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Official publication of Council of Reformed Charities, originating in 1960. CORC is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization that is in agreement with the Five Solas of the Reformation: Scripture Alone, Christ Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, and to God Alone Be Glory. CORC membership has a commitment to serve in God's world as helping agencies.

Glimpses of God's Abundant Grace and Glory

I am far enough down life's path to recognize that God's grace is sufficient in every circumstance. Although not always conscious of His abundant goodness, I realize that "He has led me all the way", as the familiar song reminds us. So often, we hold up a mirror reflecting back the society around us, rather than a window that reveals a different way. Well known author Philip Yancey tells us how to live for Him in the world: "Jesus' images portray the Kingdom as a kind of secret force. Sheep among wolves, treasure hidden in a field, the tiniest seed in a garden, wheat growing among weeds, a pinch of yeast worked into bread dough, a sprinkling of salt on meat – all these hint at a movement that works within society, changing from inside out."

It strikes me that such influence is reflected in every mission statement of the ministries listed in our directory of agencies on page seven of this newsletter. Permit me to share a few:

- **** manifests the love and compassion of Jesus Christ by protecting and enhancing the lives of children and families through quality social services.
- **** equips the church to disciple people in prison with the Word of God... designed to help incarcerated persons grow dramatically in a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ...
- **** to ensure that every Christian leader and family has a place to seek and find restoration and renewal.
- **** to provide a continuum of high-quality services consistent with the Christian principles on which the institution was founded...

In this issue, we are reminded of God's marvelous, infinite grace in every circumstance and detailed experience. **Summertime** is a good time to reflect upon God's faithfulness and to celebrate His providential goodness in our lives. While traveling or sitting around a campfire or going down 'memory lane' in getting glimpses of His grace, may we worship Him who designed life for the ultimate purpose to bring all Glory to God alone!

Summers provide refreshment through family reunions, church picnics, special trips to special places in this great land and in others, interruptions of schedules when we 'put things on hold', plans that are impacted because of tragedy, and through a variety of

other circumstances that provide growth on our road of sanctification. Jerry Dykstra, executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, writes about summer in *The Banner*, July 2007 issue: "Summer is one of God's delightful gifts to his children. I think of it as God's way of saying, "Everything will be OK, so just slow down for a bit and enjoy my world. Take it all in; taste it, smell it, savor it... encourage you to slow down and savor God's creation and his grace. To taste and touch God's beautiful world and bask in the joy of his love."

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There are many 'Kodak Moments' during this season that somehow provide only a memory without really telling the whole story as we tried to capture it. Here are a few that may be a reminder of some of your summer experiences too. Praise God for His provisions, as He gives grace in all circumstances and we give Him Glory.



Little Guy – Big Horse



Best Friends



Special Time



We're Both Little



Beating the Heat



Lest We Forget



Well Read (red)

The journey is not about reaching the destination, but in finding all the great diversions, beauty, and opportunities along the way.

A GRIEF DISCLOSED

by H. David Schuringa

When my oldest son, Greg, called me on the phone crying, "Dad, the baby is dead," well, I didn't know what hit me. And when I sat with my son across the desk from a funeral director to arrange for the burial of my son's son, well, I was numb. To this day, I don't know what was or is more difficult for my wife, Mary, and me to bear: the loss of our stillborn grandson or the excruciating pain of witnessing the heart-wrenching grief of our son and daughter-in-law. As parents, we felt so utterly helpless.



is sovereign here as in heaven, and that we must carry on with the work he has given us to be advocates for the down-and-out until Jesus comes. The sun peaked out that winter's day for the

duration of the service, and then the clouds thickly covered the sky once more. Like the seemingly fragile rays of sun trying to warm a cold day, we were hanging on to our precious faith for dear life.

In the months following that initial shock in January '06, I found myself beginning to delve deeply into a review of the history of philosophy. I was especially intrigued by the onset of the Enlightenment and the ensuing debate regarding the existence of God, a debate that continues down to the present day. Looking back, I know that I was on a mission. Is there really a God? Is the Bible really true? Is there really life after death? Will we really ever see Jacob alive? "Heretical" thoughts, I guess, for a minister of the Gospel, but honest thoughts from a grieving parent and grandparent.

