

# The Commons

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## DNW Notes from

President Dennis N. Voskuil

A few years ago I preached a baccalaureate sermon at Northwestern College in which I informed the students, "You'll never graduate." I explained that as the Apostle Paul told the Philippians, in our Christian walk we must constantly "press on toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." As servants of God, we never graduate—but we continue to learn and grow in our ministries.

To that end Western Theological Seminary, in cooperation with the Revitalization/Leadership Cluster of the Reformed Church in America, invited recent graduating classes to gather at the seminary in the middle of May for a few days of reacquaintance, renewal, and retreat. To date, the graduating classes of 2004 and 2005 have participated in the program.

Studies of church leaders have revealed that establishing ongoing peer relationships is one of the most effective ways to deter fatigue and burnout. Leaders who are able to participate in these peer groups early in their ministries are most likely to sustain energy and vision.

It is a joy, of course, for me to become reacquainted with friends and to hear them tell of the exciting things happening in their lives. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the challenges of Christian leadership.

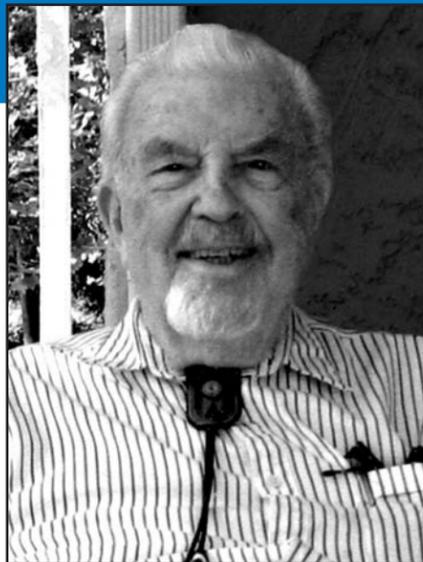
When this program has been fully implemented, classes will be invited to participate in these "reunion" retreats one year, three years, and five years after graduation.

In a memorable radio ad, Tom Bodett tells his listeners that they are always welcome at Motel 6. He concludes with this hospitable phrase: "We'll leave the light on for you." It is my expectation that those who have graduated from Western Seminary will know that they are always welcome: "We'll leave the light on."

*Dennis*

## Distinguished Alumni of 2006

### Alumni Profiles



#### James Nettinga '37

by Drew Nettinga

James Zwemer Nettinga was born July 16, 1912 in Chicago, the third child of Siebe and Katarina Nettinga. When Jim was a young boy, the family moved to Holland, where his father became Professor of Church History at Western Theological Seminary.

Jim hoped to attend Chicago University to play football for legendary coach, Amos Alonzo Stagg, who had impressed him at a youth rally. Unable to fulfill that dream, Jim went to Hope College, played football and basketball there while studying History and Classics, and graduated in 1934. Three years later, he graduated from Western Seminary.

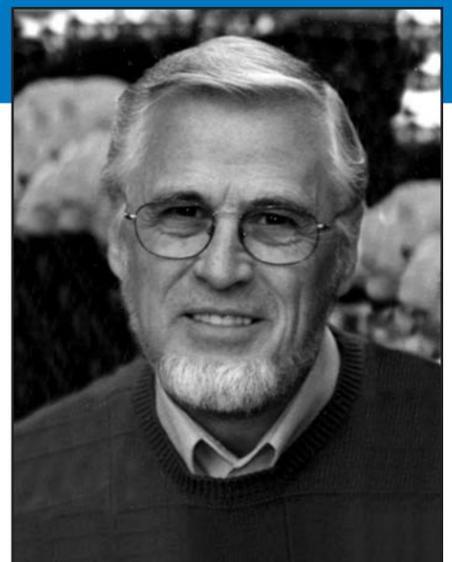
Itching to get out of Michigan and explore more of the country, Jim went to Princeton Theological Seminary, where he received a M.Th. in 1938. He moved to New York and earned a Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary in 1946.

During his years at Union, Jim was pastor of the E. 89th St. Reformed Church. There he met and married Margaret Drew, who came from New Jersey each Sunday to sing in the choir. Later Jim left the E. 89th St. church to do youth work at the denominational offices of the Reformed Church of America.

In 1949, Jim, Peggy, and their 2-year-old son, Drew, moved to Pasadena, California, where Jim went to work as the Western

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Western Theological Seminary's Alumni/ae Council announces the 2006 Distinguished Alumni Award winners: the Rev. Dr. James Nettinga and the Rev. Dr. Richard Ter Maat.



