

¹⁸ **Fiction: He Knows Each One by Name**

³⁸ **Did Adam and Eve Exist?**

²² **Ministry for All Ages**

³² **The Art of Lament**



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Touching Lives in N'Dali, Benin



*"Sing to the Lord,
bless his name;
tell of his salvation
from day to day.
Declare his glory
among the nations,
his marvelous works
among all the peoples!"
-Psalm 96:2-3*



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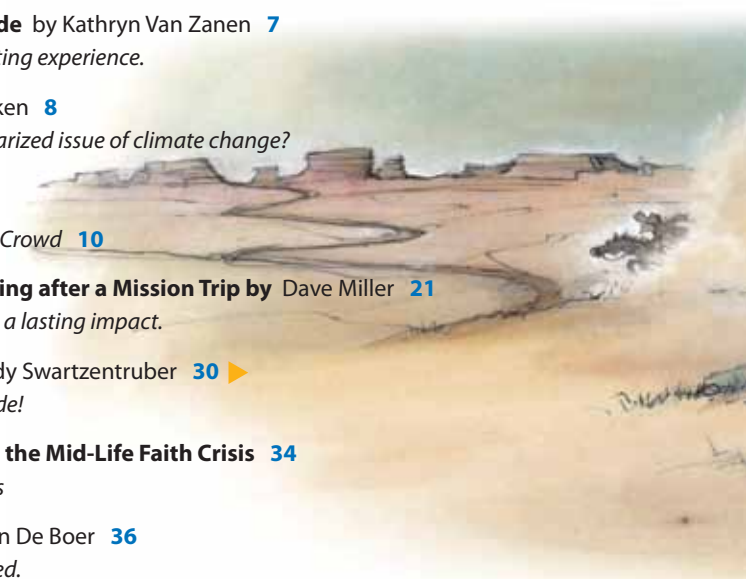
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A Tippy Canoe

HUMAN MEMORY LETS US FORGET the name of someone introduced seconds ago, while replaying in living color a sufficiently grand or horrible event that occurred decades ago.

Take the time Pastor Bob was invited by the Christian school principal to accompany the graduating class on their final outing—a few days at a dude ranch. I had to pitch in to earn my keep. There had to be *some* talent I could contribute.

Fortunately there was. Someone had to teach safe canoeing, since we preferred to come back with the same number of graduates we'd left with. As Providence would have it, my family owned a canoe, and we'd had enough fun playing "tippicanoe" to know what *not* to do.

All went splendidly until the final morning. With an hour to kill before departing, the principal and I hopped aboard for one last paddle, setting a sterling example for the students congregated on the dock. Donning our PFDs, we stepped carefully into the *center* of the boat before gingerly parking our posteriors in the appropriate places. At the last moment, one youngster who had never set foot in a boat asked to join us. "Hop in!" we said.

I vividly recall the horizon rotating counterclockwise just before losing all vision to the murky depths that swallowed us whole. When they fished us out, my glasses had disappeared for good. It took a few days to restore my vision, but weeks to restore my drenched ego.

The epistle writer James probably had something worse in mind when he wrote, "Not many of you should become teachers . . . for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness" (James 3:1, NRSV). Many preachers, teachers, and parents appear to serve with faithfulness and distinction for decades, but then the revelation of some sin takes them down faster than a misstep in a tippy canoe.

When they fished us out, my glasses had disappeared for good.

In the blink of an eye, sexual abuse, plagiarism, egotism—and other (post)modern incarnations of the "seven deadlies"—ruin a career, a relationship, a reputation. Worse, much worse, such behavior betrays the gospel and God's lambs placed under our care.

At seminary we learned that such catastrophes have deep roots that go way, way back. When we underestimate our own vulnerability to sin, we don't take precautions. We live like it couldn't ever happen to us. It can. So from the get-go we need to take steps that keep us constantly accountable and fully transparent in how we conduct our lives.

If you've been blessed to be able to enjoy the great outdoors this summer, practice safe canoeing.

If you've been blessed to shepherd Christ's lambs at school, church, or home, then practice safe teaching. You never know what you might be capable of, and whom you might take down with you. Foolish human pride usually precedes the misstep that plunges you and those you love into a sea of hurt. ■



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Published monthly (12 issues per year). Periodicals postage paid at Grand Rapids, Mich. Postmaster, send address changes to: The Banner, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560. Canadian publications mail agreement #40063614. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: The Banner, 3475 Mainway, PO Box 5070, STN LCD 1, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8.

Copyright 2012, Faith Alive Christian Resources, a ministry of the Christian Reformed Church. Printed in U.S.A. The Banner (ISSN0005-5557). Vol. 147, No. 08, 2012.

Member of Associated Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.

In Pursuit of Solitude

It's probably about eight o'clock in the evening. I'm not sure because I have no watch and have paid no attention to the time for the past few days. From my perch on the rocky shore of Greenway Island, I watch the sun paint the cliffs opposite me with rich yellow rays, light dancing on the rippling expanse of sea. I am alone. The North Channel of Lake Huron is home to islands of some of the oldest exposed rock on planet Earth, and this moment feels equally timeless.

* * *

That “solo time” was part of a freshman orientation kayaking trip, and it served as my first introduction to the practice of solitude. But it wasn't until the next summer that I fully realized the vitality of this discipline. That year I spent twelve weeks in Colorado, far from my thoroughly Midwestern family and dearest friends—wrestling with the emotional and psychological repercussions of both the end of my first romantic relationship and my first year of college. The distance and diminishment of my support network

drove me to solitude—letters, emails, and phone calls could only do so much. Instead, I wrote in my journal: pages upon pages, hours upon hours. Each morning I grabbed my notebook, along with yogurt, granola, coffee, and a pear, and headed to the breakfast table to write.

I spent significant portions of that summer alone—in the dining hall of the YMCA where I worked, in my room, on the back porch of the on-site ice cream shop, and, best of all, on mountaintops, the Front Range of the Rockies stretching on before me. The peaks gestured heavenward and reminded me to do so as well.

Rereading those journals, I am struck by the progression of each entry, beginning with frustration, sadness, and anger, and culminating in at least a semblance of hope. Writing in my journals was my way of confronting and addressing emotions and thought patterns of which I had previously been blissfully but unfortunately ignorant. My time of solitude became a time of reflection and growth.

Christ too found solitude in the mountains. He spent time throughout his ministry in solitude, and would regularly

“withdraw to desolate places and pray” (Luke 5:16, ESV). In Psalm 46, the psalmist reminds God's people to “be still and know that I am God.” It's also worth noting that the revelations from God experienced by other biblical figures—including Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and John—happened when they were alone.

One of my most respected college professors—the man who led the kayaking trip that took me to the silent island that was my first experience of solitude—advocates this practice of solitude: one hour a day, one day a month, one week a year. This challenge requires impressive discipline and a significant commitment of time. But it's time well spent.

To engage fully in our own lives and in the lives of our loved ones, we must first experience the benefits that come with solitude: rest, the opportunity for reflection, and rejuvenation. Alone, we return to our roots so that we can begin to grow. ■



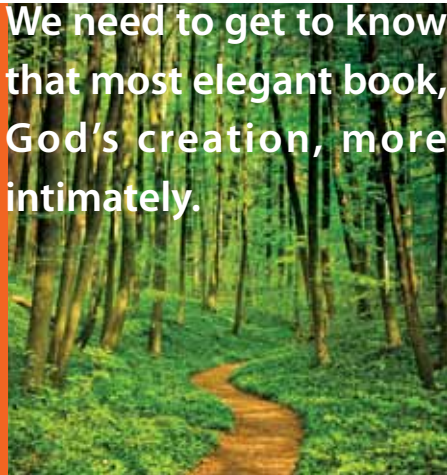
Kathryn Van Zanen is a student at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

I'M AFRAID THAT TOO OFTEN
WE LEAVE THE DEEPS OF LIFE UNTOUCHED
NOT BECAUSE WE REMEMBER THEY ARE SACRED
BUT BECAUSE WE FORGET THEY ARE THERE.

—PERCY AINSWORTH

Be Still and Know

WE need to get to know that most elegant book, God's creation, more intimately.



"I DON'T LIVE IN FEAR, though, of an accident . . . I have more confidence and faith in business." That was the recent comment of a local Christian politician in support of the oil sands Enbridge Pipeline. This view contrasts with those who believe environmental risk needs to be curbed.

These two camps, climate change versus anti-climate change, are polarized within the Christian Reformed Church.

The question is, What is to be the response of a polarized Christian community? Do we just continue with our unsustainable lifestyle? Wait for new legislation?

The 2012 CRC Creation Stewardship Task Force acknowledges that change will be difficult: "Unfortunately, it appears that global society is unlikely to change its current use of carbon-based fuels and associated economic policies anytime in the near future" (p. 48).

It's time for all of us to step back and find our common ground.

"Be still and know that I am God," says the psalmist (Ps. 46:10). One of the two ways for us to know God, according to the Belgic Confession, is "by the creation,

preservation, and government of the universe, which is before our eyes as a most elegant book" (Art. 2, emphasis added).

We need to get to know that most elegant book, God's creation, more intimately.

Years ago I taught with someone who wanted students to get in touch with the created world. He assigned students to find their own space outdoors, away from others, to look, to listen, to smell.

Awareness is one way for us to begin to know God's book more intimately. Look for creepy crawlers; listen to the birds; smell the earth and plants. *Be still and know that I am God.*

A second way for us to get to know God's elegant book is to actively appreciate nature. Not all of us will become birders, but each of us can learn to respect, value, or even tolerate God's creation. My daughter has a deadly fear of wasps. She has to learn to tolerate them. By learning to appreciate, we become more sensitive to fluctuating and declining populations in nature. *Be still and know that I am God.*

Our thoughts about creation will be more focused as we become more aware and appreciative of God's planned biodiversity. Honing our ecological virtues is a first step to becoming better caretakers of God's sustaining gifts. It is a way of serving God, of witnessing to our neighbors and the global community that he is not only our Savior but our Creator. ■



John Franken is a semiretired Christian school teacher who runs a B&B called Chickadee Acres. He attends Telkwa (B.C.) Christian Reformed Church.



Urban Ministry

Brian Walsh's visionary and prophetic story ("Urban Ministry: Looking for a Place to Call Home," May 2012) offers a blueprint of relevant ministry for almost any church, not just those in the cities.

Sometimes I wonder, were Jesus on earth today, would he on a Sunday morning don his best suit to join my church community, or would he be found among the broken humanity of Vancouver's downtown east side? Walsh, correctly, holds that seeking renewal for what is broken in our culture is a path toward the church's internal renewal.

—Nick Loenen
Richmond, British Columbia

Confessions

I was surprised and somewhat disappointed by the editorial on the Reformed confessions ("Which Line to Toe?" May 2012), especially by your reference to people having to "hold their nose" when signing the Form of Subscription. This suggested to me that you think there is something musty or even rotten in our confessions.

In over thirty years of teaching the confessions at the college and seminary level, I have found that when students are given the opportunity to study these documents in their historical contexts,

LETTERS

they often develop a deep appreciation for them. They come to see them as beautiful summaries, explanations, and defenses of basic biblical truths.

If the Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, and Canons of Dort are no longer functioning as living documents in the CRC, I suspect that the fault lies not so much with the confessions themselves as with those of us whom the church has entrusted to teach them.

—Lyle Bierma
Grand Rapids, Mich.

I appreciated the informative and insightful article of Karin Maag (“Confessions: Past, Present, and Future,” May 2012). However, her conclusions miss some of the major differences that exist between the Belhar and our current three Forms of Unity. Having confessions with cultural roots does not, in itself, give every cultural- and issue-specific document confessional status.

—Ken Krause
Big Rapids, Mich.

How blessed we are that in all this unsettling turmoil there are still eloquent voices of hope and encouragement such as those of Julian R. Hudson (“The Belhar: Social Gospel or Confession?” March 2012). He convincingly identifies with clarity and simplicity that the Belhar is not a confession and did not arise out of any concern for the gospel as do the existing historical creeds. Were it that such clarity, simplicity and biblical foundation existed at synod for this and all issues.

—Ralph L. De Groot
Peterborough, Ontario

Blessing

I fully agree with Richard Vandezande (“IMHO: The Blessing,” May 2012). We have two wonderful pastors. Our senior

pastor is ordained, our associate pastor is not.

After an inspiring service and the parting blessing, I often think, Please stretch out your arms and *bless us!*

—J. Huizinga
Brighton, Ontario

Why Did Jesus Die?

I write to express my deep thanks for the article by Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat (“Why Did Jesus Die?” April 2012). It is a model of careful biblical study and warm devotion. My mind and heart were blessed by reading it.

—Dale Cooper
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Music and Memory

It thrilled me to realize that my experience with music and Alzheimer’s is not unique (“Music and Memory,” March 2012).

Alzheimer’s took away the father we knew and loved. The one thing he was still able to enjoy was his love for music.

Toward the end, we sang his favorite hymns. We hoped this would make his transition to the next world easier. It also brought us great comfort.

My father is now singing in the courts of heaven. I’m sure the music there is more beautiful than anyone could imagine!

—Suzette Lootsma
Whitby, Ontario

Climate Change

I fully agree with “Synod 2012 Asked to Make Climate Change Declarations” (News, May 2012), provided synod asks that we start with cleaning up our own backyard by making all our premises smoke-free. Was/is that not part of “the biblical mandate for humans to be God’s

caretakers of creation”? Was/is that not a “moral, ethical, and religious issue”?

—Jake Prins
Grand Rapids, Mich.

To state that there is no ambiguity within the scientific community that “human activity is responsible for the increase” [of global warming] removes the credibility of the Creation Stewardship Task Force’s claim. Climate change is a complex subject involving many variables and modeling techniques—all of which are subject to ongoing debates by the scientific community.

I believe for Synod 2012 to affirm the task force’s position is unwise at this time, just as having adopted the popular claim of the 1970s that the planet was heading into the next Ice Age would have been foolish.

Let’s let the scientific community do the job without taking sides and spending money when the jury is still out.

—Steve Wiley
Byron Center, Mich.

Pentecost Dreaming

What an unfortunate graphic was used as illustration for “Pentecost Dreaming” (May 2012). As an artist I’m very conscious of the connotations of images. I hope that this image was used as a negative counterpoint to Mary’s wonderful article.

If all we can think of and dream about is a larger house (or cottage or car), then the spirit of materialism inspires us more than the Holy Spirit.

—George Langbroek
St. Catharines, Ontario

[MORE ONLINE](#)

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Worship is a highlight at the convention.

Ontario Youth Event Draws Record Crowd

Enthusiastic teens from all over Ontario descended on Waterloo, Ontario, for the All Ontario Youth Convention in May.

More than 1,000 young people, volunteers, and pastors set an attendance record for the volunteer-run convention's 37-year history.

The Ontario convention has become the largest annual youth event in the Christian Reformed Church. Tim Scholman, chair of the planning committee, attributes the event's success to relationships built over the years: youth who attended and became youth leaders, and churches looking for events specific to Ontario and to their denomination.

Hannah Schreutelkamp, 17, of Clearview Christian Reformed Church in Oakville, Ontario, has been attending for three years. "I get closer to God," she said. "It's always one of the highlights of my year."

Kyle Beishuizen, 21, from Brampton, Ontario, is one of the young people who attended and then became a youth leader. He came, he said, for lots of different reasons. "I try to lead, but you learn as much as you lead."

Melissa Wolting, 18, of Grace CRC in Chatham, Ontario, was returning for the fourth time. "I really wanted to hear Shane Claiborne," she said, noting that the event "is always a really good 'God experience.'"

She and many others found the spiritual direction area an unexpected highlight. The area consisted of a few rooms set aside for prayer, reflection, and one-on-one counseling or discussion with members of the prayer team. "So much deep stuff has happened in that space—life-changing things. ... God is meeting people in there,"

said prayer team coordinator Cynthia Stevens.

Eighteen pastors also attended a pastors' forum, new this year, to learn more about including youth in the life of the church.

After the sun-filled weekend wrapped up, Kaitlyn Smit of Clearview CRC said she plans to make daily time with God a priority. "I get so busy," said the 15-year-old



from Oakville. "I guess I've been waiting for this weekend to get me kickstarted." [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Anita Brinkman

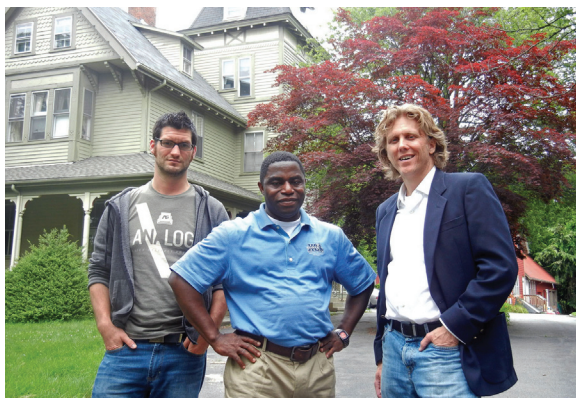
Rhode Island Church to Offer Discipleship Training

Todd Murphy is committed to bringing theological and discipleship training to New Englanders who can't attend a traditional seminary because of the cost or because they do not have a college degree.