This past Christmas, it dawned on our oldest grandchild, Olivia (Greg and Sarah's first-grader), that this whole business of Santa Claus might be a hoax. So one day, she asked Sarah, "Mommy, is it true that Santa Claus isn't real?" Sarah looked at her, paused for a moment, smiled and said, "Yes, that's right, Santa isn't real." To that Olivia responded, "OK, Mommy, but I

(Continued on page 5)

2007 CORC Conference/Annual Meeting Summary



Conference Attendees



Worship Time



Pastor Semeyn Delivers Message

Beautiful Crystal Mountain Resort in Thomasville, Michigan was the setting of the Twentieth Anniversary Celebration and Conference during the final week of April. The inspiration, instruction and fellowship were highlighted through worship, dedication, celebration, program, and communion over delicious food and enriching fellowship. The main conference session was led by well-known Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff regarding the topic of *Charity, Justice and Reformed Perspective*. Using at least twenty different Scriptures, Dr. Wolterstorff discussed how the word ‘justice’ can be inserted in almost all of the references to righteousness, and he talked about the implications of ‘righteous justice’ for our care-giving ministries. CORC members Mark Eastburg of Pine Rest Mental Health Services and Jonathan Bradford of Inner City Christian Federation of Grand Rapids, Michigan individually responded to the presentation, before it was open for general discussion.

Rev. Peter Semeyn, senior pastor of the Faith Reformed Community Church of Traverse City delivered the message based on Exodus 3:1-12 under the topic “*Leading Through Weakness*” incorporated in a printed liturgy prepared by CORC’s president Dr. David Schuringa. The structure and word of the liturgy were ‘high church’ and centered on the CORC mission of helping people in need. Singing was led by CORC member Bear Berends of Christian Learning Center with the members of the Blue Water Ramblers of Grand Rapids. The group lifted up their voices for the voiceless ones declaring solidarity with all those at risk. We were all so strengthened by Word and Sacrament to be faithful servants to the ‘least of these’.

LEADING THROUGH WEAKNESS

(Excerpts of Message used with permission from Pastor Semeyn)

Which one of us hasn’t asked ourselves that question? “Who am I to go before Pharaoh and demand that he let the Israelites go?” Who am I to go to a hospital room and try to bring someone God’s comfort and love? Who am I to stand before these people and try to teach a lesson from God’s Word? Who am I to think that God would honor my requests in prayer? Who am I to try and be a parent of these children, offer advice to these people, give guidance that may be life changing? Who am I to think that I can lead this organization?, these people?, this work? WHO AM I?

In private moments when we are alone, driving in our cars, sitting in our offices, relaxing at home, on our way to an appointment or to represent a group, we have what I call our “Moses Moments” when we battle feelings of inadequacy and incompetence. Have you ever noticed God’s tendency to choose people haunted by doubt and lacking in self assurance to lead his people? Moses is one in a long line of men and women who wondered “WHO AM I?” Others like David, Jeremiah, and Peter fought off feeling of inadequacy, guilt and shame. Which one of us would hire any one of them as a ministry leader? God has a habit of choosing apparently weak people to lead. When God decided to invade the earth as a human being, he didn’t anoint a Harvard graduate and an MIT professor who had distinguished themselves as scholars and leaders to be his parents. He chose an unknown teenage girl from a Podunk town called Nazareth, whose fiancé was a local carpenter. Pondering all of this and wrestling with his

own sense of inadequacy and incompetence to fulfill his calling Paul once wrote to a new body of believers: But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are.”

I grew up in a dysfunctional family and learned that what I did and how I did it gave me recognition and affirmation. I learned that what I did was more important than who I was. My academic achievements, my athletic accomplishments, my work productions gave me a sense of worth. I needed to accomplish things for people to like and accept me and the more I did, the more value I believed I had. To say “no” to something I was asked to do would have been a sign of weakness and would have decreased my value as person.

