to be with her Lord on August 17, 2011. She was preceded in death by her husband Al and will be missed by children Lila, Delaine Mulder (Marv) and Alan (Brenda Kallemeyn), 4 grandchildren, 5 greatchildren

**KORTLEVE** "Joe" Govert, on Sept. 16, 2011 Joe went to be with the Lord. Loving husband of Nora (nee Vanderbilt). Beloved father of Ronald (Anne), Mitchell (Frances), Wilfred (Cheryl). Opa to Jennifer Harris (Jade), Michelle Wilson (Jeff). Ryan, Joshua & Jessica Kortleve and Brandon & Brittany Kortleve. Great Opa to Mackenzie & Cameron Harris and Madison & Avery Wilson.



**LOCK, JANE H.** ("Jennet") (nee Nagel) of Edmonton, AB was taken Home by her Lord and Saviour on June 3, 2011, at age 49. She was the loving wife of Jurjen K. Lock and is survived by the children she cherished: Evan, Emilie, Jeremy and Carl. Along with her Lord, it was her family that was always most

precious to her. Jennet was born and raised in Toronto, Ontario where she attended Toronto District Christian High School while attending Willowdale Christian Reformed Church. She went to Calvin College and graduated from York University. Her death came somewhat unexpectedly after a lifelong struggle with depression which intensified over the past couple years. Although we grieve, we have great joy for we know that precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of those faithful to Him. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). Write the Lock family at 14303 106 A Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5N 1E3.

**NYKAMP** Marie, 90, of Zeeland went to be with her Lord on 9/28/2011. She was preceded in death by her husband Eli and her two brothers. Surviving are her children Sylvia, Del (Diane), Esther (Randy), Rich (Marcia), Dennis (Doreen), and Charlene (Cal), 18 grandchildren, and 26 great-grandchildren.

**SIKKenga** Eleanor I (nee Todd) age 87, reached the goal of her faith and met her Savior face to face Monday, September 5, 2011. She was preceded in death by her husband, Harold, in 1998, and sisters, Anna Buckingham, Edna Copley and Julia Fox, and brothers, Robert Todd and James Todd. Her FAMILY includes children, Sharon (Jack) Groeneveld of Battle Creek, Donna (Jeff) Sils of Jenison, David (Mary) Sikkenga of IL, Ruth (Dale) Mulder of Kentwood, Paul (Cindy) Sikkenga of FL, Shirley (Dennis) Dahl and Dennis (Gail) Sikkenga, both of Montague; 23 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. DONATIONS: Endowment Fund of New Era Christian School, 1901 Oak Ave., New Era 49446. FULL OBITUARY may be viewed and PRIVATE CONDOLENCES may be sent by visiting [www.clockfuneralhomeofwl.com](http://www.clockfuneralhomeofwl.com).

**SLAGER** - Angeline H. "Angie", nee Helmus, age 79, Aug. 9, 2011, beloved wife of the late Robert Sr.. Loving mother of Linda (Harlan) Fissel, Nancy (Edward Sr.) Kawa and Robert Jr. (Beverly) Slager. Cherished grandmother of Edward Jr. (Kim) Kawa, Karen (Marc) Van Gameron, Katie (Eric) Greenhill and Kristen (Matt) Darling. Dear sister of Tunis (the late Marilyn) Helmus and the late Wilma Montiel. Dear sister-in-law of Nellaine (Vern) Lich and William (Pal) Slager. Fond aunt of many nieces and nephews. The Lord is My Light and My Salvation. Great is Thy Faithfulness.

**SLOOT**, Richard 86, Everett, WA. Passed away to his eternal home August 28th, 2011. Survived by his wife Elsie, children Rick (Lisa), Yvonne (Bill) and Irene. Sisters; Henny and Ali.

**TAMELING** Henry, age 100 of Elmhurst, IL joined the Heavenly choir on Sept. 11. He is survived by his wife of 72 years, Marie (Essenburgh),

children Ticks (Roger) Groenboom, Ben (Corrie), Leona (Roger) Boerema, 9 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren.