#### Richard Ter Maat '64

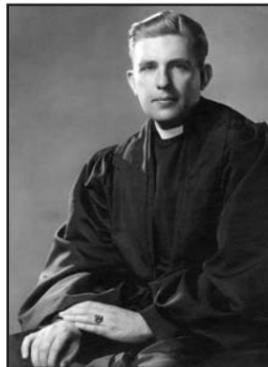
by Deb Borst

Shortly after his call to urban ministry in Grand Rapids West Side, the young pastor, fearful of losing his bearings and being uprooted by the pace and demands of his core city parish, jotted down principles on a scrap of paper. He has carried it with him for 42 years...determined to be "obedient to his calling and faithful to his Lord." It became a daily call to integrity amid the chaos of urban life and ministry:

Keep me focused, Lord, on my calling...  
To represent Jesus to the poor  
To represent the poor to the city  
To represent the city to the church.

Richard Ter Maat was born in 1938 to a hardworking Wisconsin farming family. He attended Hingham Reformed Church with his parents and grandparents and graduated from Liberty Grade School and Oostburg High School. His curiosity and spirit of adventure led him to the beckoning halls of Central College in Pella, Iowa, where he distinguished himself not only as a scholar, but also as a "drummer" and a practical jokester of rare distinction.

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Ordination, 1938  
Classis of New York



The entire student body of Liberty Elementary gathers for eighth grade graduation, May 1952. (Dick is pictured at far right)

# “Witness”

By Robert H. Schuller '50

My vision for ministry started at Western Seminary. Dr. Simon Blocker, Professor of Homeletics, assigned a term paper to be written on a great preacher. One morning he said, “Schuller, you still haven’t picked a preacher.”

I replied, “I don’t know any on the list you handed out.”

“Fine,” he said. “I’ll give you one: George Truett.”

I had never heard of this Baptist preacher in Dallas, TX, but what I learned would inspire the direction of my ministry. George Truett came to a church in Dallas with about forty members. He came with the attitude that he would spend his whole life there and build it into a truly great church. Forty years later it was the largest Baptist church in the world.

I thought, “That’s what I’ll do. I’ll go to a big city where there are lots of unchurched people, and I can try to win them to Christ.”

The first church I served was in Chicago, and it grew tenfold in four years just through knocking on doors and inviting people. Then I accepted a call from the California Classis to start a church in Garden Grove.

My Uncle Henry, a former missionary to China who told me when I was four that I would grow up to be a preacher, said, “Bob, you have to make this a mission. You have to go after unchurched people.”

So I did. I rang doorbells.

One young woman told me, “My father was Jewish and my mother was Catholic, and they said when I grew up I could pick one. Now I’ve graduated from Stanford, I’m married with a child of my own, but I have no religion. What’s yours?”

I thought I would pick up on the Jewish part of her story, “Well, you know in the Old Testament...”

She interrupted, “What do you mean, Old Testament?”

I said, “Well, you know the Bible is made up of the Old Testament and the New Testament...”

She said, “Oh, you have two Bibles?”

I started laughing and said, “Oh forget it, but I have a church you might like.”

So she came to church.

Dr. Robert Harold Schuller is the Founding Pastor of Crystal Cathedral Ministries in Garden Grove, CA. Dr. Schuller was Western Seminary’s first recipient of the Distinguished Alum award in 1997.



I had my sermon all prepared like I had been taught at seminary. There she was in the front row. Suddenly I thought, “If she doesn’t even know what the Old Testament is, this sermon will mean nothing to her!” I was talking to a person who knew nothing about the Bible! I had to switch to extemporaneous speaking. It was revolutionary. Later when I would end up on global TV, it became more important.

In school a teacher knows his students have certain prerequisites before they sit in his class. In my “class” none of them had prerequisites. It changed my entire “preaching” strategy. The pulpit went from a teaching post to a therapeutic place. Start with the heart; where are they troubled? What are their hurts? Just be Jesus to the people, wherever they are.

Jesus used two words: witness and preach. Don’t preach to unchurched people. Witness to unchurched people and preach to believers.

There’s the mission and there’s the church. A person has to know what his role is. If he’s going to be the pastor of a church, then he has to focus on covenant people. Choose whether you are called to witness or to preach—occasionally you can do both—but know your focus.

A pastor’s number one role in mission is to be the Body of Christ to others—smiling, loving, encouraging people. My friend Mother Teresa once said, “Smile, it is the beginning of peace.” That is profound! Every message should start with a smile.