Murphy, who leads Sacred Journey Christian Reformed Church in Providence, R.I., is setting up the St. John Center for Discipleship.

Nathaniel Koliyah, a Liberian immigrant, is trying to complete his seminary degree but is finding that extension programs lack hands-on discipleship. Murphy's program meets his needs.

Another student, Joe Paravisini, is a native Rhode Islander who didn't have the opportunity to go to college but has a deep desire to preach. "Going to seminary would take him a



Todd Murphy (right) with Nathaniel Koliyah (center) and Joe Paravisini (left), two of his students.

decade," said Murphy. "Joe is a gifted future leader who could advance the church, and the center would help in his training."

Murphy hopes to eventually partner with a major Reformed theological seminary to offer accredited classes for ministers and students. —Callie R. Feyen



Michael Essex leading worship at the Where U At? Urban Youth Conference.

Urban Teens Gather for Youth Conference

"I went to Where U At to reconnect with God and I came back completely ready and armed for the spiritual battle over my life," said Daysia Moore, 15. "Where U At changed me for the better."

Moore was one of 155 participants from West Michigan gathered for the Where U At? conference for urban youth.

"It was an uplifting event. The music was great, the message was great and next year will be awesome! I would recommend it to anyone," said Kiyah Sims, 13.

"I thought it was a unique experience that humbled me greatly," said Matthew Verstraete, 15. "I have never been in a place where it is 100 percent different than what I am used to. I hope that I get the chance to have my mind changed again." [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Abigail Kromminga

Michigan Church Prays after Gang Threatens Neighborhood

"I don't want to get shot," thought Carena Shannon as her eyes darted around her church's neighborhood.

She, along with about 100 other church members, encircled a house just three doors down from her church in order to pray during a Sunday morning worship service.

The house is a center for Mexican gang activity in the neighborhood, said Reggie Smith, pastor of Roosevelt Park Community Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The congregation was responding to a recent series of shootings and crimes, all of which happened in the span of just one week.

Smith, also the president of the neighborhood association, knew the violence had to stop. "We said, 'This is our neighborhood. It belongs to God, and we're not going to let it go so easily,'" he said.

"I knew that was the right thing to do. I wasn't afraid at all," he continued.

The police have told the landlord to remove the members of the gang from the house.

"I think it kind of opened their eyes to . . . why we are here," he continued. "So we're still trying . . . to not just be a church that happens to be in this community, but to be a church of this community. And sadly, a lot of our churches don't do that." [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Ryan Struyk



Pastor Reggie Smith leads his congregation in prayer around a house occupied by a Mexican gang.

NEWS

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Gerrit Heersink

1926 – 2012

Rev. Gerrit Heersink, 85, diligent pastor of rural churches, ecumenical in outlook, student of church history, and one-time beekeeper, died in Peterborough, Ontario.

Heersink's first congregation was the Gereformeerde Kerk of Hasselt, the Netherlands. In 1961, he moved to Canada, serving congregations in Ontario and Alberta. He retired in 1991.

Heersink was a man of broad interests and intellectual curiosity. Writing sermons was a serious challenge to him. He was deeply interested in ecumenical issues. He followed denominational developments with a lively interest.

He loved to explore nature; the Heersink family were great campers. When necessary, he would gladly fill in as church organist. Heersink credited his wife for being his partner and model in pastoral calling.

Heersink was preceded in death by his wife, Iefke. He is survived by three children and their spouses, seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

MORE ONLINE

—Louis M. Tamminga

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

"You've Been Flocked!"

Suspicious activity was reported in the Grand Haven, Mich., area concerning a flock of migrating pink flamingos randomly appearing in yards under cover of darkness. The birds were on the move seven nights a week, leaving behind a sign telling homeowners, "You've been flocked!"

One man, who caught the birds landing, said he was about to call the police when he turned the bird over. To his surprise, he found the name of his church, Ferrysburg Christian Reformed Community Church.

The high school youth mission team at the church was behind the flocking. They were trying to raise \$3,000 to go on a Disaster Response Services trip to West Virginia. To date, \$4,000 has been raised.

Church members were given the opportunity to purchase Anti-



Flocking Insurance for \$10 to make sure their yard would not end up covered with dozens of plastic flamingos. Each week, the cost of the insurance rose. Members could also pay to have someone else's yard "flocked."

A map of the birds' migratory patterns was updated every Sunday, including photos.

A yard that was flocked

Those who had not purchased insurance woke up to a yard awash in pink, including pastor Nate Visker, who was one of the first to be hit. Victims were asked to pay a small donation to have the birds removed the next night.

—Daina Kraai

Los Angeles Church Serves Skid Row



Skid Row in Los Angeles, Calif., contains one of the largest populations of people who are homeless in the United States. And that's where Oaks of Righteousness Christian Reformed Church, Los Angeles, is ministering with its 5 Breads and 2 Fish restaurant.

"We are serving hot meals to about 2,000 customers every day," said Jaesung Moon, a co-pastor of the church.

The food is donated, and the serving is done by volunteers. As long as someone is in line by 4 p.m., he or she will be fed.

Members of Oaks of Righteousness CRC serve lunch at 5 Breads and 2 Fish restaurant.

Still hungry? People can eat as many times as they want as long as they get back into line.

Some of those who eat at 5 Breads and 2 Fish also volunteer to help serve.

The restaurant goes through 200 pounds of rice every day, as well as fresh vegetables, meat, and breads.

Joon Lee, the church's other pastor, said there is no free meal. "It's a paid meal. Meals on Jesus. You don't have to pay for the food because Jesus paid it all," he said.

—Jonathan Kim



Residents of Roseland march for peace.

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Jerrien Gunnink

1928–2012

Rev. Jerrien Gunnink, gifted preacher, genial pastor, doctrinally well-versed, known for his wisdom and humor, passed away on April 24.

Gunnink entered the gospel ministry in 1953. He served congregations in Michigan, Colorado, and Montana. He retired in 1994.

Gunnink was not exempted from sorrow. Two years after their wedding, his wife, Henrietta, died in a car accident. Two sons also preceded him in death.

Gunnink loved preaching. He was a gifted speaker, very much in tune with his audiences, a devout student of the Word, and intellectually active through old age. He wrote two books that received a wide reception: *Preaching for Recovery in a Strife-Torn Church* and *Revelation 101: What in the World Is Jesus Doing Now?*

Gunnink was kind, cheerful, and thoughtful, a loving “people person.” He had a keen sense of duty and was a superb administrator and teacher.

Gunnink is survived by his wife, Ida, three children and their spouses, eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

Chicago’s Roseland CRC Organizes March for Peace

Members of Roseland Christian Reformed Church want to take back their streets in Chicago and showcase the good in their community. Homicides in that city soared by 60 percent in the first three months of 2012, and Roseland has not been spared from the violence.

Last October, a 17-year-old member of Roseland was shot and killed. “Losing him was a wake-up call,” said Joe Huizenga, the church’s pastor. “We need more positive reinforcement. We need to lift up the good things and encourage our kids to be strong.”

So in June, Roseland CRC joined forces with Pullman CRC and other community organizations to march for peace.

Around 130 people participated in the march, which was well-received by shop owners and community residents. The march ended with a barbecue and concert.

Kisha Pleasant, a member of Roseland CRC, participated in the march with two of her three children. “I have never done a march in Roseland, so it was a blessing to see everyone come together and unite for the same thing—people, love, and our children,” she said. “This is our community. We want peace for them to be able to grow up and be our future leaders.” [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Melissa Holtrop

Kids Kayak at New Jersey Camp

“At first I was a little scared, because I thought I was going to drown,” was the reaction of Al’lena, one of 10 campers in The River of God Kayak Kamp. But with John Algera’s assurance that he would catch her, and wearing a mandatory life vest, Al’lena learned to paddle a kayak.

The camp is an annual event for kids 9 to 14 organized by Algera, pastor of Madison Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Paterson, N. J.

Biblical teaching, prayer, paddling exercises, and safety drills are part of each day as they paddle on the local rivers and reservoirs around Paterson.



JOHN ALGERA

—Calvin Hulstein Al’lena enjoys The River of God Kayak Kamp.

NEWS

IN MEMORIAM



John Van Ens

1919–2012

Rev. John Van Ens, exuberant in faith expression, missionary at heart and practice, and large in kingdom vision, died of old age on April 30.

After serving in the U.S. Army in Germany, Van Ens was a math teacher before subsequently entering the gospel ministry in 1952.

His first charge was as a missionary in Sri Lanka where he and his twin brother, Clarence, became co-pastors in the Dutch Reformed Church (now the Christian Reformed Church) of Sri Lanka.

After returning to the U.S., Van Ens served congregations in California, South Dakota, and Florida. He ended his career serving the Faith Reformed Presbyterian Church on the island of Guam.

Van Ens approached every challenge with an easy can-do attitude. He was a man of charming, quasi-boisterous spirit and encyclopedic mind. He loved sports; those who knew him will tell you that he could be very competitive.

Van Ens is survived by his wife, Sylvia, five children and their spouses, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga

Arizona Church Revitalizes by Sharing Facility and Vision

A year ago, Christ's Community Christian Reformed Church in Chandler, Ariz., struggled to find a way to keep its doors open.

"We had lost virtually all our youth and young families," said Jonathan Gerstner, the church's pastor. "If we couldn't turn the trend around, we would die as a congregation."

But a new partnership has saved the church.

The church partnered with Bethel Church, a church plant of a different denomination, led by Michael Gowans. Gerstner's church needed a worship team, and Gowans' church needed worship space.



Jonathan Gerstner (right) and Michael Gowans in front of their shared sign.

Each church operates separately but shares gifts and vision. Christ's Community shares its large facility in prime real estate in Chandler. It shares its GEMS and Cadet programs, and its doctrine-based leadership training.

Bethel Church shares its dynamic worship praise team and also updated the church sanctuary.

Gowans said, "Christ's Community is like a fireplace. It has all the structure, facilities, foundational doctrine, and is rich in discipleship training. Bethel has the fire."

Gerstner said that Christ's Community and Bethel are on the brink of birthing a new church.

"This is not a consumer-based relationship," said Gowans, "It is what we can do together, walking humbly by God's grace and exalting God alone." [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Shashi DeHaan

Highlights from Spring 2012 Classis Meetings

Two or three times each year, Christian Reformed churches send representatives to meetings of their classis, a regional grouping of churches. They review and make decisions about their shared ministries and practice mutual accountability for their congregations' individual ministries. Here are the highlights from the most recent classis meetings:

Those **welcomed into ministry** in the Christian Reformed Church included Chad Haan, George Lubbers, and Mary Stegink.

Kak C. Yoon **transferred** into the CRC from another denomination.

Jack de Vries and Philip Reinders were **loaned** to other denominations.

Brad Close was **released from campus ministry** and Kooksung Kim was **released from his congregation**. Jin Choi has **left CRC ministry**.

Trinity CRC in Sparta, Mich. protested the **seating of female delegates** at Classis Grand Rapids North.

Classes Huron and Toronto discussed **youth ministry**, including the cuts in Canadian staff at Youth Unlimited.

—Banner news correspondents



A monthly car show at Dearborn Christian Fellowship CRC attracts a variety of classic automobiles, ranging from Mustangs to more luxurious rides.

Michigan Church Reaches Community with Classic Cars

When Dearborn (Mich.) Christian Fellowship, a Christian Reformed congregation, was looking for ways to reach out to the surrounding neighborhood, Dwight Smith figured a monthly car show would bring people together on summer nights.

Five years later, the church's Cruiz-In remains an effective ministry tool, even if visitors think they're coming to just another summer car show where they'll find classic Mustangs, showpiece Porsches, and just about everything in between.

"It's been fun to reach out to our neighbors," Smith said. "We're just out to have a good time, to say, 'this place is welcoming—we want to have you here.'" [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Jeff Arnold

Taking It to the Streets in Orange City

Late in April, 27 neighborhoods around Orange City and Alton, Iowa, found themselves a part of the first "Take It to the Streets," a service-based Sunday organized by Living Water Community Christian Reformed Church in Orange City.

The event, spearheaded by Jim and Julie Haak, involved church members serving individuals and community organizations.

"There is more to being a Christian than just going to church on Sunday," Julie said. "Jesus himself served others every day of the week. Our minister serves us every Sunday. This was a way for the congregation to serve others instead."

There were a few bumps in the road. Some members were skeptical, and others questioned the idea of working on a Sunday. But the response they received from those they served was overwhelming.

The Haaks and Living Water hope that "Take It to the Streets" becomes an annual event, and that it grows to include other churches and communities.

—Kate Padilla

Taking it to the streets in Orange City



IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Robert De Vries

1935 – 2012

Robert De Vries, 76, humbly intimate with his Lord, ever ready to share his Savior's grace with the burdened, and restlessly seeking to tune his ministry to the gospel's healing power, died on March 25.

After serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, De Vries entered ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in 1972.

He served as a missionary in the Philippines, planting a church in the slums of Manila.

In 1979, he and his wife moved back to the U.S. and served churches in Kentucky, California, and Michigan.

His ministry was characterized more by honesty and transparency than by polish and sophistication. His heart beat warmly for those who were weak and those who suffered.

He and his wife adopted five children with special needs.

De Vries is survived by his wife, Alice, 11 children and their spouses, and 16 grandchildren.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

—Louis M. Tamminga



Dan Groenendyk received the President's Volunteer Service Award.

Michigan Man Wins President's Volunteer Award

Dan Groenendyk, a member of Providence Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich., was given a President's Volunteer Service Award, for contributing 249 hours of volunteer service with the United States Coast Guard Academy over the span of one year. The award included a certificate, a letter from the President, and a medal. A former Marine, Groenendyk said he enjoys the opportunity to serve the community. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Susan Vanden Berg



John Schloff (left) and Mark Quist

Michigan Men Honored for Rescue of Drowning Girl

Mark Quist, pastor of Park Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich., and John Shloff, a physician from the church, received the U.S. Coast Guard Meritorious Public Service Award for their rescue of a teenage girl who was drowning in Lake Michigan last summer.

Receiving the award was humbling for both men. Quist said, "I'm just glad that God had us at the right place at the right time. It was pretty clear to me that God was gracious and really saved both of us." [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Susan Vanden Berg

California Church Celebrates 100 Years

First Christian Reformed Church in Hanford, Calif., celebrated its 100th anniversary with the theme "Forever Faithful."

"The celebration was an amazing day blessed by God," said Nancy Azevedo, secretary at Hanford CRC.

"Congregations may come and go. Denominations may come and go. But the church is forever, because it is the bride of Christ and he is forever," said Lambert Sikkema, pastor of Hanford CRC.

—Heidi Wicker

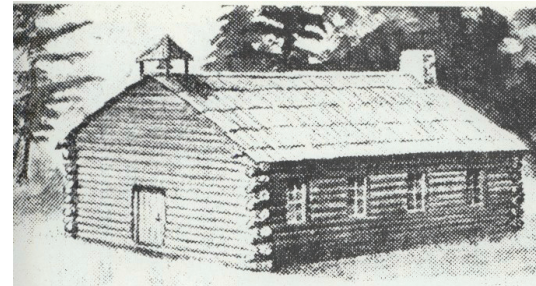
Zeeland Church Celebrates 150 Years

First Christian Reformed Church in Zeeland (Mich.), one of the oldest churches in the denomination, celebrated its 150th anniversary in April.

Psalm 100:5 and the theme "Celebrating 150 Years of God's Faithfulness" guided the celebration.

The church was first known as *De Ware Gereformeerde Hollandsche Gemeente te Zeeland*, or The True Reformed Holland Church in Zeeland.

It was a daughter church of Noordeloos CRC in Holland, Mich. Noordeloos was one of the four churches that first formed the fledgling Christian Reformed denomination when they left the Dutch Reformed Church in 1857.



The original log building of First CRC

With strong Dutch language ties for decades, the Zeeland congregation held its final Dutch service in 1953.

First CRC has two daughter churches—Bethel CRC and Third CRC, both in Zeeland. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Susan Vanden Berg

Northern Michigan Church Celebrates 100 Years

In June, 100 colorful balloons were released into the air in McBain, Mich., to mark the 100th anniversary of Calvin Christian Reformed Church.