**VAN MEURS** Peter, age 81, Muskegon, MI, went to his eternal home on July 18, 2011. He was preceded in death by his wife, Ruth Brondsema Van Meurs, on February 9, 2011. Both are dearly missed by their children Deb (Dan) Gasper, Dan, Doug, Dorace, Dave (Beth), Derek (Angela), 13 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren, sister-in-law Doris Brondsema, cousin Ina van den Burgh, many nephews, nieces and friends.

## Employment

**CAMPUS CHAPLAIN** Ottawa Christian Reformed Campus Chaplaincy seeks to hire a full time campus chaplain to establish a new campus ministry on the bilingual campus of the University of Ottawa. The successful candidate is committed to the Reformed faith, self motivated,

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**COMMUNICATION ARTS FACULTY POSITION** — Tenure-track position, starting August 16, 2012 — Master's degree required; Ph.D. preferred. A generalist position with ability to teach journalism and previous teaching experience desired. Formal review of applications will begin on January 7, 2012.

**THEOLOGY FACULTY POSITION**— A renewable term position, which could become tenure-track, starting August 16, 2012 — Ph.D. required, although ABD considered, with expertise in Old Testament studies. Previous teaching experience desired. Formal review of applications will begin on November 1, 2011.

*For additional job openings and application instructions, please visit [www.trnty.edu/jobopenings](http://www.trnty.edu/jobopenings).*

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relates well with young adults and is able to be an incarnational presence in both the academic and wider communities Please contact Larry Vandergrift at [lvdrgrift@uottawa.ca](mailto:lvdrgrift@uottawa.ca) for a job description and further information. Deadline: December 31, 2011

**CO/PRINCIPAL OPPORTUNITY** Cambridge Christian School is requesting applications from enthusiastic individuals committed to Christian education to lead the school into the next decade. We are seeking a person eager to give leadership to a student body of just over 185; experienced, dedicated staff; loyal family base; and diverse and committed Board. The JK to Gr8 school is in Cambridge, Southwestern Ontario. An extensive renovation and expansion and preschool addition is well underway. Please forward a complete résumé, highlighting relevant leadership and educational experience, and philosophy of Christian education by November 15, 2011, to: Cambridge Christian School 229 Myers Road Cambridge, Ontario N1R 7H3 ATTENTION: Teresa Wolfert [www.cambridgechristianschool.com](http://www.cambridgechristianschool.com) 519-623-2261



S U S T A I N I N G  
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by email [sce@crna.org](mailto:sce@crna.org)  
or visit [www.crna.org/sce](http://www.crna.org/sce)

SCE is a program to support and strengthen CRC congregations—so they can be used by God to transform lives and communities.

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**SOUTHWEST CHICAGO CHRISTIAN School Association (SCCS)** seeks a Superintendent to be appointed no later than July 1, 2012. SCCS was founded in 1900 and enrolls nearly 1,000 students in grades PreK-12 at three campuses. The candidate should demonstrate success in administering Christian schools, an ability to articulate persuasively a Reformed Christian education, an ability to articulate his or her Christian beliefs and knowledge, and a thorough understanding of the financial issues pertaining to the operation of Christian schools. The candidate must be a confessing member of a church which adheres to Reformed confessional standards and hold a valid administrative certificate. Profile and application information are available at <http://www.swchristian.org/applications>. Applications should be submitted to Bert Kamp, Board President at [KampCPA@aol.com](mailto:KampCPA@aol.com).

**SHORT-TERM PASTORAL RELIEF** - covering study/family/health sabbaticals, anywhere in CRCNA. Rev. Mr. John Veenstra, (ret.), [jveenstra4@cogeco.ca](mailto:jveenstra4@cogeco.ca)

**WORSHIP DIRECTOR** Crossroads Fellowship CRC of West Des Moines is seeking a part-time Director of Worship to develop and lead the worship ministry of the church. A full job description and application can be found at [www.crossroads-crc.org](http://www.crossroads-crc.org). Submit your application and resume to [crossroads.crc.jobsearch@gmail.com](mailto:crossroads.crc.jobsearch@gmail.com).