Unchurched people aren’t coming to church because there’s something attractive about church. We grew up in a church age, but now we’re in a mission age. If you’re going to be a mission, you can’t lay the law down and scold them for doing something you would consider a sin. That type of preaching is for people who have already made a commitment.

To realize your vision you have to decide: are you a mission or a church?



Jim at the American Bible Society, 1959

## James Zwemer Nettinga '37

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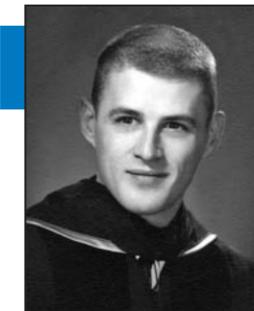
Regional Secretary of the American Bible Society (ABS). He also preached in Reformed churches in the Southland, including the drive-in movie theater where Robert Schuller was beginning his ministry.

The family, now larger with another son, Jon, moved back to the East Coast in 1957 for Jim’s appointment as the ABS Director of Institutional Advancement in New York City. Jim promoted the ABS 150th anniversary celebration in 1969 and its landmark New Testament translation, *Good News for Modern Man* (1966) and later the complete Old and New Testaments, *The Good News Bible* (1976).

Back in 1966, the *Today’s English Version of the Scriptures* was not met with universal joy and acclaim. Some conservative churches complained that it muted fundamental claims of Christian doctrine. For example, in Isaiah the KJV states, “a virgin shall conceive,” but the TEV says, “a young woman who is pregnant will have a son.” Some churches went so far as to burn as many copies of the new translation they could find.

### Jim Nettinga

b. Chicago, IL 1912  
 AB, Hope College '34  
 ThB, Western Theological Seminary, '37  
 ThM, Princeton Theological Seminary '38  
 PhD, Union Theological Seminary '46  
 Married Margaret Diane Drew in 1942  
 Children: Drew and Jon  
**Service to the church:**  
 1938-42 Pastor of Harlem Collegiate, NY, NY  
 1942-47 Secretary, Young People’s Work  
 1947-49 Act. Secretary, BDM  
 1949-77 Secretary, American Bible Society



WTS graduate, 1964

## Richard Ter Maat '64

(continued from page 1)

Dick and Helen (Meylink), his high school sweetheart, married in 1960 and moved to Holland, Michigan where Helen completed her studies at Hope College and Dick attended Western Seminary. Neither envisioned themselves serving in the city, but God had another plan. An internship in Denver primed them for what lay ahead. As graduation approached, a call to Ninth Reformed Church on the near West Side of Grand Rapids persistently tugged at their hearts. In June of 1964, they moved into the parsonage and took the first step into what would become a lifelong ministry within a parish they fondly named Westown.

As the Ter Maats immersed themselves in the life of their new congregation, they became increasingly aware of the church’s ineffectiveness in reaching its closest neighbors. God gave Dick a compelling vision. In a bold and faith-filled moment, Dick proposed that the church rent space in a storefront to begin an outreach to boys on the street. The leaders responded by allocating the



Dick points out a new direction with WTS urban intern Warren Bovenkirk in the late 1960s.



# Distinguished Alumni

When family and friends asked Jim what he felt about this reaction, he simply smiled and said, "It's good publicity for us. For every book they burn, another will be bought by someone wanting to know what the hubbub's about."

In 1973, Jim wrote *Quotations from the Bible for Modern Man*, in which he gathered Bible passages to answer the difficult and troubling questions of life situations.

Throughout his career with the American Bible Society, Jim was privileged to present copies of the Bible to four standing Presidents: Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon Johnson, and Gerald Ford. During the presentation to President Ford, Jim and the President discovered they had played football for opposing high schools. Ever the diplomat, Jim never told family and friends whether he agreed with Lyndon Johnson's assessment of President Ford being who he was as a result of having played football without his helmet.

Jim's wife Peggy died in 1975. Shortly thereafter, Jim retired from the American Bible Society and moved to Carlsbad, California. While maintaining his ties to the Reformed Church, Jim joined Pilgrim United Church of Christ in Carlsbad, where he met and married a widow named Pearl Goode in 1980. Jim and Pearl



*Jim presents President Gerald Ford with a copy of the Bible from the American Bible Society, 1975.*

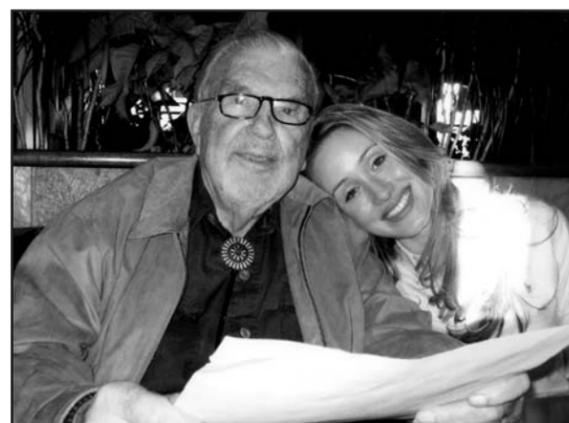
brought their families together on many occasions, hosting reunions and special weeks with the grandchildren.