But this was not the first celebration; the 60-member church kicked off the festivities back in January by collecting increments of 100 quarters to give to a local charity. The next month they did 100-piece puzzles together. They "remembered" their history and God's faithfulness in May. In June they "celebrated," and in July they "anticipated" God's faithfulness to them in the future. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Daina Kraai

Calvin CRC released 100 balloons to celebrate God's faithfulness.





Corina Setala

Ontario Deacon First Signer of New Covenant for Officebearers

Corina Setala, a deacon at Bethlehem Christian Reformed Church in Thunder Bay, Ontario, was the first person in the CRC to sign the new Covenant for Officebearers, by which officebearers affirm their commitment the creeds and confessions of the church. Just a week earlier, Synod 2012 approved the covenant to replace the Form of Subscription, which had been used for nearly 400 years. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Gayla R. Postma



Calvin Christian High School girls' soccer team

West Michigan Girls Win Division IV Soccer Title

The girls' soccer team of Calvin Christian High School in Grandville, Mich., won its first Division IV state championship in school history. "We had nine seniors who were really motivated and focused," Calvin Christian head coach Tim TerHaar said.

Katie Klunder tied a Michigan high school girls' soccer record for most points in a season with 80.

—Gregory Chandler



TODD GRASMAN

Michigan Girls Win Division III Soccer Championship

The girls' soccer team of Unity Christian High School in Hudsonville, Mich., won its seventh Division III state championship in eight years. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Greg Chandler

Ontario Student's Art Appears on Postage Stamp



Carson Visser's artwork has captured the attention of a whole nation. The 14-year-old's painting of a barred owl is now featured on a collector's edition postage stamp in Canada.

Visser, a member of Faith Christian Reformed Church in Burlington, Ontario, won a competition sponsored by artist Robert Bateman and Wildlife Habitat Canada with his painting entitled "Curious Visitor." [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Monica deRegt

Carson Visser with his winning painting, "Curious Visitor."



Oregon Teen Wins Second Place in Jeopardy Tournament

"Second place winner of the Jeopardy! Teen Tournament."

"Who is Rose Schaefer?, Alex."

Schaefer, a 17-year-old member of Parklane Christian Reformed Church in Portland, Ore., placed second among 14 teens in the Jeopardy! Teen Tournament, winning \$36,000. [MORE ONLINE](#)

New York Organist Wins National Competition

Benton Blasingame won the first national Taylor Organ Competition in Atlanta, Ga., playing variations on *Jesus Loves Me*. The competition, open to organists under age 23, awards the winner \$10,000 and a solo recital in Atlanta. Blasingame has been the organist for the Rochester Christian Reformed Church in Penfield, N.Y., for the past four years. He plans to pursue a master's degree in organ and sacred music at Yale University. [MORE ONLINE](#)

—Calvin Hulstein



STEVE THRON

Benton Blasingame

BY HUGH COOK

He Knows Each One by Name

It's summer . . . a great time to relax with a good book. In that spirit, we're pleased to offer this excerpt from Hugh Cook's new novel, *Heron River*. (For a Q&A with Hugh Cook, see p. 34.)

Adam, a young man with an intellectual disability incurred as the result of a childhood accident, lives in a group home with his housemates and their caregiver, Woody. This scene occurs one hot summer night.

—Editor

A**FTER IT GOT DARK**, Adam sat in the living room with Donnie and Eric and Jay watching a nature show on television. It was about a mother lion with two cubs and showed the cubs play-fighting and rolling on top of each other. They chased each other through grass and bushes.

Adam walked to the kitchen to grab a snack. He reached into the cupboard for some popcorn, and then the kitchen lights went off and he heard Donnie and Eric shouting. Hey, Donnie said, who turned off the TV? Turn it back on!

On on! Eric shouted.

Adam walked through the dark, back to the living room. Not sure what's going on here, Woody said. Looks like the power's off.

Turn it back on, Donnie said. We're missing the show here.

Woody walked to the window. Don't see any lights on anywhere else in the neighborhood, he said. Looks like a power failure.

Well, go downstairs and turn it back on, Donnie said.

I can't, Woody said. It's not just in the house; the source of the failure is farther away. Maybe it's so hot Niagara Falls dried up.

That's not funny, Donnie said. We're missing the show.

It was dark in the room, and Adam began shuffling towards the front window to look for light.

First thing we gotta do is find some candles, Woody said. Everybody just stay where you are a minute—I'll be right back.

Nobody said anything, and then Adam saw the beam of a flashlight shining in the kitchen. A moment later Woody came into the living room, carrying two candles. He set one candle on the coffee table and the other on the TV. There, he said, at least now we can see something. Everybody okay? I'm sure they'll have the power back on soon.

I wanna see the lions, Donnie said, we're missing the lions.

Now now what do we do now? Eric said.

Not too much we can do, Woody said. We may just have to wait a bit. Adam, grab your harmonica and play us a tune.

Don't want to, Adam said. Two weeks ago his brother Jesse had disappeared on his motorcycle, and he and his mother have not heard from him. Adam hasn't played his harmonica since.

Hot hot it's getting hot in here, Eric said. He began taking off his shirt.

Nobody said anything for a while. This is going to take forever, Donnie said finally. We're never gonna get the power back.

I've got an idea, Woody said. I want all of you to get ready to do something. You'll have to do it in the dark, but I think you can do it. Are you up for it?

Up for what? Adam said.

You'll find out. Okay. Donnie, what I want you to do is go to your room and grab the blanket from beside your bed. Don't ask any questions, just go and grab the blanket.

Donnie went to his room to get his blanket.

Eric, I want you to go and get us all a can of pop from the fridge while they're still cold. Got that? Five cans of pop.

Eric went to the kitchen and came back carrying an armful of Cokes.

Okay, Woody said, I'm gonna blow out one candle. Adam, I want you to carry the other candle, then we're all going outside.

Woody blew out one candle and gave the other to Adam. He went to the couch and picked up Jay. Adam, I want you to walk ahead of me with the candle and open the back door. Donnie and Eric, you guys follow me. Okay? Let's go.

Adam opened the screen door, and they all stepped into the backyard. Donnie, Woody said, spread the blanket right in the middle of the grass over there.

What do we need the blanket for? Donnie said.

Just spread the blanket out nice, Woody said.

When Donnie had spread the blanket, Woody took Jay and set him down on the blanket. Just lie on your back, Jay, Woody said. Jay let himself fall back. »

**Then they all saw it,
a bright light flashing through the sky
off to their right.**



You can give me the candle, Adam, Woody said. Okay, Adam, Donnie, Eric, I want you guys to lie down beside Jay. Go ahead, lie down on the blanket, on your backs, just like Jay.

They all lay down on the blanket. Woody blew out the candle. It was completely dark outside. Not a light anywhere. Adam had never seen it this dark. He couldn't even see the shapes of the trees.

Any room left for me? Woody said.

They all scrunched up beside each other. This is stupid, Donnie said, it's hot out here.

Hot hot, Eric said.

Perfect, Woody said. Alright everybody, what I want you to do is look straight up. Look straight up. Tell me what you see.

Don't see nothin', Donnie said, it's bitchin' dark.

That's the point, Woody said. Look up and tell me what you see.

Stars, Adam said, lots of stars.

Exactly! Woody said. Have you ever seen so many stars? What's happening is that because the power's off everywhere there's no light interference and that's why we can see the stars so much better.

Adam looked up and couldn't recall ever seeing so many stars.

See that really bright star over there, Woody said, the one that's brighter than all the others? That's the North Star. It's the last star in the handle of what's called the Little Dipper. You know what a dipper is? It's like a saucepan. It's the group of stars you see there in the shape of—well,

if you tilt your head a bit it's sort of shaped like a grocery cart, and—

Why don't they call it the Little Grocery Cart then instead of the Little Dipper? Donnie said.

Good question, Donnie, Woody said, I'll suggest that to the Royal Astronomical Society. Anyway, those stars are the cup of the Little Dipper, and the last and brightest star in the handle is the North Star.

Adam tried to follow Woody's explanation, but he didn't see any dipper. And then, after looking some more, there it was above him, the North Star, brightest in a row of stars. I can see it! he said.

Good for you, Woody said.

They were all silent, looking at the stars. Then Woody asked, How long do you think it would take us to travel to the North Star?

A week, I'll bet, Donnie said. That sucker's way up there, man.

You know what? Woody said. If you traveled at the speed of light, it would take you more than four hundred years to get there.

Get off it, Donnie said.

Lots lots of years lots, Eric said.

But you know what's most amazing? Woody said.

What? Adam said.

God made every one of those stars. And he knows each one by name.

Get out, Donnie said, there's zillions of them. Nobody could do that.

No, but God can, Woody said.

They lay on their backs a long time, looking at the stars. None of them said anything for a long while.

Then they all saw it, a bright light flashing through the sky off to their right. Holy! Donnie shouted, did you see that?

Oooh, Adam said.

That's called a shooting star, Woody said. When you see one you're allowed to make a wish.

They all looked intently into the sky, waiting to see another shooting star. Then Adam saw another. There's one! he shouted, pointing.

Bull, Donnie said, I didn't see one. You're just makin' that up.

They looked at the stars a long while, and then Woody said, Listen, maybe we should collect our stuff and get back inside. Get ready to call it a day.

Not yet, Donnie said. I haven't finished makin' my wish yet. I want to look at the stars some more.

Me too, Adam said.

What about you, Eric?

Stay stay a while stay.

Sounds to me like it's unanimous, Woody said. Alright then.

Adam hadn't finished making his wish either. He thought about it and then wished his brother Jesse would come home. ■



Hugh Cook is a member of Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Ancaster, Ontario. To purchase a copy of *Heron*

River, email info@mosaic-press.com.

Ten Questions for Debriefing after a Mission Trip

YOUR CHURCH GROUP has just returned from a fantastic mission trip to some far-flung corner of the world, or from someplace much closer to home.

But once people get home, CNN, Twitter, soccer, school, work, and church activities have a way of crowding out the spiritual focus that, just a few days earlier, seemed certain to shape their lives.

That's why it's important to have an effective debriefing plan in place even before leaving home.

Roger Peterson, author of *Maximum Impact Short-Term Mission*, says that the debriefing process, a time of reflection after your short-term mission, is more important than the actual mission. While not discounting the work that's

ahead of time what you expect of them on their return.

Here, then, are ten potential debriefing questions adapted from Tim Dearborn and Dr. David Livermore, author of *Serving with Eyes Wide Open*. Share them with your team before you leave, and then make sure you carve out time upon your return to reflect on them.

1. What did I learn about myself on my short-term mission?
2. What did I learn about God?
3. What did I learn about the people, the church, and the Christian community in the area where I served?
4. What did I learn about how culture impacts the ways people live and understand the gospel?
5. What did I learn about justice, economics, poverty, and politics during my short-term mission?



Real life change comes as people return home and reflect on their experience.

been accomplished, real life change comes as people return home and reflect on their experience.

Over the years I have served alongside thousands of people on mission trips in Mexico and attended countless conferences sponsored by denominations and mission organizations. Here's what I have learned: the most effective people in God's kingdom are the ones who take seriously the need to stop, reflect, and consider what God is saying to them through their mission.

Tim Dearborn, director of faith and development at World Vision International, says that in order for people to really gain insight from this debriefing time, they need to know what to look for. This means letting your team know

6. As a follower of Christ, what did I learn that can help me be a more fully devoted disciple?
7. How might my faith be different if I had grown up where I was serving, as opposed to in my home community?
8. What did I learn or experience that will change the way I live and represent Jesus in my home community and church?
9. What have I learned about my own Christian calling?
10. How can I continue to support the ongoing work in the area where I served?

There you have it. Ten questions to consider as your team returns to your home church. But let me go one step further and give you a bonus question:

What difference would it make if you lived each day with the same intensity and focus on Jesus and others as you did on your mission? And then ask your team this follow-up question: What keeps you from living life at that level now?

For most of us, the lessons learned from serving on short-term mission trips may take years to fully grasp.

But that's okay. It's a journey. ■



Dave Miller is executive director of Adventures in Life Ministry, a mission organization serving Mexico, and a member of Grace Valley Christian Reformed Church in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Building a Church You Can Call Home

by Sandy Swartzentruber

The 1980s sitcom “Cheers,” set in a Boston bar, probably isn’t the first place you’d look for a model of how the church should be. But when it comes to community, Cheers has some good things going for it.

At Cheers, everybody—no matter how neurotic, addicted, immature, or goofy—is welcomed, accepted, and known by name. When house painter and resident wisecracker Norm Peterson enters the bar, everyone shouts, “NORM!” (Propriety aside, wouldn’t you feel great if everybody shouted out your name when you walked into church on Sunday morning?)

Norm and his buddies are a family in every sense of the word but geneti-

cally. But what does it take for a church to develop a strong sense of family? According to many church leaders, the key lies in two words: intergenerational ministry.

WE: All Together Now

Faith Alive, the publishing ministry of the CRC, has launched a new venture designed to help churches become places where people of all ages know each other, learn together, and learn from each other.

A new group of products called “WE” provides intergenerational events where preschoolers to senior citizens share a meal, experience part of God’s story, and respond to it together.



At Rosewood CRC in Bellflower, Calif., people of all ages do an activity together at a WE event.

WE gives church members a space to meet new people, form bonds across generational lines, and build community.

Ruth Vander Hart, Faith Alive's managing editor and curriculum editor, says, "WE gives church members a space to meet new people, form bonds across generational lines, and build community in a way that can be hard to come by in other church events."

WE events usually run about two hours. When people arrive, they're seated randomly at tables of six to eight (little kids are welcome to stay with parents or go to another table). The event host welcomes everyone and invites them to use some fun conversation starters to get to know each other as they eat a meal together.

After the meal, volunteers perform a skit or readers' theater or some other dramatic presentation of part of God's Word. At their tables, groups respond to the story by doing various activities together. They might make part of a banner together, do a service project, create a "blessing bowl" out of clay, or learn about the meaning behind the furnishings of the tabernacle.

Finally, the table groups share what they learned with the large group, everyone sings together, and organizers hand out take-home devotions and other items to help the learning continue after the event.

Events are designed to allow people of all ages, from the church's oldest members to its teens to its youngest kids, to actively participate.

Talbot Street CRC in London, Ontario, used WE: The Epic Story with the congregation. Member Marg Wiersma said, "The events are great because they create community. It was so nice to see the adults and the children working together! Our church is really big, so these events are great because you get to connect with people you might not meet otherwise. At



A simplified "stations of the cross" activity brings home the meaning of Jesus' sacrifice at an intergenerational WE event.

one event I sat with a teenager and a five-year-old boy, and we got to know each other. Now when we see each other in the halls at church, we always say hi!" ■



Sandy Swartzentruber is an associate editor for Faith Alive and a member of Church of the Servant CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.

WE Series



WE: The Epic Story (10 events)

by Bonny Mulder-Behnia and Laura Keeley
Trace the whole sweep of God's big story, from creation to new creation, with these 10 events. We suggest planning one a month throughout the church year.

WE: Enter the Tabernacle (five events)

by Diane Geerlinks and Betty Panza
Explore the meaning of the Old Testament tabernacle and God's desire to live with his people. In the final event, participants walk through a model of the tabernacle made from common household supplies and learn how each piece tells part of God's story.

WE: The Unshakeable Promise (six events)

by Bonny Mulder-Behnia and Laura Keeley
Discover the meaning of "covenant" by exploring the stories of Noah, Abraham, Moses at Mount Sinai, Jesus' birth, the Lord's Supper, and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

WE: Expectations (one event)

by Laura Keeley
Start Advent off right with this single event. Based on the theme of Jesus as the Son of David, this event centers on the creation of a community Jesse tree. It's also a great way to try WE if your church hasn't used it before.

To view an introductory video and get more information about how WE can work in your church, visit WeCurriculum.org.

How to Make a Hymnal

The lifespan of a hymnal is about the same as that of a good roof—about 20 years. After two decades, both begin to show their age.