## Real Estate: Sales and Rental

**ARIZONA CONDO** - Fountain Hills - Very nice 2-bdrm, 2-bath 1450 s.f. 2nd flr. w/pool, spa, garage & views. Nov-Dec; Apr-May. 800/wk to \$1800/mn. Details 231-924-5652

**FOR RENT:** Scottsdale, AZ, 2 BD, 2 BA, condo in Old Town district. Walk to shopping, dining. Awesome hiking and golf. 209-923-1451, [gamallett@hughes.net](mailto:gamallett@hughes.net)

**FOR RENT-MESA, AZ** Jan. 2012 Pk Model Qu Bed Nice RV Park. \$1,700/month/ Util. Included. Call Pat 616-452-6577

**FOR RENT** Townhouse in Green Valley, AZ available month of Jan 2012. Sleeps 6, 2 BR, Arizona room w/sofabed, large patio w/mountain view, grill, 2 full baths. Weekly \$525, monthly \$2100. 616-245-3610 or 616-340-9147.

**TUCSON, AZ GUEST HOUSE** 2BR 1Ba, 850 sf, in NE Tucson. Dec 15-31 wklly \$300, or Feb \$1000/mo. Email [mdbarents@earthlink.net](mailto:mdbarents@earthlink.net) for details/pictures 520/760-0541

**CHERRY VALLEY S CALIF HOME** For sale Friendly +55 gated cmty. 3 BR, 2 BA, kitchen/family, living/dining. 2 stall attached garage w/ golf cart incl. Overlooking 9th fairway & pond. Golf, clubhouse, pool, tennis & hot tub. Btwn Redlands & Palm Springs. Agent Lynn 909-936-3544

**COLO. SKI-IN/OUT CONDO** Jan. 20-27 in beautiful Breckenridge. 2BR, 2BA w/laundry. \$2,850. Or will rent studio sep. [bosGTX@msn.com](mailto:bosGTX@msn.com). Resort: [grandtimber.com](http://grandtimber.com).

**NETTLES IS, FL** park model w/florida room. av/Dec 10 thru March 616-581-4025

**FOR RENT** Nettles Island, Florida double wide trailer, 1br 1b, fully furnished. Available Dec-March 616-291-0438, optional golf cart rental.

**CONDO FOR RENT** No. Hutchinson, Is, FL, 2 bedrooms & den, 2 baths, on ocean and river. Avail. Jan @ \$2600 & Feb @ \$3600. Call 616-283-2385 or [www.lagrandk@aol.com](http://www.lagrandk@aol.com)

**FOR RENT IN FLORIDA:** Condo near Clearwater, 2 BR, 2 BA, greatroom, new appliances, very clean, quiet, near shopping, beaches, golf courses. Avail. Dec 2011 - Apr 2012. Weekly/monthly rates, reasonable. Contact [ljvandermeer@yahoo.com](mailto:ljvandermeer@yahoo.com) or 708-946-0265.

**CONDO FOR RENT** Naples, FL, 2 bedrooms, 2 baths and pool, avail. Jan-Mar, 2011. Email [pinkhippo2@yahoo.com](mailto:pinkhippo2@yahoo.com) or call 708-836-1130.

**KISSIMME HOME FOR RENT** New, 6 bedroom, 4 bath, fully furnished home with private pool, 3 miles from Disney. [www.floridavacahome.com](http://www.floridavacahome.com). 708-372-2586

**FT. MYERS POOL HOME FOR RENT** 2 bed, 2 bath, sleeps 10, heated pool, hot tub, bikes, quiet cul-de-sac. 9 mi. to beach. Photos available. 905-332-6711

**ANNA MARIA ISLAND, FL CONDOS** pool, beach access, linens, fully equipped. 1 and 2 bedrooms. \$650-750/wk. D. Redeker, 941-778-1915. [redekercondos.com](http://redekercondos.com)

**BEAUTIFUL LONG BOAT** Key, Florida near Sarasota, Bradenton. 2 BR 2 BA condo directly on white sandy beach. Newly decorated. \$1,000 and up depending on season. 630-655-2888.