During the early years of his retirement, Jim served two interims in United Church of Christ congregations in Escondido and Poway. He also served as the pastor to retired ministers for the California Classis of the RCA.

After Pearl's death in 1999, Jim moved to a retirement community in San Marcos and then to one in Fullerton, where he is but five minutes away from his son Jon and family. Now 93 years old, he enjoys life and is deeply honored to be among the recipients of Western's Distinguished Alumni/ae Award.

When told of this award, Jim said, "I appreciate

very much this honor. I value the education I received at Western, the preparation it gave me for ministry, and the friendships with classmates that I have enjoyed keeping throughout the years. May Western Theological Seminary continue to thrive in this new century and millennium!"



*Jim with granddaughter Jesse on Christmas 2005*

church's only reserves, set aside to paint the church steeple, to launch this venture of faith. Frank's Meat Market became the first home of "The Other Way" Ministries in 1967. Its logo proclaimed, "Jesus Christ, the Hope of the City."

What began as a simple plan to keep vulnerable boys off the streets through mentoring and bicycle repair gradually grew into a thriving community ministry. "The Other Way" soon became a gathering place...a sort of West Side living room where genuine hospitality was offered and relationships grew. The Good News began to change hearts and lives. Through the support of numerous



*Dick presents a "Good Neighbor" award at the annual Good Neighbor Festival.*

churches and the God-given vision of its leader, "The Other Way" continued to expand its mission.

A self-described "scout" always eager to explore new territory, Dick began to dream of a blighted city neighborhood trans-

landlords. "Jubilee" became the theme for reclaiming and restoring Westtown, and Nehemiah became Dick's textbook. Westtown Jubilee Housing was launched in 1990. To date, 37 homeowners have staked their claims and made Westtown their community. Four new housing projects are currently underway.

Dick retired from "The Other Way"

Ministries in 2003. He continues as Executive Director of Westtown Jubilee Housing. He still delights to dream of God's plan for his parish and loves to create his own architectural renderings for the future of Westtown. He and Helen have remained faithful servants of Jesus Christ on the Westside of Grand Rapids for 42 years and worship at Servant's Community Reformed Church. They have been blessed with three wonderful children and their spouses. Nothing brings them greater earthly joy than their five grandchildren.

Dick and Helen have fallen in love with the city—seeing it as a picture of the community God is building from every tribe, tongue and nation. Dick's desire is that his life will reflect the leadership described in a favorite poem of John Perkins, founder of the Christian Community Development movement.

## Dick Ter Maat

b. Vesper, WI 1938

BA, Central College '60; MDiv, Western Theological

Seminary '64; ThM, Calvin Theological Seminary '81;

DMin, Westminster Theological Seminary '95

Married Helen Meylink in 1960

Children: Kris, Tom, and Lisa

### Service to the church:

1964-73 Pastor, Ninth Reformed, Grand Rapids, MI

1967-2003 Founder/Director, "The Other Way" Ministries

1981-86 Founding Pastor, Servant's

Community Church, Grand Rapids, MI

1990- Founder/Director, Westtown Jubilee Housing

formed by God into a healthy, flourishing community. This would require not only changed hearts and lives, but safe, affordable housing in a neighborhood dominated by absentee



*Dick and Helen Ter Maat with their family*

Go to the people,  
Live among them,  
Learn from them, love them.  
Start with what they know,  
Build on what they have:  
But of the best leaders,  
when the task is done  
The people will remark,  
"We have done it ourselves."

c. Cindy LaMeyer

Deb Borst is Women's Ministry Director at "The Other Way" Ministries.