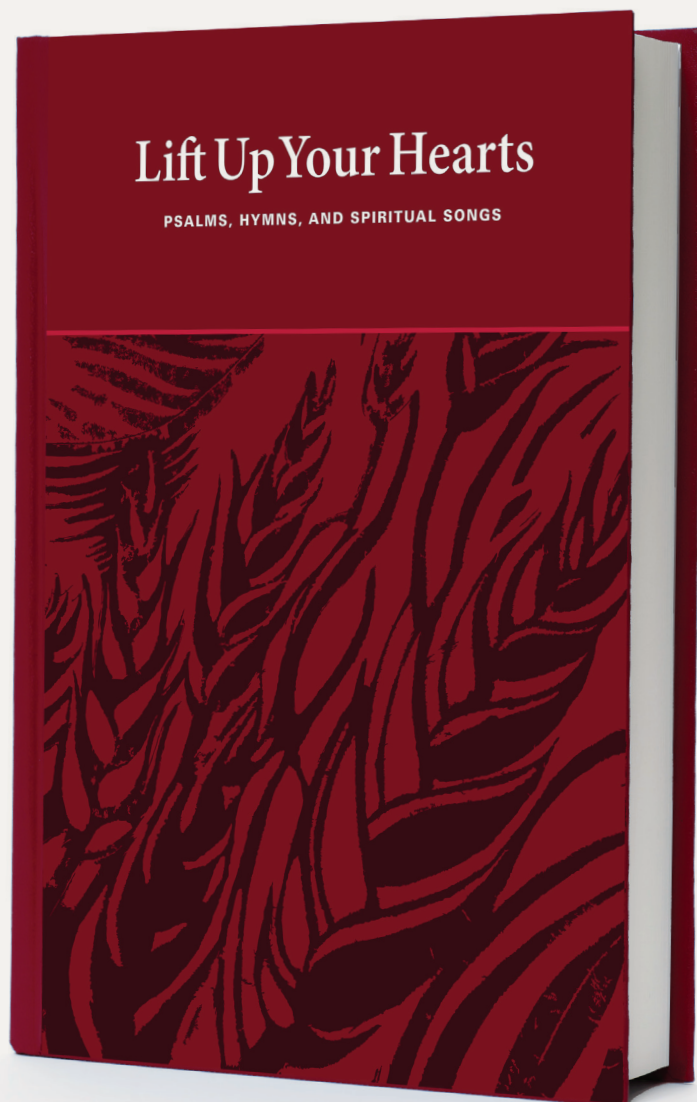
The gray *Psalter Hymnal*, published in 1987, is 25 years old. An entire generation of kids has grown up since it was released. In those 25 years, the world and the church—and especially the church’s music—have changed dramatically.

In 2013, Faith Alive will release a new hymnal called *Lift Up Your Hearts: Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*. The introduction of a new hymnal is always somewhat historic, but this hymnal has an added dimension: it will be the first hymnal ever to serve both the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America (see sidebar). “Our hope is that churches from other denominations will also find that its breadth and depth of song choices will meet their worship needs,” says Joyce Berger, Faith Alive’s music and worship editor and head of the editorial committee for the new hymnal.

At first glance, producing a new hymnal sounds easy: someone picks the songs, and a printer prints the book.

But the reality is much more complicated, especially when two denominations

At first glance, producing a new hymnal sounds easy: someone picks the songs, and a printer prints the book. But the reality is much more complicated,



Why a bi-denominational hymnal?

Following an agreement formed after the closing of the Reformed Church in America’s publishing ministry, Faith Alive became the resource provider for both the CRC and the RCA. Also, the synods of the CRC and RCA have encouraged their churches to find ways in which to work collaboratively. As denominational siblings, it makes sense for us to work together wherever possible.

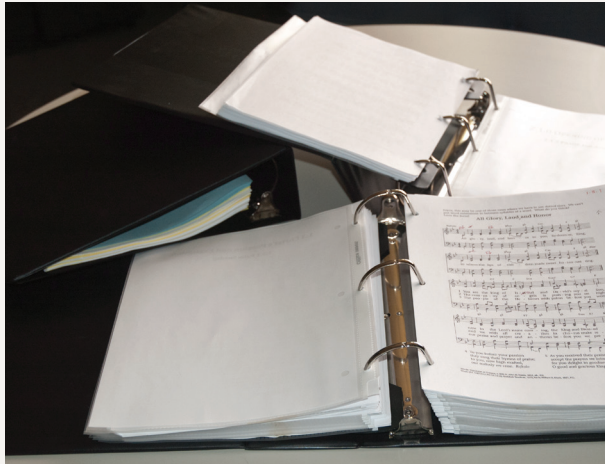
You add.
God multiplies.

are involved. There are questions of theology and musicality to be discussed. There's a balance to be found between old favorites and new songs, between Western tunes and songs of the global church.

The production of a hymnal takes about ten years from start to finish. Planning for the 2013 release of *Lift Up Your Hearts* (LUYH, or "Loo-yah," as it's affectionately pronounced), began in 2003 with some initial conversations and research, though the first official meetings of the editorial committee were not held until 2008.

An 80-member advisory committee from the CRC and the RCA provided a link between churches and Faith Alive. Their role was to communicate to the editorial committee which songs would best help their congregations worship God. They also provided feedback on many other questions, especially questions about word and tune choices. Though not a decision-making body, this group's opinions and perspectives influenced the editorial committee's decisions.

The 13-member editorial committee for LUYH includes five CRC representatives, five RCA representatives, and three staff members from Faith Alive. Their first task was to listen to the advisory committee and the churches. Based on the advisory committee's wisdom, the editorial committee chose the songs for the hymnal, decided which tunes would



Huge binders hold the songs under consideration for inclusion in *Lift Up Your Hearts*: the CRC and RCA's new hymnal.

accompany them, and organized them into helpful groupings.

LUYH's editorial committee began its work with a roster of 3,000 songs under consideration. They pared those down to about 800, based on theological and musical criteria, while keeping in mind a balance of genres and content and anticipating the pastoral needs of this and future generations.

After songs are chosen for a hymnal, they're edited, typeset, and copyedited. Permission is sought from copyright holders for the publisher to reproduce the music and lyrics. Graphic designers lay out each page. Proofreaders ferret out stray typos or other errors. Finally, the completed manuscript is sent to the printer.

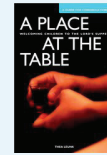
LUYH is scheduled to roll off the presses in the spring of 2013. Electronic versions of the hymnal will also be available at that time. ■

—Sandy Swartzentruber

LUYH's editorial committee began its work with a roster of 3,000 songs under consideration. ””

New Titles from Faith Alive

For more information on these and other resources, visit FaithAliveResources.org or call 1-800-333-8300.



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Thea Nyhoff Leunk

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M. Craig Barnes

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Who, Me? Series

These new Bible studies for youth explore the lives of biblical characters and the extraordinary ways God uses ordinary people.

On the Way

You must be in your right mind to really preach.” That goes without saying, you might think. But what the speaker meant is that preaching has to come from the right side of the brain—the affective, feeling part.

That is not to say that preaching has to be all emotion. But it must involve emotion. Left-brained preaching is about what to know. Preaching that also draws on the right brain is about what to do with what you know.

I suggest that we must also be in our “right mind” to live the way we ought. That too seems to go without saying. But it is actually another way of stating James’s famous words: “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:26).

God desires authentic living—feeling and embracing the truth as well as knowing the truth. He wants us in our *right* minds as well as our left. As a denomination, we have sometimes paid so much attention to our left mind that our right mind gets left out.

We can learn a lesson from the apostle John. I’ve read that in his New Testament writings, John uses the verb “believe” some 98 times, but the noun “belief” only once. For John, faith is not simply something to *have*; it is something to *do*. Faith puts us in our right minds.

That’s never been more important than it is today. True faith must affect how we live, how we behave. “What good is it . . . if someone claims to have faith but has not deeds? . . . Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2:14, 17). You

see, left-brained living is not only deficient. If we are not in our right minds, we’re dead!

The ministry of Faith Alive Christian Resources helps enable us to be in our right minds. Materials for everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, help us to live out what we believe.

Curriculum materials encourage leaders, children, and young people to put their faith into practice. Bible study materials help us find our place in God’s story. Devotionals lead us day by day into faithful living. Evangelism tools help us reach out into our neighborhoods and communities with the Word that has so changed our lives. Music enables us to give voice to our praise. Study guides help us structure ourselves for ministry. All are designed to put us in our right minds.

It is not that this material is better than all others. It is, rather, that this material arises out of a Reformed understanding of Scripture and the conviction that everything and everyone belongs to God, and all of us must live every moment and everywhere for God. You can trust these

authors and educators and composers and advisers to make every effort to help you live in your right mind as well as your left. Faith Alive: the agency’s name is a statement of its mission.

Let’s thank God for the many dedicated people who make this agency and its products such a valuable resource. I ask you to join me in praying that God will bless and use them. I challenge us all to live and learn and worship in our right minds (as well as our left) so that others might have a faith alive like ours! ■



ISTOCK PHOTO

“ Faith puts us in our right minds. ”



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

You add.

Today in Print—and So Much More

Kim and Joe Kuster have lived with visual impairments for most of their lives—an experience they say has drawn them closer to the Lord.

The Kusters recently discovered a new resource to assist with their daily devotions: an audio version of the *Today* devotional produced by Back to God Ministries International.

Many people are familiar with the print version of *Today*, but BTGMI also makes the

daily devotional available through smartphone apps, audio podcasts, RSS feed, or an email version that can be read aloud using a screen reader.

It also offers an audio cassette, which is mailed to the homes of people who request it.

Kim is able to read the large print *Today* but, until recently, the only way Joe was able to enjoy the devotional was by listening to a cassette recording. But the cassette version is a bit cumbersome for Kim and Joe's active lifestyle, which includes

running a ministry for people with hearing impairment, so they were happy to learn about the options available through newer technology.

They opted for the daily app that comes right to their smartphones equipped with voiceover capability.

For someone like 94-year-old Julia Koeman, who doesn't have a computer or smart-



Kim and Joe Kuster access audio *Today* devotionals on their iPad.

phone, the cassette version works well. Julia has read *Today* at mealtimes for most of her life. When she could no longer read the large print version, she was thankful to learn about *Today* on cassette.

Rev. Mark Stephenson, director of the CRC's Disability Concerns ministry, is grateful to see more and easier-to-use resources available to people with visual impairments.

"In addition to the *Today* audio options, the CRC offers cassette versions of *The Banner* and *Breaking Barriers* (the quarterly publication produced by Disability Concerns), Stephenson said. "Now *The Banner* and *Breaking Barriers* are also available online, giving audio access to those who have a screen reader."

Go to ThisIsToday.net or email info@BackToGod.net to find out about various audio versions available. And check out the Disability Concerns website crcna.org/disability for a list of several church-related resources available for people with visual impairments. ■

—Nancy Vander Meer,
Back to God Ministries
International

Manhattan Mission

Two small evangelical churches serve more than 90,000 residents packed into New York City's Bowery neighborhood.

Enter Dwell, a new Christian Reformed Home Missions-supported church that is striving to connect the Bowery to the mission of God.

Led by Pastor Pete Armstrong and his wife, Lily, this young church serves an urban community that is increasingly diverse, both economically and ethnically.

While the well-known Bowery Mission has served people in the area who are homeless for 133 years, it is just one block away from upscale restaurants and from apartments that sell for upwards of \$1 million.

The sight of the poor living next to millionaires intrigues Armstrong, who says he feels called to minister to both. He was overjoyed that both groups were represented at the church's Easter Sunday launch service, which attracted nearly 100 people.

"Worship included men from the Bowery Mission, along with families living in nearby penthouses," he says. "The vision God gave to plant a church across barriers is coming true."

Pete and Lily had moved to New York from Seattle in 2010 so Pete could serve as associate

(continued on page 29)



Dwell, a new CRHM church plant, meets for worship in a local theater.

The Dark World of Human Trafficking

On a late March afternoon, two Nicaraguan girls ages 12 and 13 left school, wrote notes to their families telling them not to worry, and hopped a bus to a nearby town.

Enticed by two men who promised them jobs and money, the girls rode straight into the dark world of human trafficking.

They were instructed to go to a house in a town near the Honduran border. There the two men they had talked with before led them to a room, locked them in, and left them for several days while arranging for forged documents to get them across the border.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case.

Globally, millions of people each year are tricked into a life of sexual exploitation and forced labor.

Earlier this year, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

(CRWRC) initiated a human trafficking awareness program in Nicaragua designed to work through churches.

Trainings are held every other month for church leaders from a variety of denominations.

The older sister of one of the girls who left on the bus was a participant in CRWRC's pilot program in her community. When the girls suddenly disappeared, she notified authorities and helped them piece together clues about what had happened. In less than a week, both girls were located and returned to their families. ■

—Mark VanderWees, CRWRC Nicaragua



A young girl who faced human trafficking is comforted by a woman who is helping her cope.

Wandering Young People Return

Taliba Harriet Susan was troubled by what she saw in Soroti, Uganda. Young men and women were having strings of girlfriends and boyfriends, and their sexual boundaries were lax. Caught up in the “party lifestyle,” they were drinking excessively and becoming unruly, Taliba says, and her heart broke as she saw them making lifestyle choices that harmed themselves and others.

“[Only when a youth is] hooked in the Lord . . . will he or she be sure to escape these behaviors,” Taliba says.

“Youths need adult Christian leaders as well as peers with good testimonies to regularly speak to their lives so that they escape the so-called order of the day, which only ruins their lives and makes the lives of others around them miserable. At the same time, avenues for spending their energies rightly need to be created.”

Taliba is one of several Ugandan leaders involved in Timothy Leadership Training (TLT).

TLT focuses on biblically based principles for personal, church, and societal growth and wholeness. Christian Reformed World Missions missionaries Mwaya and Munyiva Wa Kitavi have organized workshops across Eastern and Southern Africa to strengthen leaders like Taliba for ministry in their communities.

TLT, which works in many countries around the world, is based at Calvin Theological Seminary.



Ugandan women gather to perform a dance of praise.

“Timothy Leadership Training opened a door for me to minister to the young people of the church,” says Taliba. Since then, she has made it her goal to challenge youths to live for Christ and participate in church life.

She regularly carves out time to get to know young people. She opens her home to them, befriending and encouraging them to follow God. Believing that they have something to offer the church, she urges them to use their gifts to serve the community of believers.

As a result, about 12 young people have become involved in choir and other worship ministries.

“Young people now have the opportunity to channel their energy in meaningful activities that shape their character and talents,” says Mwaya Wa Kitavi. “Harriet’s prayer is that these young people will continue to have the passion to serve the Lord.” ■

—Sarah Van Stempvoort, Christian Reformed World Missions

You add.
God multiplies.

Manhattan Mission

(continued from page 27)

pastor at City Grace Church, another Home Missions-supported church less than a mile from Dwell.

While at City Grace, Pete led an Alpha evangelism course and began feeling the call to plant a new church in the Bowery, where he and Lily lived.

After starting with Sunday evening prayer and Bible study meetings, the Armstrongs developed a launch team and began looking for a physical worship space.

In early 2012, through a connection Pete made with a local theater manager, the new church called Dwell signed a lease to worship in the theater every Sunday.

In addition to sharing the gospel with Bowery residents, the church is also increasing its partnership with the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors, a local community group.

In addition to Dwell and City Grace, Home Missions also supports Open Door Fellowship and New Song, two newer church plants in Manhattan's historic Harlem neighborhood. ■

—Ben Van Houten, *Christian Reformed Home Missions*

Fresh Sight

Ever since Marcia Beare was in high school, she'd wanted to be a doctor. But the first time she studied at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., she followed the path laid out for her and prepared to become a social worker.

"The 'professionals' told me that it was a socially acceptable job for a blind person," said Beare, who lost her sight at age 2 as the result of a rare childhood cancer.

Following that advice, she earned her bachelor's degree in sociology and went on to get her master's degree in social work.

After graduation, she took a job, only to realize before long that social work was not really what she wanted to do.

So last spring, Beare returned to Calvin to study to

become a doctor. She enjoyed the classes. But after diving into math and science courses, she quickly noticed a gap between her comprehension and that of her classmates.

In Beare's statistics course, mathematics professor Thomas Jager asked if anyone would be willing to help her outside of class. Junior Ryan Burkhart volunteered.

In time, the two learned how to work together, and soon other students joined in.

Junior Amanda Doyle tutors Beare in physics and uses a computer program to record chemistry exercises as audio files. Sophomore Andrew Hess and junior Christian Woolley are often available to help when Beare stops by the physics reading room.

Beare especially remembers Hess's step-by-step support in solving equations, and

Woolley's mentoring in the department's regular physics help sessions.

"Never once have they ever been upset because I asked them a question," Beare said.

But the encouragement goes both ways. "Marcia has such a rich life story," Burkhart said. "And it gets richer every day."

It's a story physics professor Loren Haarsma has watched unfold through Beare's



Marcia Beare receives help with her pre-med classwork from Ryan Burkhart, a fellow Calvin College student.

participation in his courses. "I've seen her make amazing progress," he said.

Along with students, Haarsma has helped, regularly recording additional information and explanations for Beare's audio assignments. This assistance ensures that Beare's software reads complex equations correctly.