**WEEKLY RENTAL:** Douglas/Saugatuck, MI: Walk to the beaches of Lake Michigan from this Newly remodeled Vacation Home, 7Br, 4Ba—comfortably sleeps up to 14. Call Ken @ 630-268-1531 or email [Groenjk@aol.com](mailto:Groenjk@aol.com) for info.

**SOUTHERN MICHIGAN CONDO** Thinking of getting away Thanksgiving, Christmas or Summer of 2012. Think South Haven, Michigan, right

on the beach! Sleeps 8, 2 full and 1/2 baths, professionally decorated, wireless service and flatscreen TVs. Call Phil @ 269 344-8303

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**WEEKLY RENTAL** Fully furnished beautiful 4 bedroom lakefront home, 30 minutes NE of Calvin/Seminary in Rockford. Go to [www.sandybottomrentals.com](http://www.sandybottomrentals.com) 641-843-8473

**WEEKLY RENTAL:** Douglas/Saugatuck, MI: Newly built Lake Michigan family guest house, 2br, loft w/ 2.5ba - sleeps 8-10. Lake Mi view & private beach. Call Ken @ 630-268-1531 or email [Groenjk@aol.com](mailto:Groenjk@aol.com) for info.

**BEAUFORT, NC:** 1 br furnished cottages for rent in historic coastal town, near beaches, w/d, TV, internet, grill, bikes. [www.theshellcottage.com](http://www.theshellcottage.com) (252)-504-6262

**SMOKY MT CABIN RENTAL** in Pigeon Forge, TN, area. Jacuzzi, Hot tub, fireplace, Hiking/attractions. Great for couples and families, 219-322-2722.

## Travel

**NETHERLANDS WATERWAY CRUISE:** Join Henk and Thressa Witte for the 28th Annual Netherlands Waterway Cruise April 13 - 21, 2012! Sign up by November 15 and receive a free Keukenhof Gardens excursion. For more information and a brochure, call Witte Travel & Tours at 616-957-8113 or 800 GO WITTE (469-4883) or [groups@wittetravel.com](mailto:groups@wittetravel.com). For a complete list of tours, visit [www.wittetours.com](http://www.wittetours.com).



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## Products and Services

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**AUTISM INFORMATION & SUPPORT** Bookstore, library, coaching & consulting, presentations, and groups for teens/adults and parents. [www.theygraycenter.org](http://www.theygraycenter.org)

**FOR SALE** 3 cemetery lots - Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens, GR, MI. Call 616-669-6774.

**Remember those in prison...**  
HEBREWS 13:3

This holiday season help support people in prison and their families by donating to Crossroad Bible Institute.

**Crossroad BIBLE INSTITUTE**

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P.O. Box 900  
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**CBI CANADA**  
P.O. Box 5037  
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

[www.cbi.fm](http://www.cbi.fm) | 1.800.668.2450

Logos for CBI, a triangle, and Facebook.

# 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!

**A** police officer stops an elderly man around 2 a.m. and asks where he's going at such an hour.

The man replies, "I'm on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body, as well as on smoking and staying out late."

The officer then asks, "Really? Who is giving that lecture at this time of day?"

The man replies, "That would be my wife."

—Anonymous

**F**or several weeks my daughter and son-in-law had been talking to 3-year-old Charlie about going to the Children's Worship and Little Lambs program at church. They told him about the fun things he would do in Little Lambs and the songs he would sing. After some encouragement, he went to the first session of the new fall season. Later that Sunday afternoon, we were going for a ride in the car with Charlie, and I asked him excitedly if he had enjoyed Little Lambs that morning. He looked up at me from the backseat, crossed his little arms, and said, "Yes, Grandma, I like it." And with a sad sigh he exclaimed, "But there were no lambs there!"