We are each given gifts and talents and abilities, and we need to use them as a team to build the kingdom. Some people are great administrators, others are great communicators, others have leadership ability, and some are wonderful teachers. We all have strengths and weaknesses. We just have a hard time admitting our weaknesses. However, when one person tries to do too many things, it isn’t healthy for the organization or the individual.

Understanding our gifts and abilities and asking others to fill where our skills are lacking is one way to admit weakness. But there is a deeper level that will serve leaders in a more profound way. Patrick Lencioni has written a very powerful book for leaders entitled *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. His premise is that teams of people accomplish much more than individuals. That is true in both quantity and more importantly, perhaps, quality. He says that team work is like a five piece pyramid and that the foundation of the pyramid is trust. Each section of the pyramid builds on the other and if one skips a section he will never achieve meaningful teamwork. The foundation of the pyramid is trust. Teamwork is built on trust. Teams of people, organizations, boards, churches cannot fully function without this foundational quality. “Vulnerability-based trust is predicated on the simple – and practical – idea that people who aren’t afraid to admit the truth about themselves are not going to engage in the kind of political behavior that wastes everyone’s time and energy, and more importantly, makes accomplishments of results an unlikely scenario.” That level of trust building must start at the top, with the leader.

Leadership is built on trust. Trust is built on vulnerability. Vulnerability is an admission of weakness. And weakness is what God chooses to accomplish his work. As CORC’s mission statement promotes: We will provide *mutual encouragement and accountability in the effective building of agencies that are dedicated to helping people in need; Engage and equip the church for coming to the aid of needy people; Collaborate where possible with agencies in providing direct services to people in need; Be a voice for the voiceless, in ways appropriate for the advancement of social justice.*

Moses wasn’t sure he could lead. He was filled with feelings of inadequacy and incompetence. And God gave him these simple words of assurance: *I will be with you...I WILL be with you...I will be with YOU!* As you lead, as you embrace the courage to be vulnerable, as you seek to build trust, God promises “*I WILL BE WITH YOU!*” In our communion meal of which we are about to partake symbolically says the same thing.

CORC Agencies Announce Improvements

Elim Christian Services Dedicates New Facilities

“To God Be The Glory” echoed throughout Elim’s campus in mid-May at the dedication services for their new Life Skills Center, which will serve up to 120 adults with disabilities. While increasing the capacity to serve, the center also incorporates eco-friendly building techniques and increased energy savings over the long term. Elim’s president, Bill Lodewyk, believes that this project illuminates God’s continuing grace throughout the almost 60 years of Elim’s ministry. “For decades, Elim has been seen as an expert and an outstanding ministry in the field of special needs services. Now, we are exporting this expertise to ministries in other parts of the country and world with this state-of-the-art services facility,” he said.



Dianne Kariotis of the Illinois Department of Human Services Bureau of Accreditation, Licensure and Certification had this to say following a recent visit: “The Elim Life Skills Center is a statement to the world that Elim believes in and cares for people with disabilities. I am overwhelmed by the design and beauty of the facility. I look forward to returning to see the adults in their new work environment.”

The completion of the Center marks the end of the first phase of a three-year capital improvement project on Elim’s main campus in Palos Heights, IL.

Christian Learning Center in Grand Rapids, MI Offers English On Line



CLC Director Bear Berends shares with David Vander Ploeg and Peter Borgdorff.

Students who work above and beyond the typical middle school English curriculum were challenged with grammar, sentence writing, novel reading, creative writing and devotional writing during the first nine-week segment of this course. The second nine-week segment includes media study, assembling a research project, and poetry writing. English online is enriched English curriculum taught from a reformed Christian worldview. The class consists of both online and inseat (face-to-face) instruction. Students spend approximately six hours online per week and attend three meetings at the CLC Network central office, where they have opportunity to share ideas and discussion with other

academically talented students. Says their teacher Becci Zwiers, “Students feel confident in their ability – it’s fun to do something at their level, and not sit in class and re-learn, but have the opportunity to learn new things.” Such a program opens new doors of learning for academically talented students.