Thanks to all of the support, Beare is progressing through the undergraduate work. As he watches, Haarsma is convinced Beare is headed toward a career in the medical field. ■

—Amanda Greenhoe, *Calvin College*

Get the Message

Before email and texting, before computers and telephones, people wrote letters to send messages. These days, getting a handwritten message in a letter is pretty special, because it doesn't happen very often. But there's one special message you can read whenever you

want to. The Bible is God's message to us. And it's not written in secret code—it's right there for everybody to see. God says, "I made you, I love you, and I sent my Son to die and rise again so you could have new life." Get the message?



Horsing Around

If you wanted to send a message really fast in 1860s America, you could use the Pony Express. A rider on a horse would carry a bag of letters as far and fast as they could go. Then, while they rested, another rider and horse would take the letters even farther. To send a message from the East Coast to the West Coast by Pony Express took about 10 days if the weather was good. But after only 19 months, the Pony Express was put out of business by the newly-invented telegraph.

I love that Pony Express... but who is Harold Hackett and where in the world is Prince Edward Island?

Message in a Bottle

Harold Hackett lives in Tignish, Prince Edward Island, on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. On days when the wind is right, he puts messages in plastic juice bottles, caps the bottles tightly, and tosses them into the ocean. The currents carry his messages out to sea, and they end up all over the world. Sometimes it takes more than 10 years for a bottle to reach land! Harold has gotten messages back from people in Africa, Russia, the Netherlands, France, Scotland, South America, the United States, and other continents and countries.



Spine Poems

Here's another fun way to send messages. Stack a pile of books so that their titles make a sentence or poem, like this:

GUESS WHAT I FOUND IN DRAGON
THREE LITTLE KITTENS
FLYING!



For another fun way to send messages, check out the website ransom.sytes.org. Type in your message, click on "create," and watch what happens!

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY

The Unbreakable Code

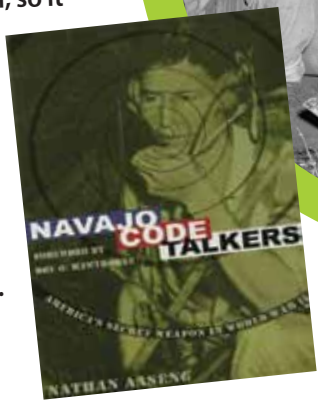
When countries are at war, they need ways to send secret messages that the enemy can't read, so they use secret codes. During World War II, 29 Navajo men worked with the United States military to create a code that even the expert code-crackers couldn't break.

Navajo is a complicated language that's hard to learn, so it was perfect for using as a code. The Navajo "code talkers," as they were called, came up with 411 code words for the military to use. For example, the code for "fighter plane" was "da-he-tih-hi" — Navajo for "hummingbird." The code for "battleship" was "lo-tso," or "whale."

By creating an unbreakable code, the Navajo code talkers helped end a war that was affecting people all over the world. To learn more, read the book *Navajo Code Talkers* by Nathan Aaseng and Roy O. Hawthorne.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



Play with Your Food

Here are three ways to send secret messages using food! Can you think of any others?

Cranberry Code Cracker

Write a message with a light-blue marker on a piece of white paper. Scribble all over the message with red and pink markers so the message is hard to read. Then pour an inch or so of cranberry juice into a glass or jar. If you slide the glass of juice over your message, you'll be able to read it clearly again! If the juice is too dark to see through, add a little water.



Sour Secrets

Fill a small bowl with lemon juice. Dip a toothpick in the juice, and use the toothpick like a pen to write a message on a piece of white paper. Let the paper dry. To reveal the message, turn on one of the burners on your stove, and hold the paper over it, far enough away so the paper won't burn (ask an adult for help with this part). The acid in the lemon juice will turn the paper brown where the letters are written!

Banana Surprise

Use a toothpick to scratch a message on the outside of a banana. After a while, the scratches will turn brown, revealing your message! When you're done, you can eat the evidence!

The Pigpen Cipher

The "pigpen cipher" is a code that people have used for hundreds of years to send secret messages. George Washington's army sometimes used it, and in the Civil War, Union army prisoners used the pigpen cipher to send messages to friends. To use this code, you and the person receiving the message need a key like this:

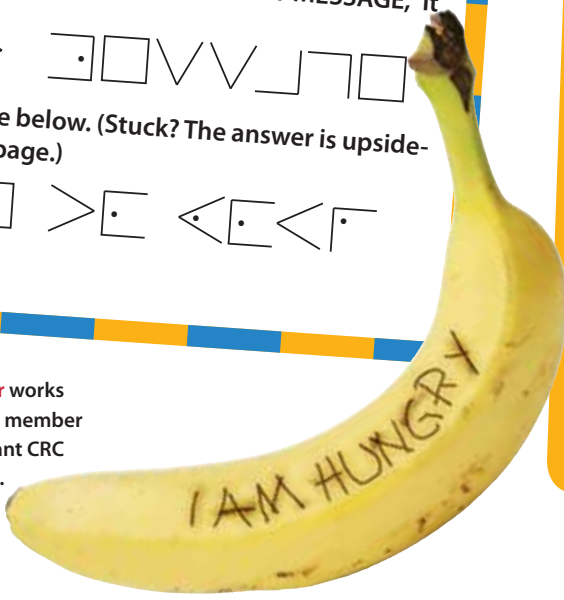
A	B	C	J	K	L	S	W		
D	E	F	M	N	O				
G	H	I	P	Q	R	T	U		
						V	X	Y	Z

When you want to write a certain letter, you just draw the lines and dots that are around it in the key. For example,

A = J = S = W =

Get it? So if you wanted to write the words "SECRET MESSAGE," it would look like this:

See if you can crack the code below. (Stuck? The answer is upside-down at the bottom of the page.)



Sandy Swartzentruber works for Faith Alive and is a member of Church of the Servant CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.



The Art of Lament

YOUR MOTHER DIES OF OLD AGE.

Your child dies in a car accident.

Your friend takes his own life.

Your business, to which you have devoted your life, goes bankrupt.

You grieve.

Why do you grieve? Most of the people who read in the newspaper about the death of your mother do not share your grief. Why do you grieve when they don't? You grieve because you were attached to her; they were not. We grieve when something to which we are attached—a person, an animal, a project, an institution—dies or is destroyed or maimed.

Lament Is Part of Our Nature

Is it part of our good created nature to grieve when something to which we are attached dies or is destroyed, or is this part of our fallen nature? John Calvin thought it was part of our created nature, and so do I. "Afflicted by disease," Calvin writes, "we shall both groan and be uneasy and pant after health; pressed by poverty, we shall be pricked by the arrows of care and sorrow; we shall be smitten by the pain of disgrace, contempt, injustice; at the funerals of our dear ones we shall weep the tears that are owed to our nature. . . . Our Lord and Master groaned and wept both over his own and others'

misfortunes. And he taught his disciples in the same way" (*Institutes* III.viii.10).

Here Calvin explicitly says that it belongs to our nature—he means our *created* nature—to weep at the funerals of our dear ones, to grieve over the loss of health, and so on. What's more, he assumes, without explicitly saying so, that it is a good thing to be attached to our relatives and friends, to our health, to our reputation. If he did not think it was good to be attached to such persons and things, he would not say that it was a good thing to grieve over their loss.

Of course, we are sometimes attached to things that we should not be attached

to; we sometimes care about things that we should not care about. But friends and relatives are not in that category; nor are health and reputation. These are good things, and so we rightly care about them. Something is seriously wrong with the person who isn't attached to anybody, who is indifferent to his health, who isn't invested in any institution, who doesn't care about his reputation in the community. Such a person doesn't grieve over anything. He is, Calvin says, "like a stone."

Though the community sees the tears of the psalmist and hears his groaning, it is to God that he addresses his lament. Faith endures. His grief does not destroy his faith in God; rather, his faith incorporates his grief. And his lament gives voice to that incorporation.

This incorporation does not come easily; far from it. The psalmist's faith is tested, sometimes severely so; and the psalmist does not shy away from saying that it is tested. Psalm 22 opens with the

yet praise him, my Savior and my God." "I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the LORD's praise, for he has been good to me" (Ps. 13). "I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise you" (Ps. 22).

Some Christians find their loss so religiously disturbing that they give up on God and treasure their grief. Others seem to think that faith requires them to stifle their grief. What we see in the psalmist

MY GRIEF OVER THE DEATH OF MY CHILD IS A GOOD AND PRECIOUS THING.

Christians sometimes suggest that their grief is an indication of weak faith. If only my faith were full and strong, they say, I would not grieve over the death of a child; instead I would tell myself that the child is now "in a better place." It's hard for me to believe that such people think they should not have been attached to their child, hard to believe that they think they should not have loved her. They must mean instead that Christians should try to stifle their grief.

The Language of Lament

The psalmist thought otherwise. A fair number of the psalms are psalms of lament; they give voice to grief. Psalms 13, 22, 42, 69, and 77 are examples. "I am weary with my crying," says the psalmist, "my throat is parched" (Ps. 69). In Psalm 42 he laments, "My tears have been my food day and night." The language is even more vivid in Psalm 22:

I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart has turned to wax;
it has melted within me.
My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to the roof
of my mouth.

No stifling of grief here!

cry of abandonment that Jesus repeated on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest."

Grief within Faith

Notice once again that it is to *God* that the psalmist addresses this cry of feeling abandoned by God; though his faith is severely tested, it nonetheless endures. The psalms of lament give voice to a faith that endures in the face of feeling that God has forsaken me.

The psalms of lament invariably conclude with the psalmist's declaration that, whatever his present feelings, God has not, in fact, forsaken him. There is more to his life with God, more to the life of his people with God, than this present sense of abandonment in grief. "In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame" (Ps. 22).

The psalmist trusts that his sense of abandonment will lift, and that God's goodness will again become evident to him. "Put your hope in God," he reminds himself at the end of Psalm 42, "for I will

is a third way. Rather than grief without faith or faith without grief, we see faith incorporating grief. The psalmist's lament gives voice both to his grief and to the faith that incorporates his grief. Indeed, he sings praise songs—but not only praise songs, also songs of lament.

If my attachment to my child was a good and precious thing, then my grief over the death of my child is a good and precious thing. And if my grief over the death of my child is a good and precious thing, then my challenge, as a believer, is not to stifle my grief but to do my best eventually to incorporate it into my life of faith.

I may eventually discover that a faith that incorporates grief is stronger and richer than a faith that sings only praise songs. ■

[STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE](#)



Nicholas Wolterstorff is Noah Porter Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology at Yale University, Fellow of Berkeley College at Yale University, and Senior Fellow in the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, University of Virginia. Among his many publications is *Lament for a Son* (Eerdmans, 1987).

Still Life: Lauren Winner and the “Mid-Life Faith Crisis”



A FEW SUMMERS AGO, I had no wind in my sails. Literally. I was taking sailing lessons, and suddenly the wind died off. I moved the tiller left and right, changed the position of the sail, but it was no use. I was stuck in the middle of the still lake, and I felt powerless.

In her recent book *Still: Notes on a Mid-Life Faith Crisis*, Lauren Winner describes a much deeper sense of powerlessness. She explains how, after her mother died and her marriage ended in divorce, the “enthusiasms” and “the confidence of conversion” disappeared.

Such an admission may surprise some, given that Winner already chronicled her conversion in a successful memoir (*Girl Meets God*), then expounded on marriage in another book (*Real Sex*), and became a well-known Christian speaker and divinity school professor—all this before reaching age 40. Even more surprisingly, Winner admits that she suffered from a lack of spiritual rootedness. She did not know the Bible well and generally chose busyness over reflection.

Winner’s sparse prose, however, will appeal to many readers who find that

their own faith has dried up—or, as Winner writes more poetically, “My faith bristled, it brittle, it snapped, like a bone, like a pot too long in the kiln.” She notes that she could not pray anymore, and, to protect herself from being judged, she became “bored” by Christianity and turned away from it.

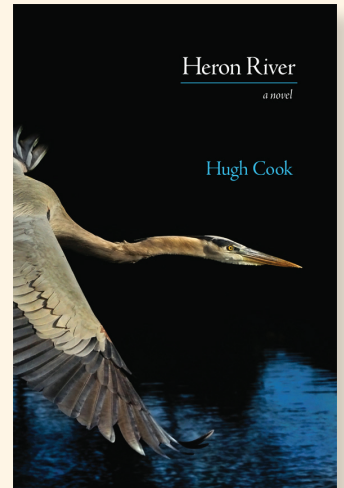
If Winner finally rediscovered hope and God’s presence, it’s mainly thanks to community and a sense of spiritual discipline. Friends told her not to be so self-absorbed and that she needed to control her anxiety. She found her way back to church, to daily prayer, to the value of “rote, unshowy behavior.”

Winner summarizes her current self this way: “I am not a saint. I am, however, beginning to learn that I am a small character in a story that is always fundamentally about God.” And so, her book is really about making slow steps toward wisdom, to becoming *still* and knowing God is here, even if we feel stuck or set adrift. ■



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

She could not pray anymore.



Q&A with Hugh Cook

Hugh Cook is professor emeritus of English at Redeemer University College. His latest novel, *Heron River*, is excerpted in this issue of *The Banner*. He graciously answered some questions for Tuned In editor Kristy Quist; look for the rest of the interview at thebanner.org.

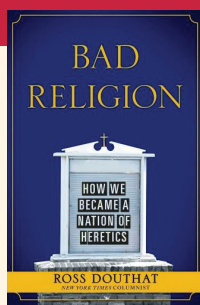
Q Does writing bring you into your immediate life more fully or does it pull you away from your daily life?

A Both, really. When I’m working on a story or a novel and it’s going well, I feel as if I’m living on a heightened plane, similar to what athletes refer to as being “in game shape,” and I’m drawn into life more acutely. . . . I remember, when I was writing a scene in *The Homecoming Man* when Gerrit is brutally being interrogated by Nazi soldiers, that I was so focused on writing that scene, and felt so intensely the pain he was going through, that I had to get up from my desk a moment and look out my living room window, as if to reassure myself that the world out there was still normal.

Big Stories for Little Ones

by Rain for Roots
reviewed by Robert J. Keeley

Rain for Roots is made up of four successful singer-songwriters (Sandra McCracken among them) who are also mothers of young children. They have joined together to create a wonderful album of songs that speak the truth of God's Word to children. Each of the songs places the focus clearly on God's work, not on what biblical heroes did or on how we ought to behave. The melodies are strong but not complex, and the arrangements are simple enough to help us attend to the lyrics. Although this album is aimed at children, it is not childish. rainforroots.com



Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics

by Ross Douthat
reviewed by Robert N. Hosack

In this hard-hitting conservative jeremiad chronicling American Christianity from the mid-20th century onward, Douthat argues that the current state of economic, political, and social crisis in the United States is at heart a religious one. "America's problem isn't too much religion, or too little of it. It's *bad* religion: the slow-motion collapse of traditional faith and the rise of a variety of pseudo-Christianities." According to his thesis, Christianity, and thus the U.S., is in decline, and given his "own Catholic commitments," he argues that salvation lies in a more traditional orthodox Christianity gradually being renewed. (Free Press)

The Lost Crown

by Sarah Miller
reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

The lives of the daughters of Tsar Nicholas II are turned upside down when the Bolshevik Revolution sweeps away Imperial Russia. Alternating between the voices of the four grand duchesses, this young adult historical novel, based on impeccable research, portrays the reality of a loving family living in a dangerous time. Particularly moving are the daughters' expressions of faith in God and their growing realization that the disparity between their pampered lives and the lives of the disillusioned masses contributed to the social upheaval that uprooted them. (Atheneum)



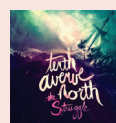
THE LOWDOWN



What? You may be misunderstanding your favorite verse, according to Eric J. Bargerhuff's new book, *The Most Misused Verses in the Bible*, in which he attempts to clear the confusion surrounding 17 popular passages. (Bethany)



Another Helping: The movie version of *The Hunger Games* comes out on DVD and Blu-ray this month; see thebanner.org for the *Banner* review. (Lions Gate)



More Direction: Tenth Avenue North delivers more Christian pop about "the struggle to believe" in their latest album, appropriately named *The Struggle*. (Reunion)



Come Inn: Fans of Debbie Macomber will welcome her newest novel. *The Inn at Rose Harbor* begins a new series set in the Pacific Northwest, where a grieving widow takes over a bed-and-breakfast. (Ballantine)

[MORE REVIEWS ONLINE](#)



Kill Screen

reviewed by Greg Veltman

Fed up with the shallow conversation surrounding video games, Jamin Warren and a few fellow writers decided to do something about it. *Kill Screen*, a print magazine and a website, challenges the assumption that "gamers don't think." It covers many angles of gaming, from reviews of current games to essays about the cultural impact of games on society. As we seek to understand how video games shape and change our world, *Kill Screen* is a great start to this important conversation. killscreendaily.com



Home Grown Faith

EACH YEAR when our four kids were young, I'd spend the last few weeks of summer planning for the fall, entering our family's school-year activities on a kitchen calendar the size of a classroom world map. I'd fill in music lessons, basketball practice, art class, and soccer games. On the side of each page I'd plot out who had to be where, when, and how they'd get there. By the time I was finished, each page looked like an airline route plan. Sound familiar?