# Alumni/ae Day 2006



1956

50 years

Burrell Pennings, George Muyskens, Carl Schroeder, Joe Muyskens, Carl Van Farowe, Louis Kraay

NOT PICTURED: Russel Block, Robert Conner, David Hager, Mark Hesselink\*, William Hoffman, Roy Kats, Cornelius "Neal" Mol\*, Sylvester Moths, William Nelson, Stuart Noordyk\*, Robert Ondra\*, Robert Otto, Robert Spencer, Harry VanderBilt\*, Douglas VanGessel, Edward Viening, Collins Weeber, Arvin Wester



1966

40 years

Front Row: Stan Rock, Larry Teitsma, Sherwin Weener, Stan Vugteveen  
Back Row: George Boerigter, Donald Vuurens, Ed Seely, Franklin Spoolstra

NOT PICTURED: Leon Aalberts, George Beukema, Harold Brown, Paul Colenbrander, Jack Cooper, Bernard Ekema, John Ekema, John Faas\*, Douglas Jon Groen, Ken Hartgerink\*, Henry Hoeks, Wayne Kiel, Gordon Nyenhuis, Karl Overbeek, Richard A. Rhem, LeRoy Sankey, Lewis Scudder, Gordon Timmerman, Mark Walvoord, David Wright, Kunihiko (Paul) Yazaki, Paul Zoschke



1981

25 years

Front Row: Jim Dykstra, Bill Harris, Ed Schmidt, Jim Lester, Abram Blaak  
Back Row: Steven Bakker, David Blauw, Wayne Sneller

NOT PICTURED: Phil Assink, Leroy Ausema, Thomas Bartha, David Boogerd, John Brown, Robert Faulman, James Heneveld, Steven Hoogerwerf, Robert Livingston, David Loveall, James McDonald, Ernst Momongan\*, James O'Connell, Nolan Palsma, David Reck, David Schreuder, David Schwabauer, Earl Smith, Phillip Sneller, Eugene Sutton, Donald Topp, Doug VanAartsen, Stephen VanBronkhorst, David VanderLeest, Jeff VanDerWeele, Charles VanDommelen, Ken Westrate

\* deceased

## AlumLine

**Henry B. Poppen '44** celebrated his 60th anniversary of ordination at the church in which he was ordained: Immanuel Reformed Church, Belmont, IA. He and his wife Cornelia have served eight churches in Iowa, Wisconsin, Chicago, Colorado, and Minnesota, as well as served as interim pastor at Palm Springs Reformed in Lake Worth, FL, First Reformed in Wilmar, MN, and First Reformed of Orange City, IA. They are now retired and living in Orange City.

**Harvey Hoekstra '47** is a retired missionary Bible translator and Chairman of the Board for Talking Bibles International. Bibles in audio format enable families in oral, non-reading cultures to hear God's Word in a daily listening program. He invites everyone to check out [www.talkingbibles.org](http://www.talkingbibles.org) and [www.audioscriptures.org](http://www.audioscriptures.org)

**Donald P. Buteyn '49** retired on June 30, 2004 as Pastor of Mission at the Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church in San Diego, CA. He and Marian have moved back to Holland, MI, where they met at Hope College fifty years ago.

In October 2005, **Arthur "Bud" Van Eck '51** and his wife participated in the Footsteps of St. Paul Tour, which led to Bud teaching a 4-week seminar on Paul in Traverse City, MI. He will also head a men's retreat about Paul in October '06. The Van Ecks completed their 17th chaplaincy cruise on Holland America in March.

The ministry of **Donald Nienhuis '54** took him all over the United States: Washington, Montana, South Dakota, Michigan, New Jersey, Florida, and Idaho. His daughters and their families heard the call to mission around the world. Family members have spread the Gospel in Venezuela, Taiwan, Russia, Romania, Moldova, Japan, Africa, Thailand, and soon, the Philippines.

After living in 17 homes in eight states and serving six churches, where he delivered 3,704 sermons, baptized 342 people, received 657 new members, and conducted 172 weddings, **William Hoffman '56** and his wife Alberdena retired to Stewartville, MN. Bill is still preaching in retirement and writes that if he knew he had only one sermon left to preach, he would choose "The Cross and Christ's Resurrection."

Nineteen years ago **Louis P. Kraay '56** retired from full-time ministry and has since continued part-time as calling pastor for First Reformed Church, Grand Haven, MI. After Margaret passed away, he married Ruth Larkin in November 2005.

At Knox Theological Seminary in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, **Collins D. Weeber, '56** directs the Doctor of Ministry Program and is Adjunct Professor of Practical Theology. The seminary was granted full accreditation in 2005 by ATS and is enjoying steady growth training men and women from over twenty denominations. Dr. Weeber is also engaged in pulpit sup-

ply for area churches, including the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church. He writes that he is deeply grateful to the Lord for the privilege of continuing ministry in the church.