Calvary Rehabilitation Center Acquires The Meier CLINICS

As was referenced in our Winter 2007 issue of *Charities*, Calvary Rehabilitation Center of Phoenix, Arizona itself does not provide any direct services. They are provided through The Meier Clinics, a nationally recognized provider of Christian behavioral healthcare services and a ‘ministry of Calvary’. Executive Director of Calvary, Jeff Shook writes “If you are like me, you want things to happen instantly. Patience is not a virtue, it is torture. When opportunities present themselves, I want them to be implemented and successful overnight. I wish God worked on my timetable. However, when I get in a ‘hurry-up’ mood, I have to remind myself that God is in control. And when I look back on the blessings Calvary has experienced since opening its doors in 1963, they have been on His schedule, not mine. That consolation works, for a while.”



So it is with Calvary’s acquisition of The Meier Clinics. There are plans to expand Calvary’s healing ministry by selecting Meier Clinics locations across the USA. Plans include the consolidation of the Meier Clinics and the Calvary ministries under one blended ministry with the leadership of one board. The blended ministry will have a new name that has not yet been established. A Phoenix Clinic will be opened. “We wish all these things would have already happened but God has other plans. So, we practice patience,” said Shook.

Things are still in progress for Calvary. An Intensive Day Addictions Program has been introduced at the Wheaton, Illinois Meier Clinics office. The program is catching on. Work continues on consolidating the ministry and the Phoenix Program should be up and running by the close of the year.

Salem Christian Home

The first Sunday of June marked a very significant step in the life of Salem Christian Homes in southern California. It was Dedication Day for their new Salem Ministry/Administration Center that relocated from the city of Ontario a few miles to the south in Chino. Several dignitaries and board officials as well as former Salem director Myron Wester took part in the dedication program. Also being a former executive director for CORC, Mr. Wester presented a dedication plaque on behalf of the Council.



Salem dedication.

In 1960, Salem began as a school for children with disabilities that met in classrooms at Bellflower Christian School. From 1968-2004, Salem's identity was primarily defined by the campus in Ontario. Since 1998, the Board of Directors

has been committed to the vision of Salem to be an integral part of the community, rather than a separate campus. Homes were developed in surrounding communities to the point where today there are nineteen Salem homes serving some 114 adults.

Dan Copeland, Salem's executive director, said that this location will be used by staff members in doing the work of planning, administration, training and development for the ministry. The training space will be used by their staff as well as for other organizations that provide similar services. "As far as we know, there are no other residential care agencies in the Ontario/Chino area that have a facility for such training to serve the Developmentally Disabled community," he said. Social activities for Salem residents will also be held at this location.

Samaritan Counseling Center, another Christian ministry, has leased approximately 1500 square feet of the 8000 sq. ft. facility to provide assistance and counseling for families with members who are disabled.

Heritage Christian Services of Rochester, NY Honors Its Founder

During the first week of April, a special surprise honor was celebrated at Heritage Christian Services as founder and President Bob Pieters and Marie Pieters and family in the naming of a new facility the Pieters Family Life Center.



Doug Struyk (left) congratulates Marie and Bob Pieters.

The 22,000 sq. ft. building is to be a holistic, wellness facility to serve both people with and without developmental disabilities. With its multipurpose room, there will be a wide range of opportunities to include social club activities, athletics and theatrical arts. The fitness room will offer universal fitness equipment, adjustable to easily fit people who have wheelchairs. The health services wing hosts a variety of therapies including PT, OT, Speech and also creative therapies like dance, music, art and massage. The main focal point of the building is the spiritual resource for exploring faith, prayer and learning. CORC member Doug Struyk from Christian Health Care Center of Wyckoff, NJ represented the CORC organization in presentation of a special resolution of congratulations.

A GRIEF DISCLOSED (continued from page 2)

choose to believe in him anyway." And she immediately sat down to write a letter to Santa.

I thought to myself, is that it? Is that what we're doing here? After all, there is no scientific evidence to prove God exists. Perhaps we just choose to believe in him anyway. So we make believe that we have conversations with him, we read a book as if he were its author, and we pretend that we're all going to live happily ever after in La-La Land.