Parents know the value of outsourcing. Seeking expert help makes sense when it's time to teach kids skills in music, art, sports, and other areas where we may feel unqualified.

So it might also seem to make sense that the best people to teach our kids about God are the "experts" at church, right?

Wrong. Unlike extracurricular activities, where your main role is to cheer your kids on, when it comes to nurturing their faith, parents need to be active participants.

The good news is, you don't need a theology degree to help your child know God. Faith nurture happens best during the everyday encounters you have with your kids. That's how God planned it! We're invited to share God's story with our children "when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deut. 6:7).

So read on for some ways to encourage your kids' faith as you "do life" together.

Take advantage of teachable moments. Look for unplanned opportunities to help your child make a connection with God. Consider God's incredible imagination as you pass by the variety of fresh produce at the grocery store. Point out that God is present when your kids experience success or



failure, start something new, or finish an activity. During a Bible story, take time to pause and wonder. "I wonder how Noah and his family fed all those animals. . . ." "I wonder what Jonah saw when he was inside that big fish. . . ." In addition to being delightful conversation starters, the great thing about "wondering questions" is that they have no right or wrong answers!

Model spending time with God. Let your kids "catch" you praying or reading Scripture or listening to praise music on your own, outside of family devotional time.

Spend time with God together. Sing a praise song together as you drive to school or do the dishes, read from a story Bible at bedtime, share quiet times with God when you walk in the woods or look up at the stars. Marvel aloud at creation: "Doesn't God have an amazing imagination?" "How did God *do* that?" Be intentional about setting aside time for family devotions. Start having a Sunday "show and tell" time each week during which your child shows you the take-home paper she received at church and tells you about the story she learned. Then talk—and wonder—about it together.



When it comes to nurturing kids' faith, parents need to be active participants.

the table on Easter, making paper “Thank you God, for . . .” leaves to hang on a branch at Thanksgiving, adding a Jesus figure to the nativity scene on Christmas Day, including examples of God’s faithfulness on a “Year in Review” list you create together each January—might be connected to specific events. Others—such as praying before eating a meal or before everyone leaves for school in the morning, playing music that glorifies God as you prepare for church, reading a Bible story at bedtime—flow naturally out of the simple patterns of everyday life.

Lean on God in difficult times. During times of stress brought about by unemployment, illness, divorce, death, conflict at school, and other difficult situations that families face, assure your child that God never leaves. Pray together about the situation. Recall how God was faithful to the families of Noah, Abraham, Rahab, and Ruth, and how they clung to God’s promise to protect them. Remind your child that the same God promises to be faithful to us too. And know this: when God knit your child together, he included the gift of faith. So even if your family is filled with chaos right now, God is still at work in your child’s life.

Include God in family traditions and rituals. Celebrations can provide ways to connect with God and to remind ourselves of God’s faithfulness. Some—such as lighting a candle on baptism anniversaries, holding hands in prayer around

Serve others together. Kids and teens need to know that Christ-followers do more than talk about and experience God’s love—we extend it too. Find something you can do for others as a family, and then do it.

Involve the village. The church family—parents, children’s ministry leaders, and everyone else—is part of the “village” it takes to raise children of faith. Shape your kids’ identity as members of God’s family by surrounding them with believers who will form relationships, share their faith stories, offer encouragement, and include them as valued members of a faith community. Spend time with people of all ages in your church family. Involve your children in the children’s ministry program at your church and talk with them about what they’re learning. Look for other people of faith who can connect with your kids and speak God’s love into their lives during the teenage years when they are seeking a perspective beyond yours.

The wonderful thing about nurturing children’s faith is that it’s not “one more thing” to add to an already packed family agenda. It happens in the sitting, standing, walking, talking, crying, laughing, playing, and all the other ordinary details of daily life. It’s as natural and necessary as breathing. And the best part? No complicated calendar is required. ■

Great Resources for Family Devotions

- *Children of God Storybook Bible* by Desmond Tutu (Zondervan)
- *God’s Big Story* cards by Carol and Gerald Reinsma, Karen DeBoer (Faith Alive Christian Resources)
- *God Loves Me* storybooks by Pat Nederveld (Faith Alive Christian Resources)
- *Spark Story Bible* (Augsburg Fortress)
- *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones (Zondervan)



Karen De Boer is the author of *Home Grown: Handbook for Christian Parenting* (Faith Alive). She attends The Journey, a church plant in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario.

Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?

SCIENCE DISPUTES THE BIBLICAL CLAIMS about creation, including our two first parents, and about Jesus, including his miracles and his resurrection. But I believe in the historicity of Genesis 1-11—for the same reason that I believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, crucified, and raised from the dead.

As a pastor and preacher, my faith and Christian worldview are not based on cleverly devised myths but on real historical facts. When I say I believe in the historicity of Genesis 1-11, I mean that the story told in those chapters—whatever literary devices are used to convey the message—is solidly based on historical facts. Like the rest of the book, Genesis 1-11 is a historical narrative, not a parable or myth.

It is this *historical* foundation that makes Christianity, as well as Old Testament Judaism, unique compared to other world religions. Without that foundation, Judaism and Christianity become just like the other religions of the world—the creation of human beings to explain the world around them.

The creation story in Genesis is part of the covenant document God gave to Israel at Mount Sinai. It acts as a historical

Genesis 1-11 is
a historical narrative,
not a parable or myth.

prologue of the covenant, explaining Yahweh's claim upon the people he had just delivered from Egypt and offering a brief history of the relationship between Yahweh, the sovereign King, and his servant people Israel.

In chapters 1-11, Yahweh says, "I am the Creator—I made you. I created you in my image and likeness. I made you perfect and placed you in a perfect world. However, your first parents sinned, breaking the covenant of works I made with them. Then, in my amazing grace, I did not destroy you under the promised curse but promised to send a child of the woman to bear the curse for you and to complete the covenant of works for you."

The Son of the woman (Gen. 3:15) is Jesus, the second Adam, the new head of the human race. By his obedience Jesus fulfilled the covenant of works God made with the first Adam and removed the curse of Adam's fall.

God's creation of human beings in his own image and the historic fall of our first parents are not minor parts of the biblical account we may conveniently remove. For if we deny that Adam is historical, what reason do we have to believe in a historical fall? And if the fall is not historical, then God did not make humans perfect, but sinful. We are left with a totally different understanding of sin, grace, and the cross. We might as well throw our confessional documents away.

I cannot believe that the New Testament authors, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, were just reflecting the naïve pre-scientific views of their day. Like them, I believe that the author of Genesis was recording historical facts—standing on the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture, and that my Savior, who really did rise from the dead, was not wrong about a real Adam and Eve.

I believe in true science *and* in the Bible, God's self-revelation to us about himself, us, and our world. And I know they cannot conflict. So where there are apparent contradictions, let us re-examine our science and our interpretation of the Bible. But let us proceed with caution, knowing that the Spirit Jesus promised would lead us into all truth has always led the Christian church to confess and believe that Genesis 1-11 is historical.

What actually happened in history mattered to the authors of the Bible. And it should matter to us. ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE



Bernard Van Ee is pastor of an emerging church at Big Springs, Calif.

FAQs

Relationships

Q As part of a small group of volunteers, I have been raising funds for disadvantaged students. After eight years, I no longer have the energy to continue. I feel guilty, since Christ calls believers to be his hands and feet. If I quit, the students will be left stranded. Should I force myself to continue?

A No. You may trust that the guilt you feel does not come from God but rather from Satan, our accuser. Your feelings of burnout are telling you it is time to begin divesting yourself from this ministry. You can do this in a responsible manner by giving at least two months' notice to those whose task it will be to find new avenues of support.

Feel free to celebrate your accomplishments and look back with satisfaction and gratitude for the work God gave you as part of the body of Christ. But also feel good about moving on to a new vision for personal ministry. Be open to hearing and seeing how God may have begun gifting you to serve him in new ways. Know that God calls you to peace while being alert to the Holy Spirit's leading.

God will surely answer your prayers of concern for the students whose well-being still tugs at your heart. Trust that God will provide where you no longer can.

—Judy Cook

Judy Cook is a family therapist and a member of Meadowlands Fellowship CRC in Ancaster, Ontario.

Your feelings of burnout are telling you it is time to begin divesting yourself from this ministry.

Church

Q My teenage son wants to join the Roman Catholic Church. How should I respond? What should my pastor say to this?

A Because the Protestant Reformation was a reaction to various teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, our denominational history has been characterized by an adverse appraisal of that church. Some have even asserted that Catholics are not Christians.

In reality, we have much more theological affinity with the Roman Catholic Church than we do with liberal Protestantism, which denies some of the theological fundamentals mentioned in the Apostles' Creed. As a result of dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, our denomination revised Answer 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism, and both churches agreed to recognize and accept each other's administration of baptism.

But there are still matters on which the two churches differ. For example, Synod 2011 recommended documents on baptism and the Lord's Supper to the churches "for further study and reflection" because "these documents offer detailed study of convergences and divergences between Roman Catholic and Reformed views of [these two sacraments]" (*Acts of Synod 2011*, pp. 822-3).

Talk to your son about why he wishes to join this church. Review the similarities and differences together, and consider asking your

pastor to join in this process. Respect the decision your son makes, and continue to discuss issues of faith even if he joins this church.

—George Vander Weit

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

Morality

Q My sister lives nearby. Her husband is often out of town, and I often help out with her kids. They are wealthy enough to hire a nanny, but I don't think it's ever crossed her mind. I love her dearly, but I'm starting to feel a bit used. Over the past few months I suggested some sort of exchange. She doesn't have the time or energy to take my kids, so I asked if she'd compensate me for all the stuff I do for her kids. She became angry and says that I'm not being very Christ-like. Is asking her to pay me unchristian?

A Unless one is prepared to say that the free trade of goods and services is unchristian, it is hard to see how your actions qualify as such.

You might consider remaining somewhat flexible and helping her out on certain occasions without asking for something in return. You would then, as you have in the past, be honoring God by going beyond the call of duty. Just as she should not expect you to always go beyond the call of duty, you would do well not to allow yourself to develop a rigid adherence to a bartering mentality.

In a certain sense you are seeking justice and she is seeking sacrificial love. In our fallen world there can be tensions between the demands of each. Being flexible is one way to reduce the tensions.

—Gregory Mellema

Gregory Mellema is a professor of philosophy at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. ■

“Where Are You?”

ALMOST 30 YEARS AGO I wanted to give up on life. Desperate and alone in a strange city, I wandered into a Sunday evening church service.

I needed something to do, someone to care about my hopelessness. I didn't know Jesus. Church was a way to fill another lonely night.

There was singing. Familiar songs, though I hadn't attended church since high school. Someone selected a hymn, and everyone sang, accompanied by a piano. The person choosing the song often requested prayer or shared an experience. They discussed intimate personal issues freely and sometimes quite emotionally. Obviously these people were involved in each other's lives.

I sat alone in back, fighting the urge to leave. Their comfortable familiarity enhanced my loneliness. Why were these people surrounded by friendship while I sat alone and hopeless?

I'd convinced myself to approach the pastor, but the preacher that night was a substitute. I watched him closely as he spoke. He seemed sincere enough. Maybe he could help. I couldn't return to that bleak apartment.

After the service, people began drifting to their cars, arranging to meet for coffee while I desperately awaited my opportunity to speak to him. When the last group left, he moved toward the parking lot. I wanted to run into the night, but fear and despair overcame embarrassment. As he opened his car door I stuck out my hand awkwardly.

“Hi, I'm Rich.”

“Hello, I'm Hank. I saw you during the service.”

“Yeah. Um—do you have some time to talk?”



Indecision flashed across his face. He was headed home to his family. His day was done.

“Right now?” He wanted to put it off, and I swallowed the urge to say no big deal. But I'd finally reached out. I needed to grab something.

“Yeah, if you can. I'm having a tough time. I need to talk to somebody.”

Eternity balances on such small moments.

I don't know how he decided that evening—perhaps a waver in my voice or considerable experience reading troubled faces—but somehow he said yes.

“Okay. Can you wait while I make a phone call?”

Then this stranger walked back to the church to use the phone, to tell someone that tonight I needed him more than they did.

The minister locked the church door.

“It’s a great evening—let’s walk while you tell me what’s on your mind.

The evening was winding down. The sun dropped behind the mountains as kids and parents ended another summer day. I didn’t know where to begin. Attempts at small talk drifted into awkward silences.

After a few blocks, Hank said softly, “Rich, you seem really troubled. What’s going on?”

I hesitated. How could I possibly convey the chaos of my life to a stranger? Slowly, haltingly, I began to relate my struggles during the last couple of years—bad decisions, messed-up career, failed marriage, my mom’s death.

As we wandered through the quiet neighborhood, I wandered through dreams, fears, mistakes, and guilt. Occasionally Hank commented, but mostly he just listened as I poured out the tangled mess I’d created.

Dusk descended; yards were deserted as families retreated inside.

I thought I needed to resolve some specific issues, but what I really needed was to acknowledge the pervasive senselessness I felt. I couldn’t seek to fill the void until I first acknowledged the emptiness.

We’re all in prison, I once read, but we don’t realize it. That walk along those peaceful streets were my initial steps on the road to recognizing my personal prison. As long as I couldn’t see the door to my private jail, I remained locked within my own fears and disappointments.

Eventually I learned that the door was locked from the inside—I’d always owned a get-out-of-jail-free card.

“Adam, where are you?” When Adam heard God in the cool of the evening, he hid in shame. But God still walked with him in the beauty of the garden.

On that warm Colorado evening, I heard a call as hushed as the murmur of

Eternity balances on such small moments.

the breeze. As traffic noise faded, as we walked in the stillness, I heard—no, felt—God’s call:

“Rich, where are you?”

For one brief moment, as the world outside calmed, so did the world within. In that moment I *felt* the peaceful, patient voice of God inviting me to walk beside him. I needed time to understand that God had been relentlessly calling me all along.

“Rich, where are you?”

God was encouraging me to step through the prison door, to leave behind the fear, confusion, and loneliness that locked me in. The invitation was obscured by the clamoring turmoil inside. But my heart *felt* it—a whisper as faint as the rustle of leaves in the trees, calling me to something different, something better.

Hank asked some simple questions as we meandered along the now-deserted sidewalks. What do you think brought you to this church? What do you believe about God? Do you know who Jesus is?

I believed in God, though I didn’t know how this ill-defined faith impacted my life.

My spirit mirrored the nighttime darkness as we approached the church. We’d walked and talked for a couple of hours, and I felt exhausted—worn and beaten down by an apparently meaningless and endless struggle. I slumped down on the steps.

After years of bad choices, I wondered if I had any right to suddenly pray to a

God I’d ignored for so long. But I took the first step in a surrender that took far too long to conclude. I asked Hank to help me talk to God.

“God, I need you. I’ve done so much wrong. I’ve lost everything, hurt so many people. My mom, my friends, they’re all gone. Help me, God. Please.”

As I listened to Hank’s affirmation of Jesus’ presence, I broke down. “Jesus, I don’t know you, but I’m so lost. Please help me.”

In that moment, I heard a bit clearer that quiet, patient voice.

“Rich, where are you?”

I still didn’t comprehend the reality of that call. But on those steps, in that calm Colorado night, I made the response that eventually opened the prison door.

“Here I am, Lord.”

The next day I bought some pine boards and fashioned a simple cross to hang in my bedroom. My crude project symbolized a life-altering evening, the beginning of a jailbreak that would take longer than I could have imagined.

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert, and streams in the wasteland” (Isa. 43:18-19).

God brought me to that small CRC church almost 30 years ago. The congregation demonstrated Jesus’ love. They nurtured the faith of a confused young man and taught me the significance of the cross. ■



Richard Dixon is a freelance writer and inspirational speaker. He blogs at www.richdixon.net/bouncingback.

ADS

Deadlines: Sept. issue is 8/6/2012; Oct. issue is 9/3/2012. Details online.

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

To Advertise: Place your classified ad online at www.thebanner.org/classifieds or email it to classifieds@thebanner.org or fax it to 616-224-0834. Questions? Call 616-224-0725.