**Charles Kamp '58** was elected chairman of the northwest cluster of churches in Maumee Valley Presbytery (Ohio). They named their cluster the Black Swamp Kirks, because the 12 churches are located in the corner of Ohio that was covered by the Black Swamp, and one of their pastors came from the Church (Kirk) of Scotland. The clusters meet between presbytery meetings and plan activities for the churches in their areas.

**Nick Vander Weide '59** is the Congregational Care Team Leader at Penn Yan United Methodist Church, Penn Yan, NY. He is also a 3rd grade Reading Buddy with Retired Seniors Volunteer Program and serves as a member of the Board of Directors of Yates County Habitat for Humanity.

**Owen (Ted) Bechtel '60** and his wife have recently moved to Fletcher, NC, which is just south of Asheville.



The Class of 1966 shares...

Since retiring in October of 1992, **Gilbert L. Visser '58** was interim pastor at his home church in Oskaloosa, IA 1996-1997 as well as an interim at the Newton, IA church 1999-2001. From the time he retired and between these interims, he has served as the part-time visitation pastor of his home church.

**Gerald Bates '64** (Th.M.) is president of Friends of Hope Africa University, Inc., an organization which assisted in the launch and development of the school, now six years old. Hope Africa University in Burundi, Africa, now enrolls 780 students. Info: [nijewe@cs.com](mailto:nijewe@cs.com)

**Bruce J. Hoffman '64** will be completing a 20-month interim at Clinton Ave. Reformed Church in Bergenfield, NJ on June 30.

**Fritz Kruithof '64** is serving with the RCA Senior Minister program, calling on pastoral retirees and families. Also, from April to July of this year he is covering a three month sabbatical at Bethany Reformed in Kalamazoo, MI.

**William N. Herold '65** is now a member of The Sons of The American Revolution as well as a member of Mayflower



Descendants. He is the 10x-Great Grandson of Governor William Bradford.

**Bruce Laverman '65** retired on September 30, 2005, but he is still active training coaches in Natural Church Development. He is also the president of the RCA's Southwest Classis.

**Daryl A. Vetter '65** retired in June 2005 but continues to work part-time at Lakeland Reformed Church in Vicksburg, MI. He moved to Holland in April 2006.

The Joint Venture Firms in China, led by **George Boerigter '66**, continue to progress. He will dedicate several new manufacturing and office buildings in China this year.

After serving in the RCA for ten years, **Don Vuurens '66** spent the rest of his ministry serving churches in the West Michigan United Methodist Conference. He was also a "circuit riding preacher" for various Methodist churches in Michigan and Indiana. For 32 years he sent seeds for a missions program of gardens to feed hungry



news of fellow classmates.

people. He is still playing lots of music, instruments and singing in church.

**Sherwin Weener '66** retired in January 2006 after serving in the RCA for nearly 40 years. He was privileged to serve as pastor of First Reformed of Astoria (New York City), Bethel Reformed (Sterling, IL), and Fellowship Reformed (Muskegon, MI). For the last ten years, he has been the Executive Minister of the Synod of the Great Lakes.

**Vern Essenberg '67** is involved with a great sexual abstinence program for 6-12th graders called Silver Ring Thing. [silverringthing.com](http://silverringthing.com)

**David L. Maris '68** recently retired from 12 1/2 years as pastor of Plainview Reformed Church and from nine years service as Area Minister for the Regional Synod of New York. He and Beula recently moved to Williamsburg, VA. They are becoming involved at the Presbyterian Church (Jamestown), close to the site of the first English settlement in the New World in 1607.

**Ronald B. Mayers '73** (Th.M.) has been teaching philosophy and religion at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, MI since 1969. Now semi-retired, he teaches in the

fall semester and spends the winter in Florida. Ron was ordained Baptist ('65) and received an M.A. ('67) and Ph.D. ('72) before entering Western Seminary in December, 1971. He especially appreciated Drs. Osterhaven and Oudersluys at Western.

**Rev. Dr. Charles Cameron (studied at WTS, 1978-79)** is Minister at Darvel Parish Church, Ayrshire (Church of Scotland). He has written a Daily Bible Readings series covering the whole of Scripture in three years. It can be found online at [www.stkentigern.org.uk](http://www.stkentigern.org.uk)

**Steven J. Bakker '81** has been Senior Pastor of Hingham (WI) Reformed Church since October of 1991. His wife, Brenda, is a full-time reading aide at their local elementary school. He writes that they are having a wonderful ministry. Last year the congregation dedicated a \$1.3 million building addition to the church, and already they are seeing it bear fruit in their community.