Although I may have let go of God for a moment, he never let go of me. I did gradually emerge from that dark place—my personal "dark night of the soul"—and as I was climbing out of the pit, a sermon I heard one Sunday morning finally grabbed me by the hand and lifted me up.

At this stage of my grief journey, it is dawning on me anew that while it can't be proven scientifically that God exists, neither can science ever prove that God does not exist. The testimony of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that God's Word is true is not like choosing to believe in Santa Claus, but it is the "assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). I think my faith is stronger now, resting more in God and less on itself.

I think it's OK to have some "heretical" thoughts like mine, and I believe we need to allow each other and those we serve through our CORC agencies the same room—lots of room—to experience God's presence anew. All that stuff we preach really is true, you know. God never promised that we could ever fully understand his ways. But our sovereign God does promise that we can always count on him to come through for us in the end.

Dr. David Schuringa is the President of Crossroad Bible Institute, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and President of the Council of Reformed Charities

Did You Know???

According to a survey by Dr. Richard A. Blackman: ("Survey of Pastors", in "The Hazards of the Ministry", Psy.D. diss., Graduate School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary.)

- 75% of pastors surveyed reported having at least one significant crisis due to stress
- 80% believed that ministry is affecting their families negatively
- 90% felt inadequately trained to meet the demands of the job
- 50% felt unable to do their jobs
- 37% pastors responding to this survey, had experienced inappropriate sexual contact outside of their marriage
- 40% of pastors experience a "serious relational conflict at least once a month."
- 1/2 of all pastors feel unable to meet the demands of the job.

Although this survey identifies only pastors, I believe that it would be safe to say that similar statistics would no doubt pertain to all leaders who are in executive positions.

- Editor

BOOK IN PROGRESS

Christian Compassion: How We Respond

With the dedication of the book in April, it is an opportune time to give an update of the work in progress. We have asked the author to give just such a report. We are grateful for his patience in the continued efforts as was recognized at the Annual Conference in Michigan. Here is what Meindert Bosch has to say:



Meindert Bosch, Author

Initially responding to the idea/recommendation that was made by Myron Wester, our Executive Director at the time, the Council first approved the project of writing a book about the Council of Reformed Charities at our 2003 Annual Meeting in Sarasota, Florida. The project was supervised for the first three years by the Council appointed Book Panel. This Panel helped organize a work plan, read, reviewed, and approved copy and content, and in general got the project under way. However in 2006, with the primary manuscript completed, the Council favored still more research and working with a general editor. Thus the Book Panel was released from its duties and the Executive Committee was asked to provide continued supervision of the project. In addition Dr. Donald Bruggink of the Van Raalte Institute was appointed general editor. A copy-editor was also engaged. As a result of the foregoing, the author was requested to do the following:

1. Conduct further research by reviewing:
 - a. All newsletters for historical information
 - b. All minutes for historical information
 - c. Other available material for historical information
(Subsequently six additional chapters have been written and are being integrated in the book.)

2. Contact former CEO's and/or annual meeting attendees for a written response/reaction to the personal value of their CORC experience. (Twenty-five out of 30 responses have been received from former CEO's and plans are to include these in some manner in the book. All are very positive and provide some unique historical perspectives).
3. The general editor favors having 75-100 photos included in the book. Sixty photos have been sent to him and more are in progress. We are grateful for the encouraging response. Besides the foregoing, the following work continues:
 - a. The author's review of the general editor's changes, rewriting and the like. To date four chapters have been completed by the general editor.
 - b. Photo placement by the general editor with many recommendations from the author.
 - c. Formatting by the general editor, possibly working in conjunction with the printer/publisher.
 - d. Updating agency profiles.
 - e. Proceed with printing and publishing.
 - f. Implement the plan for book distribution.

As one can tell from the above information, considerable work remains to be done but the project continues. We will stay in touch as we anticipate completion of this significant work. Future information will be forthcoming regarding the distribution of the book: Compassion: How We Respond.

- Meindert Bosch, Author

CORC CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY & BOOK DEDICATION

The 2007 Annual Meeting of the Council of Reformed Charities was an occasion to celebrate our Twentieth Anniversary and to dedicate our soon-to-be-published CORC book **Compassion: How We Respond**. Although our author, Meindert Bosch, was not able to be present because of injuries sustained earlier in a fall, his sons Dave & Ron received honors and recognition on his behalf.