Denominational and Classical

Calls Accepted

PASTOR DAVID VAN DER WIELE of Saugatuck CRC has accepted the call extended to him by the Greene Road Church, Goshen, IN. He will be leaving Saugatuck at the end of July. From the G. R. C. Council

Candidates for the Ministry

SYNOD 2012, has approved a one-year extension of candidacy for the following candidates: **Glenn S. Adams, Amanda Bakale, Aminah Al-Attas Bradford**, Michael S. Boerkoel, Samuel Boldenow, Joel T. Bootsma, Micah Bruxvoort, Timothy A. De Vries, John O. Eigege, Joshua R. Holwerda, Joseph Kim, Kyle P. Klooststra, Kenneth C. Kruihof, Erin Marshalek, Sarah Meekhof Albers, Jessica J. Oosterhouse, Benjamin J. Schaefer, Adam Stout, Juli Stuelpnagel, Thyra D. VanKeeken, Caleb J. Walcott, Jan Anthony Weststrate, John T. Wildeboer. A complete list of the current candidates for ministry is found at www.crcna.org/candidacy.
Rev. Joel R. Boot, Executive Director

Eligible for Call

We are pleased to announce that **John Eigege** 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

Meetings of Classis

CLASSIS ILLIANA will meet on Wed. Sept. 19 at Trinity College at 8:30 am. Email agenda items to firstcra@netnitno.net by Aug. 8.

Laryn Zoerhof, SC.

CLASSIS OF THE HEARTLAND will meet in regular session September 21 - 22 in the Kansas City area. Agenda items are due by August 4. Please send these to Rev. Robert Drenten, Stated Clerk, 1405 Albany Ave. NE, Orange City, IA 51041; email - robert.drenten@gmail.com 712-737-8388

CLASSIS ZEELAND will meet on Thursday, September 20, 2012, 3PM, at The River CRC in Allegan. Agenda deadline is August 9.

Congregational

Church's 100th Anniversary

LOMBARD CRC will celebrate its 100th Anniversary with an open house and banquet on Saturday, October 13. Tickets will be necessary for the banquet. On Sunday, October 14, we are planning a special worship service at 10:00 a.m., followed by a time of fellowship. We extend an invitation to all former members and pastors to join us as we celebrate. An anniversary booklet and DVD will be available. Further information will be posted on our website: www.LombardCRC.org

SIBLEY CRC OF SIBLEY, IA will celebrate 100 years of God's faithfulness with a day long celebration on Sept. 23rd with a church service, noon meal, and a festival of music by Journey Bound of Des Moines, IA. All former pastors, members and friends are invited to attend

Birthdays

100th Birthday



KATHERINE HOEKMAN of Platte Health Care Center, P. O. Box 200, Platte, S. Dak. 57369, will be 100 on Aug 23. Her 3 sibs (Pete, Henry & Steve) thank God for His faithfulness in her life.

95th Birthday

PAULINE (VAN KOOTEN) TERPSTRA will celebrate her 95th birthday on August 25. Address: 608 East 2nd Street, Apt 224 Pella, IA 50219. Her children Gretta (Chet) Geels, Nancy (Gerald) Kuiper, Carole (Hank) Stavinga, Georgia (Sander) de Haan, Fran (Chuck-deceased) Van Waardhuizen, Myrna (Jerry) Schuiling, 19 grandchildren, 36 great-grandchildren thank God for her many years.

90th Birthday

ED & PHYL BUSHOUSE 531 Oakes Ave, Grand Haven, MI 49417, will celebrate their 90th birthdays on Sep 4 and Aug 19. Their children Paul, Mary & Steven Porter (grandchildren Chris and Jeremy), and Howard & Pat (Matt, Erin, Liz & Michelle) thank God for the blessing they have been in our lives.

DENA (SMITS) JOLING of 920 21st Ave S, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495, will celebrate her 90th birthday August 6, 2012. Her family thanks God that she has reached this age with a good mind, strong faith and grateful spirit.

JACOBA KAMERMAN 243 W 28th St., Holland, MI will celebrate her 90th on Aug 10. Her 9 children, 25 grandchildren and 34 great-grandchildren rejoice with her. We thank God for His many blessings, faithfulness, good health and alertness.

IRENE VANEGMOND KIMM 5241 Cameron Brdg Rd W, Manhattan, MT 59741 will celebrate her 90th birthday on August 21, 2012. We thank God for granting her many years to faithfully serve others and her Lord. With much love from her grateful family.

ALETHA MAAS celebrated her 90th birthday on July 13. Her family is grateful to God for His faithfulness and many blessings to her and her family. 310 N. Dakota Ave Rm 111, Corsica, SD 57328 or atmaas@siouxvalley.net

MIRIAM DE VRIES DONSELER celebrates her 90th birthday August 5, 2012. Through her marriage to the late John Donseler, she is blessed with a loving family: Joan De Wall and Gretchen and Bob Kredit: 8 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren. Presently residing at Breton Ridge #6104, 2772 Pfeiffer Woods Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512. Ps. 100:5

Anniversaries

65th Anniversary

BEELEN, Howard & Vonnie, August 19; 725 Baldwin St. #2059, Jenison, MI 49428. Children Jim & Pat, Bob & Sue, Judy & Mark Dykema, Cindy & Ron Borst, 10 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren are thankful for your example of marriage built on faith and love.

60th Anniversary

BOERSMA Marion & Angie - 2634 NE 6th St. Gresham, OR 97030 celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary on June 3. Thank you Father for giving us decades together with each other - our sons and daughters and good friends.

BUINING Rev. Rodger and Marijane (Scheffers) celebrate their 60th anniversary on August 29, 2012. 13246 N. Avenue Sun City, AZ 85351. Children: Karl & Vicki Roelofs, Randy & Angie Buining, Bonnie Buining; 8 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Praising God for his many years of blessings.

DE GRAAF, John and Allieda (Van Boven) of Cutlerville, MI will celebrate 60 years of marriage on August 13. Congratulations! Happy Anniversary from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

STOB Bill and Delores, 7210 Elkhorn Dr. West Palm Beach, FL. 33411 We are profoundly grateful and give thanks to the God of great gifts, as we celebrate our sixtieth wedding anniversary on August 15. We have already been joined by our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren in a memorable celebration in Orlando, Florida. We are overwhelmed with God's blessings over the decades.

WINKEL Harvey & Lois (Bierens) on Aug 30, 1952: 9594 S 8 Mile Rd. McBain, MI 49657 Children: Debra Hoekstra, Tom & Deb Winkel, Jack & Ruth Winkel, Jim & Kim Winkel and Phil & Sue Winkel. 17 grandchildren & 14 great-grandchildren. Thanks be to God!

50th Anniversary

DREYER Conrad & Elizabeth (Ensing), Alsip, IL. 50 years of marriage, August 17, 2012. Their children: Ruth & Kevin Shave, Dave & Kristine, and Karen, along with their 4 grandchildren, Matthew, Christopher, Kaitlyn and Joshua, give thanks to God for His continued blessings and faithfulness. We love you Mom and Dad!

KLUMPENHOWER Gary and Helen of Imlay City, MI celebrate 50 years of marriage together on August 3rd. They and their family (4 sons, 8 grandchildren) thank God for his many years of blessings.

POSTMA Paul and Margaret [Koel] 13 33000 Mill Lake Rd Abbotsford B. C. Aug 17th 1962. Their children Peter [Kimi] Darren [Sheri] [Kirk] Monica [Jason] Carla along with their 12 grandchildren. We thank our Heavenly Father and to God be the glory. Ps 121, 1,2.

RIETBERG Wayne and Marilyn (Buteyn) 2048 S. Cross Creek DR, Grand Rapids, MI 49508 will celebrate 50 years of marriage on August 3, 2012. Congratulations, Dad and Mom! With love and gratitude, your children: Dan and Angela, Phil and Lisa, Sheryl and Doug Baker, Mark and Mirsada, and 6 grandchildren. Great is His faithfulness!

ROZEMA Bob and Jan (Koedoot) of Ferrysburg, Michigan, will celebrate 50 years of marriage on August 15. Children: Cheryl (Bob) Dykstra, Jenny (Chip) Jenkins, Rob (Lisa) Rozema, and 9 grandchildren. God is faithful!

40th Anniversary

DEBOER Jay and Barbara celebrate 40 years of marriage August 26th. Their children and grandchildren thank God for your love and faithfulness to Him, each other and us. Congratulations!

Obituaries

BOONSTRA Ann (Weidenaar), age 88, went to be with her Lord and Savior on June 3, 2012. She is survived by her loving husband of 65 years, Harold, sisters Mathilda Ten Hor and Agnes Ten Hor, son Richard (Trena), daughters Jackie Archer and Jan Kosmal (Donald), nine grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

BOS Bernard went to be with our Lord on June 26th 2012 11510 W. 73rd Place, Burr Ridge, IL 60527. Beloved husband of Wilma Bos, nee Broeze; loving father of James (Marge) Bos, Barbara (Art) Hendrix, Kevin (Cindy) Bos, and Kimberly (Howard) Hoff; devoted grandfather 13; great-grandfather of 11; fond brother of 5; uncle of many nieces and nephews. Long-time member and former elder of Christian Reformed Church of Western Springs.

CLARK Dorothy (Boss) 87 years loving daughter, sister, sister-in-law, wife, mother, mother-in-law, aunt, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend, you were truly a blessing to all

GIBSON Emma, nee Smit, 84, of Lynden, WA, May 20, 2012. Preceded by husband Thomas, infant son Thomas Robert; survived by children Linda (Gerald, deceased) Lenssen; Daniel (Emily); Joyce (Butch) Mulder; Philip; Joel (Darla); 13 grandchildren; 6 great-grandchildren. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Rev. 14:13.

HOFFMAN Robert W. age 66, US Army Veteran, of Burbank, IL, went home to be with the Lord on June 7, 2012. Beloved husband for 43 years to Nancy, nee Frieling. Loving father of Lisa (Gerald) Van Kuiken, Daniel (Tammy), Matthew (Erica), Julie (Eric) Keizer, Michael, and David. Cherished grandfather of Jessica, Morgan, Isabel, and Alicia Van Kuiken; Theodore and Graham Hoffman; Dylan, Madison, Landan, Colton, and Quinton Hoffman. Dear brother of George (Pearl), Joanne (late Melvin) Decker, and the late Frances Muhlena. Fond brother-in-law and uncle of many.

LANING Rose May 25, 2012 Wayland, MI Preceded in death by husband Peter. Survived by children Gerda (Dan) Wubben and Peter (Adrianna) Laning, 5 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.



LEESTMA, Melba Ruth (De Boer) completed her earthly pilgrimage of 83 years from 1929 – 2012, on April 30. We sadly release the natural ties to our wife, mother, sister and friend. But we anticipate with holy joy the resurrection reunion with her and all who have gone before, and those

who will follow in the faith in the Christ of the Gospel of God. She was the fourth daughter in a family of five girls. Three sisters, Gertrude, Margaret and Norma and her parents Rudolph and Fanny De Boer preceded her in death. They lived in Grand Rapids and Grosse Point Park, Michigan. A younger sister Carolyn lives in Bloomington, Minnesota. Melba married her husband, Herman in 1950 during his seminary training for pastoral ministry. She fulfilled her role in parish ministry with him for forty years in Michigan, Illinois, California, Washington and Minnesota. She birthed and nurtured five sons and

Church Position Announcements

FIRST CRC OF TABER ALBERTA is seeking a Lead Pastor. We are a vibrant congregation with a diversity of members. The successful candidate must have a strong preaching and leadership of the worship services. Dedication to the youth of the congregation, organize and support of Youth Programs and Serve Trips. Teaching of Catechism and pre-confession classes. Working with the young adults with their programs and pre-marital counseling. Being involved with the Classis/Synodical issues and the community ministerial meetings. Forward your resume and letters of response to tabercrcsearch@gmail.com or contact Richard Visser Taber CRC Search Committee Chairman. 403-223-8354 for more information

PASTOR Prince George CRC, located in the centre of beautiful British Columbia, seeks a fulltime pastor. We are among five northern BC CRCs. Prince George has many amenities, including a university, a K-12 Christian school, and excellent recreational facilities. Biblical preaching and a real passion for our Lord's kingdom are essentials. More information and our profile are available by e-mailing pg.crc.search@hotmail.com 250-562-1586

MINISTER/CONGREGATIONAL LIFE Faith CRC, Elmhurst, Illinois, a Chicago suburb, seeks a pastor to administer and lead the adult ministries and pastoral care of the church, preach and lead worship regularly and support evangelism and community outreach. Please direct all inquiries to Ray Middel at 630-862-1861 or (frcsearchteam@gmail.com).

WORSHIP DIRECTOR West Leonard CRC (Grand Rapids, MI) is seeking a worship director to plan and orchestrate services with a blend of hymns and contemporary music. About 8 hours/week. Email wleonardcra@gmail.com for details.

CHILDREN/YOUTH DIRECTOR Athabasca Reformed Congregation in Athabasca, Alberta is seeking a passionate Christian or Christian couple to encourage and equip junior- and senior-high school students to grow in their commitment to Jesus Christ, and to minister to children in a nearby First Nations community. The position can be full- or part-time, though a minimum of approximately 30 hours per week is anticipated. Please visit our website at www.arc.rcchurches.

two daughters: David, Frances, Glenys, Randall, Harley, Jon and Franklin. The extended family includes 4 daughters-in-law, 1 son-in-law, and 11 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. She was always indefatigably challenged and chose to complete her formal education, after her children matured, by earning a Masters Degree in Marriage and Family Counseling from Whitworth College. For 25 years she enriched the lives of many in this professional capacity with sensitive Christian dedication and service to her clients and the Lord Jesus Christ. We who knew her recognize with gratitude the precious gifts with which the Lord endowed her. She seized the days of her life with artfulness, energy and enthusiasm. We praise God with all who knew and loved this beautiful daughter of God. Hallelujah! "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also and he praises her." (Proverbs 31:28)

OULDMAN Marjorie Jean aged 95; June 10, 2012; Grand Rapids, MI; She is survived by her children: John and Mary Calsbeek of Coloma, MI; grandchildren: Rebecca and Casey Bell of Grand Rapids, John and Jen Calsbeek of Missoula, MT, Benjamin Calsbeek of Budapest, Hungary; great-grandchildren: Joe and Ben Bell and Amelia Calsbeek; brother and sister-in-law: Renald and Gertrude Nagelkirk of Grand Rapids.

PATTERSON Leroy Roger; age 87; of Grand Rapids, Michigan; he leaves behind his sister, Joan (Richard) Carroll; nephews, David and Paul Carroll; and his friend Mitch McLeod. 616-940-3022

PETERSON Ronald L. aged 75; May 30, 2012; 2307 Ridgeway SE Grand Rapids, MI 49546; Ron pastored churches in Crown Point, IN, Goshen, IN, and Dearborn, MI. He also served as regional director of CRHM, Eastern Region and more recently provided pastoral care for Classis South of GR., RCA, and Hope Reformed Church of GR. Most recently he directed the residency program at Church of The Servant CRC in GR. He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Mary Lamse Peterson; children: Kristen and Jon Sucher, Jim and Mary Peterson, Karen and Ed Caviasco; 9 grandchildren; brother: Carl and Elaine Peterson; brother-in-law: Jim and Mary Jane Lamse.

org (under Opportunities to Serve) to view the full job description and apply. The application deadline is September 30, 2012 though the competition will remain open until the position is filled.

PASTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL CARE Trinity CRC, a congregation of 553 total members located in Abbotsford, BC, is seeking a part-time ordained pastor to join our ministry team. Responsibilities focus on pastoral care, leadership in elder visitation, hospitality, and mentoring and training in these ministries along with preaching an average of once per month. For job description, go to www.trinitycra.ca and look under Ministry Opportunities. To submit a letter of interest and resume, email: office@trinitycra.ca Attention: Len Kamp, Clerk

MANDARIN ASSOCIATE PASTOR Golden Gate CRC, San Francisco, CA is seeking a Mandarin associate pastor to lead the Mandarin-speaking congregation. We are a multicultural church family with 500+ members ministering in three language services (Mandarin, Cantonese, and English) that joyfully worships, serves, and reaches out to the world for the glory of God. We are seeking a full-time minister fluent in Mandarin and English with a M. Div. and minimum two years of pastoral experience in North America to provide spiritual leadership through teaching, shepherding, and working together with the Senior Pastor/Pastoral Team to oversee the body of Christ. For more information please contact the Chair of the Pastoral Search Committee/Miss Lu at pastorsearch@ggccc.org or (415) 200-6494.