After 20 years of active service as a Navy Chaplain, **David Schwabauer '81** is about to retire. He currently lives in California.

**Paul Hansen '82** is in the process of earning a Doctorate in Worship, pending completion of his dissertation in 2007.

Since 2001 **Gordon I. Waddilove '82** has been on the board of Alongside, a ministry to pastors and missionaries. He earned an M.A. and teaches Gospel Literature as an adjunct professor at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, MI. He also teaches at North Hills Classical Academy, a Christian school.

**Cindi Veldheer DeYoung '90** joined the Pastoral Care Staff at Spectrum Health, Butterworth Hospital (Grand Rapids, MI) in December, 2005 after 14 years serving as Hospice chaplain. She successfully trained her canine, Wilson Waldo, to pass the AKC Canine Good Citizen Test last November. Wilson's middle name, Waldo, is in honor of the Waldensians.

**Dave Van Netten '96** has been pastoring the Grace Reformed Church in Waterloo, IA for more than eight years. He is enjoying God's blessing on their growing ministry. And yes, the "Drummer-Preacher" is still playing drums in the church's praise band too!

After serving Faith Reformed Church in Kingsville, Ontario, Canada, for nine years, **Carson Culp '97** has accepted the call to be the pastor of Christ Community Church in Welland, Ontario, effective June 20, 2006.

In May 2006 **Christopher Dorn '99** received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI. His dissertation: "Tradition and Transformation: The Celebration of the Lord's Supper in the RCA."

In February **Rodney Haveman '01** and **Gretchen Schoon Tanis '02** were among 800 delegates attending The Ninth Assem-

*The day started with a welcome reception in the Burggraaff Atrium. Later in the morning, two students gave a presentation on their Oman Intercultural Trip. After luncheons for the classes of 1956, 1966, and 1981, guests were treated to a panel discussion between two seminary presidents: Dr. Dennis Voskuil and Dr. Neil Plantinga, Jr.*

bly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil. WTS M.Div. student Kate Davelaar also attended. Rod and Kate posted their reflections on the RCA's website, [www.rca.org](http://www.rca.org)

**Fiana Rakau '01** (Th.M.) is now the principal of the Talau Seminary for the Presbyterian Church in Vanuatu (islands in the southwest Pacific Ocean).

Andrew and **Julie VanDerVeen Van Til '01**, married July 3, 2004, praise God for the birth of their daughter, Eva Claire, on January 11, 2006. Julie is the pastor of Ada Community Reformed Church, Ada, MI.

**Shane '01 and Jill '03 VerSteeg** are the proud parents of healthy twin boys, Will and Owen, born March 10, 2006. The VerSteegs live in Johnston, IA.

**B.J. Van Kalsbeek '02** is a chaplain and Manager of the Pastoral Care Dept. at Mercy Medical Center in Sioux City, IA. He and his wife, Manda, had their first child, Kamea, on December 20, 2005. Manda works for the Girl Scouts doing development and marketing.

**Kent Frens '03** and his wife, Betsy, celebrated the birth of a daughter, Josie Jeanne, on February 10, 2006. Born 1 lb 2 oz, as of April 12 she weighed 2 lbs 11 oz. "Bless the Lord, O my soul..."

**Jason Olson '03** is working with Crossroads Community, an RCA new church start in East Sioux Classis. They converted a Dept. of Transportation garage into a church facility. Recently 100 teenage girls from a local residential treatment facility accepted Christ after watching *Passion of the Christ*. On a personal note, Samuel Christian was born to Jason and his wife on May 27, 2005.

**Joshua Vis '03** earned his M.A. from the University of Chicago in 2005. Last fall he started a Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible at Duke University.

Matt and **Jess Shults '04** welcomed a son, William John, into their family on June 7, 2005.

**Daniel Teerman '04** is now the Director of Spiritual Life at Bradenton Christian School. He counsels students, works with small groups, works on spiritual development with elementary students, evaluates and develops school-wide Bible curriculum, and calls on sick or injured students and their families. He also still teaches. He writes that the Lord is using the ministry as a place where people are healed and disciples are growing. He would not be surprised if a church is soon planted, as God is moving in the Bradenton, FL area.

In February 2006 **Amy Avery '05** joined Worthington Presbyterian Church in Worthington, OH as an associate pastor. She serves mainly in the areas of pastoral care, Stephen Ministry, Ministry of Faith, and Growth and Renewal.