Even though our organization is older than 20 years, CORC selected the time of our 'official legal date of 1988' as our beginning. CORC actually was loosely formed already in the 1950's. So, in a realistic sense, the Council of Reformed Charities has been around for fifty years. Our purpose for celebrating the anniversary this particular year was basically for these reasons:

- ◆ Our conference was in the state of Michigan, where the official CORC organization documents were drafted and adopted as well as now maintained.
- ◆ Many of our CORC retiree are available in the state and were invited for the Anniversary celebration.
- ◆ It gave us a choice opportunity to dedicate our long-awaited and anticipated book: Compassion: How We Respond.
- ◆ Our everlasting God has been so faithful to our Council over the years, and we wanted to take time to praise Him for His abundant blessings.



Representatives involved in the book production.

Dedication plaque presented for Meindert Bosch.



Book Editor Dr. Donald Bruggink shares details about the book, with D. Schuringa looking on.



2007-2008
Executive Committee
L-R: President D. Schuringa, Secretary M. Geitner, Treasurer D. Copeland, Vice President B. Lodewyck

CORC MEMBERSHIP

The Council of Reformed Charities is an association of Christian agencies which promotes human services in an effort to exercise mercy to our neighbor. CORC was incorporated in the state of Michigan in 1988. Charities is published in Muskegon, Michigan. Address changes/comments may be addressed to George J. Groen, Editor and Executive Director, P.O. Box 2650, Litchfield Park, Arizona 85340. Email: corcgroen@aol.com

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- Myron Wester

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- Dan Holwerda
- Ron Stursma

Council of Reformed Charities



1988-2008

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Council of Reformed Charities

"CARING THRU SERVICE"

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Email: corcgroen@aol.com
- Questions regarding specific required services may be addressed by contacting the individual agency director named on the inside back page of this newsletter.
- Pastors and church officials are invited to contact us regarding service that may be required among members with special needs in their congregation/community.

NOTE: You are encouraged to share this newsletter with others who would benefit.

Executive Officers & Standing Committees

President: Dr. David Schuringa - *Crossroad Bible Institute, Grand Rapids, MI*
Vice President: Dr. Bill Lodewyk - *Elim Christian Services, Palos Heights, IL*
Secretary: Lois Murray - *Sierra Village, Inc., Visalia, CA*
Treasurer: Dan Copeland - *Salem Christian Homes, Inc., Ontario, CA*
Executive Director: George Groen - *Ret. Elim & Christian Education, Phoenix, AZ*

Communications Committee

Jim Schlottman, Chairman - *Quiet Waters Ministries, Denver, CO*
Sam Beals - *Wedgwood Christian Services, Grand Rapids, MI*
Don Distelberg - *The Timothy Group, Grand Rapids, MI*
Phil Ellis - *Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, Grand Rapids, MI*
Marlowe Van Ginkle - *Hope Haven, Inc., Rock Valley, IA*

Membership Committee

Bill Lodewyk, Chairman - *Elim Christian Services, Palos Heights, IL*
"Bear" Berends - *Christian Learning Center, Grand Rapids, MI*
Doug Struyk - *Christian Health Care Center, Wyckoff, NJ*
Dan De Groot - *Justice for All, Rock Valley, IA*
Jim VanderKamp - *Roundup Fellowship, Denver, CO*
David VanNingen - *Hope Haven, Inc., Rock Valley, IA*

Nomination Committee

John Wynbeek, Chairman - *Bethany Christian Services, Grand Rapids, MI*
Dale Ellens - *Bethesda Christian Counseling Midwest, Inc., Sioux Falls, SD*
Andrew Lee - *Bethany Home Society, Ripon, CA*
Rich Schutt - *Rest Haven Christian Services, Tinley Park, IL*
David Stienstra - *Inland Christian Home, Inc., Ontario, CA*
Marlowe VanGinkle - *Hope Haven, Inc., Rock Valley, IA*