—Sharon Gallup

**M**y mother was surprised by her 7-year-old grandson one morning when he made her coffee.

She drank what was the worst cup of coffee in her life. At the bottom of the mug she discovered three little green plastic army men. "Honey," she asked her grandson, "what are the army men doing in my coffee?"

Her grandson said, "Grandma, it says on TV that 'the best part of waking up is soldiers in your cup!'"

—Clarence Wildeboer

**T**his is true:

Grandma, "Jack, I hear you just had a birthday!"

"Yes," Jack said.

"How old are you now?"

"I'm 4."

"Grandma just had a birthday too. How old do you think I am?"

"10,000?"

—Lucille Van Dyke

**M**y son, age 3 last year, was not obeying. He argued and continued being very defiant. Finally I lost my temper and sent him off to his room. After I cooled down, I went to his room and first told him that he needed to listen to and obey Mommy. But I also knew I had to tell him I was sorry for losing my patience with him. Later that evening I was tucking him into bed and we were getting ready to pray, when he looked up at me and asked, "Mommy, did you find your patience yet?"

—Jodi Dawson

**P**astor Dave was giving the children's message to the kids in front of church. His topic was the Bible. As a part of his message, he told the children

about his neighbor who lives across the street. My son spoke up after he finished the line below (Sam is 4 years old.):

Pastor Dave: "I know a man who lives across the street from me but doesn't go to church or know the Bible. I'm not sure how to tell him about Jesus."

Sam: "Just look both ways and cross the street!"

—Jen Schoenher

**J**ust before the congregation called its first female minister, the members agreed to treat her like any other new minister. One of the members always took the new minister fishing, so shortly after she arrived he took her out in his boat. They fished for several hours, but she didn't catch a thing. Finally, the minister said, "I need to

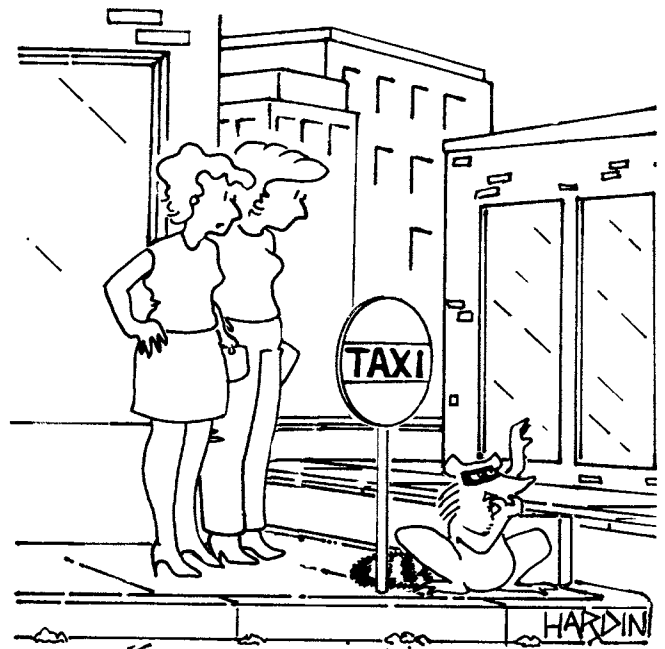
get back to the office, and I have to make some hospital visits."

"OK, we can leave," the church member said.

"No, that's OK," the minister replied. "You're doing well, and you can continue to fish." She got out of the boat and walked across the water to her car.

On Sunday the fisherman reported to the congregation, "She can't catch any fish, and she can't swim either."

—George Vander Weit



"It's amazing how well they adapt to an urban environment."

# KINSHASA, D.R. CONGO



*"Speak up for those who cannot  
speak for themselves,  
for the rights of all  
who are destitute.  
Speak up and judge fairly;  
defend the rights of  
the poor and needy."  
-Proverbs 31:8-9*

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