CHILDREN MINISTRIES Roosevelt Park Community CRC is actively seeking a part time Children Ministries Coordinator. Our church and neighborhood is urban and diverse. Mail resumes to Alta Van Doeselaar, Roosevelt Park Community CRC, 811 Chicago Drive, Grand Rapids, MI., 49509

PASTOR: First Orillia CRC is a caring, smaller church looking for a full-time minister with a passion for preaching to help ignite believers in their devotion to God, to live gracious lives, and to develop relationships with those whom God is calling. A 2012 Transitional Report needs a spiritual leader to encourage its recommendations. Contact Maarten Reinders at searchteam@orilliacrc.com.



VERHOEVEN Henry J. (91) of Bellflower stepped into the arms of his Savior on June 15, 2012. Hank was born in Hanford, CA, but resided his entire life in Bellflower, CA. He was the owner and CEO of Superene Feed Supplements in Cypress. He was a founding member of Rosewood Church.

Hank loved his family and friends, his church, sports, reading biographies and especially Airstream Motor Home rallies. He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Lorraine (Brouwer), and his two daughters, Glenda Oliver of Chester Springs, PA, and Pam Tazelaar of Henderson, NV. He was predeceased by his son, Dale, in 2005. He also took great pleasure in his 6 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. A memorial service was held at Rosewood Church on June 18.



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WALHOF Bernard 67, May 17, 2012; 607 6th Ave Edgerton, MN 56128. Survived by his wife Verla of 46 years, his children Shelli & Loren DeGroot, Darren & John, Jennifer & Ryan Reitsma, Clint & Sara, 10 grandchildren, brothers Allen & Lavonne, Fred & Chris & twin sister Bernice & Elroy Post.

Employment

CAREGIVERS NEEDED Are you interested in working for the best living assistance services company in West Michigan? Visiting Angels is looking for people who can be excellent, not average; make a connection with our clients; be perfectly dependable; practice compassion and work with integrity. Contact Heather at 616-243-7080 or heather@vangels.com or visit our website at www.vangels.com and complete an online application.

CRRC DIRECTOR The Board seeks a new Director for this people-intensive, part-time position. Job emphases include donor and program development and supervision of the Rec Center staff. Salary is negotiable. The Board expects to hire a new Director this fall. If you are interested in applying for this position, please call or email Amy at (616) 942-7540 or crccoffice@sbcglobal. Applications accepted until the position is filled. The CRRC is located in Grand Rapids, MI.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR for an established, international, faith-based, girls' ministry with headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The mission of GEMS Girls' Clubs (www.gemsgc.org) is to help bring girls into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. Resumes will be accepted until August 31, 2012. For more information contact Gert at gert@gemsgc.org.

HELP WANTED - Need dependable, honest, mechanical, leader for our new Grand Rapids crew. Must have reliable trans, communication skills, and a "can do" attitude. First wk train in Ann Arbor, then 3 wks in Montague, all pd. Hrs vary so flexibility is key. Must be of sound mind and body, average computer skills, and lift 45#. This is a ground floor opp for that person who wants to grow with a winning team here in West Michigan. Send resume to jack.iwema@hoodz.us.com.

OUTSIDE SALES CONSULTANTS. Van Manen Petroleum Group is searching to fill 2 Outside Sales Rep. positions in support of our Bulk Fuel and Lubricants division. The successful candidate should have a Bachelor's Degree from a four year college or university; and five years of sales, sales closing, marketing, lead generation, or related training and experience. Our business is operated with high ethical standards and our employees are properly compensated for their efforts. Pay is structured on a base salary, commissions, and bonus. Excellent ben-

efits and training package includes major medical, life and LT disability, 401K, and paid holidays/vacations. Qualified candidates should send their resume to darinm@vanmanen.com or apply in person at Van Manen Petroleum Group, 0-305 Lake Michigan DR NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49534. 616-453-6344

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Real Estate: Sales and Rentals

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PENTWATER COTTAGE see us at pentwatertuckaway.com or email at info@pentwatertuckaway.com ask for Debbie August still available 616-550-4900

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Miscellaneous

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Editor in Chief for Faith Alive Christian Resources



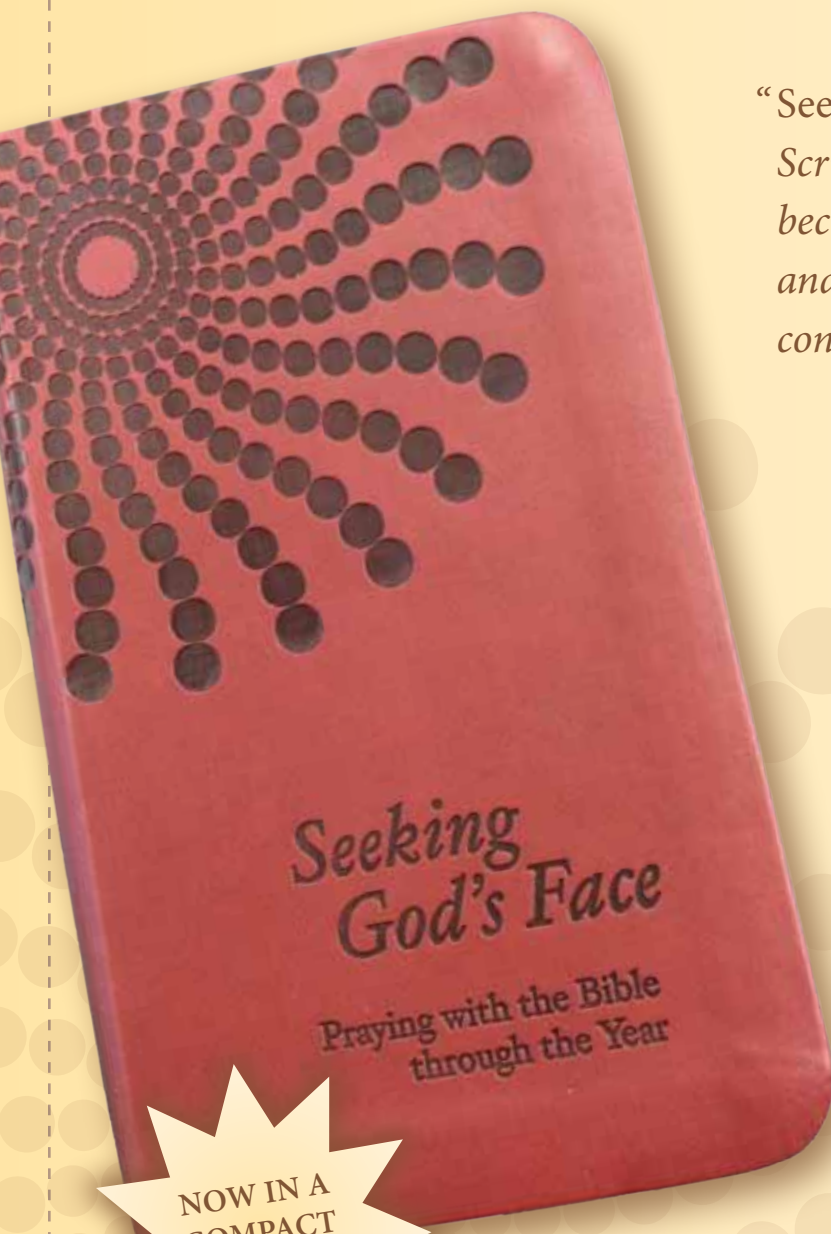
The Christian Reformed Church in North America invites applications for the position of **editor in chief** for Faith Alive Christian Resources. Faith Alive, the publishing ministry of the Christian Reformed Church, provides resources that assist Christian churches with helping people of all ages commit their lives to Jesus Christ and show the lordship of Christ in their daily living.

The editor in chief will provide overall strategic direction for the editorial staff and for the development of resources to support faith formation and local church ministry, and will function as theological editor of Faith Alive products.

The successful candidate will have a master of divinity or theology degree or equivalent; at least eight years of broad ministry experience; extensive knowledge of the church of Jesus Christ, especially the Christian Reformed Church; a strong commitment to the Reformed faith; and proven leadership and administrative skills.

For a complete job description and application information, visit crcna.org. **Deadline for application is September 28, 2012.**

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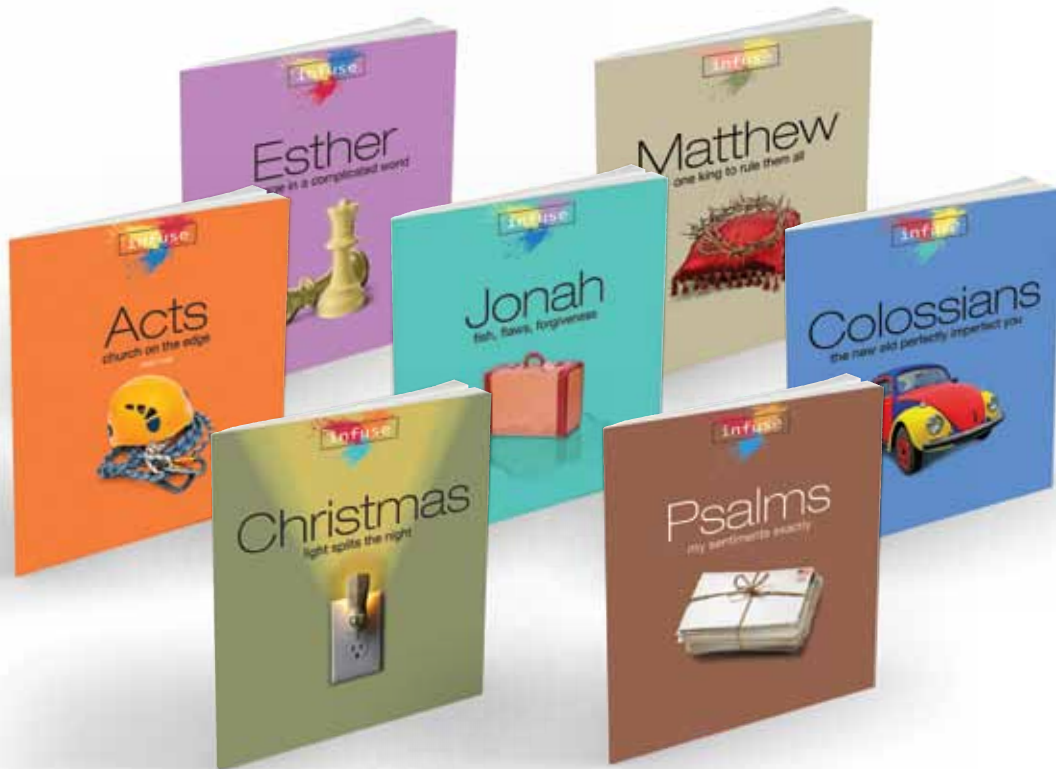
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Punch Lines

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

A bar was enlarging its building, hoping to grow its business. A nearby church circulated petitions and prayed fervently to block the bar from expanding.

About a week before the bar's grand reopening, a bolt of lightning struck the bar and burned it to the ground. The church folks responded by bragging about "the power of prayer."

The angry bar owner eventually sued the church on grounds that the church "was ultimately responsible for the demise of his building, through direct actions or indirect means." The church vehemently denied all responsibility.

Opening the hearing, the judge said, "It appears from the paperwork that what we have here is a bar owner who believes in the power of prayer and an entire church congregation that does not."
—George Vanderweit

Recently our 4-year-old daughter participated in the Lord's Supper for the first time. After the bread and juice were served, she turned to me and said, "Mom, I should've saved some of my candy!"

"Why?" I asked.

"So I can have dessert!"

—Sanneke Schievink

Spotting on a church website: Upcoming Events:

July 10: Sermon on Exodus 40: "How Important Is Church?"

July 31: Church cancelled

—Andrew Beunk

A park ranger was telling a tour group in Hawaii's Grand Canyon of the Pacific that it took 100,000 years for the canyon to be formed. Suddenly a voice from above said, "I made this."

No one dared say a word. Finally a young boy, looking up, said, "Lord, why did it take you 100,000 years to make this?"

The voice replied, "To me 100,000 years is like a second."

The boy thought for a moment and then asked, "What is a million dollars to you?"

The voice replied, "To me a million dollars is like a penny."

The boy's face lit up. "Lord, can I have a million dollars?"

"Just a second," was the reply.

—Paul Andringa

Last year my daughter, her husband, and their children lived with me for 10 months while my son-in-law was finishing his studies to be a youth pastor. One day their 5-year-old piped up: "Grandma, where did you live before you came to live with us?"

—Margaret DeBoer

One Sunday afternoon, we were enjoying a lunch of buns with meat and cheese. As my husband reached for the last bun with Gouda, my daughter walked in and asked longingly, "Is that Dutch cheese?" To which my

husband responded, right before taking a big bite, "It was, but soon it will be Finnish!"

—Monica de Regt

When I picked up my 5-year-old grandson, Benjamin, from preschool, I mentioned to him that today would have been Papa's birthday. (He had passed away six months earlier.)

After a few minutes, Benjamin said, "I wonder what kind of birthday cake God is making for him!"

—Ravina Kruizenga

After the revival was over, three pastors from three churches were discussing the results.

One said, "The revival worked out great! We gained four new families."

Another said, "We did better than that. We gained six new families."

The third said, "We got rid of our 10 biggest troublemakers!"

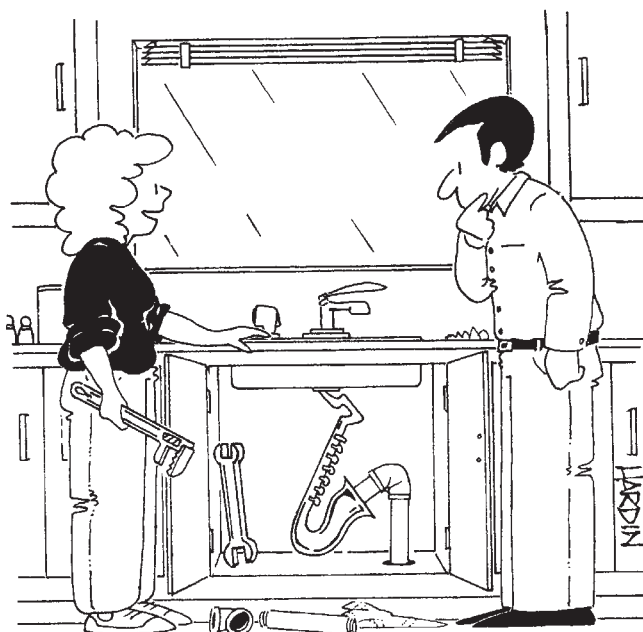
—Sue Lauritzen

As all the animal pairs were leaving the ark, Noah said to each of them, "Go forth and multiply!"

Coming across two snakes sunning themselves on the bow, he asked, "Why aren't you going forth and multiplying?"

"We can't," replied one snake. "We're adders."

—Tom Sorenson



"Not only did I fix the leak, but when you run the hot water it plays 'Harlem Nocturne.'"

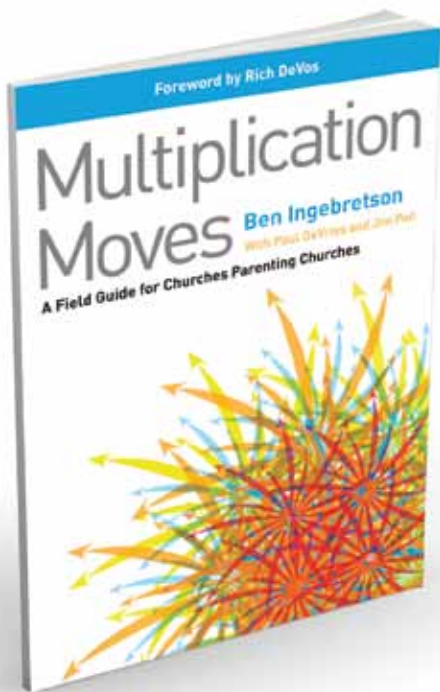
Multiplication Moves

A Field Guide for Churches Parenting Churches

Ben Ingebretson with Paul DeVries and Jim Poit

Foreword by Rich DeVos

There's a movement happening right now that is changing the face of God's kingdom: churches planting churches. If you're a pastor or a church leader and you're wondering if your church should parent another congregation, this book is an invaluable resource for you. Join the *Multiplication Moves* conversation and engage your congregation in an online small group study guide at www.m-moves.com.



"I heartily applaud all efforts to multiply churches and reach more people with the Good News. Starting any endeavor can be daunting, but I can point to a number of thriving, vibrant churches that were church plants just a few years ago. This book will help inspire passion among those contemplating planting churches, help them overcome any doubts, and provide a clear roadmap. Get out and start winning new people for Christ and start new churches!"

*Rich DeVos
Entrepreneur and Amway Co-founder*

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