On May 7 **Bill Freeman '05** was ordained and installed at the First Congregational Church in Belding, MI.

## On to Glory...

**Hermina Van Eyl '71**  
b. Lethbridge, Alberta, CAN 1928  
d. Holland, MI 2/23/06  
Hope College; WTS '71 (M.R.E.);  
Directed Children's Ministry at:  
Central Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, MI  
First Reformed Church, Holland, MI  
Grace Episcopal Church, Holland, MI

**Howard Schipper '64**  
b. Holland, MI 9/19/30  
d. Grand Rapids, MI 3/14/06  
Calvin College '52; WTS '64 and '87 (D.Min.)  
Reformed Churches served:  
(1964-69) Immanuel Community, Lansing, MI  
(1969-78) Bethany, Grand Rapids, MI  
Other service to the RCA:  
(1978-81) Field Secretary, Church Planning & Development  
(1981-95) Exec. Secretary, Great Lakes Synod  
Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Resettlement  
Founding pastor, Vietnamese Reformed Christian Church

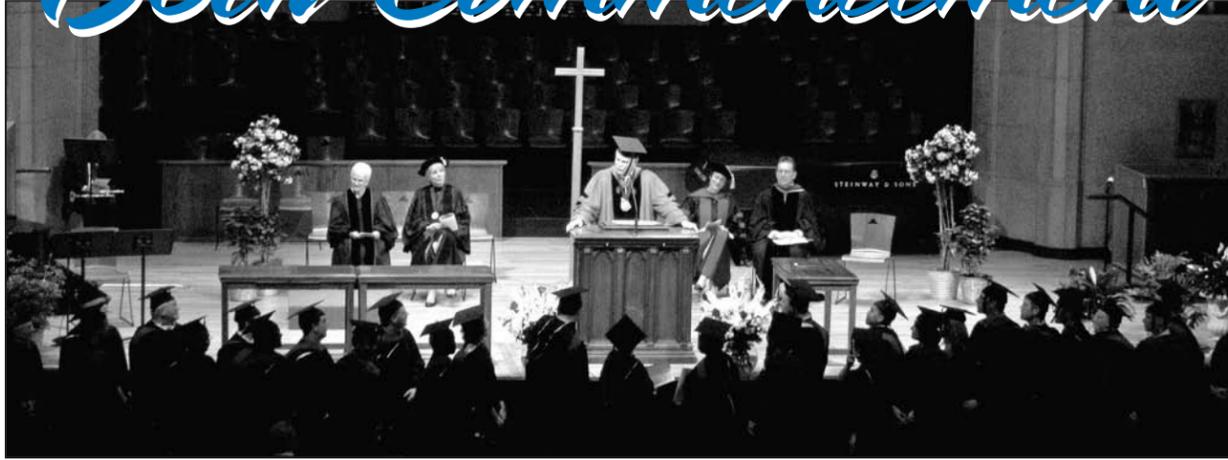
**Herman R. Rosenberg, '43**  
b. Byron, IL 3/7/18  
d. Grandville, MI 3/28/06  
Central College '40; WTS '43  
Reformed Churches served:  
(1943-47) Hope, George, IA  
(1947-52) Central Park, Holland, MI  
(1952-59) Park View, Santa Ana, CA  
(1959-64) Family, San Diego, CA  
(1964-70) Faith, South Holland, IL  
(1970-74) Richmond, Grand Rapids, MI  
Other service to the RCA:  
(1974-83) Evangelism Associate

**Henry Voogd '44**  
b. Muskegon, MI 6/14/18  
d. Holland, MI 2/21/06  
Hope College '41; WTS '44  
Reformed Churches served:  
(1944-46) Prattville, NY  
(1946-47) Clover Hill, Flemington, NJ  
Other service to the RCA:  
(1947-83) Professor of Religion, Hope College

**Allen James Boeve '60**  
b. Prairie View, KS 6/30/30  
d. Hastings, NE 3/12/06  
Calvin College '57; WTS '60  
Vancouver School of Theology  
(SystematicTh.M.)  
South Dakota State University (M.R.E.)  
Reformed Churches served:  
(1960-64) Hope, George, IA  
(1964-67) Central Park, Holland, MI  
(1967-75) Park View, Santa Ana, CA  
(1977-81) Family, San Diego, CA  
Other service:  
(1975) Freeman Jr. College & Academy, Freeman, SD  
1981 Dismissed to Presbyterian Church; served churches in South Dakota, Kansas, and Nebraska.

**Sonja Stewart '77**  
b. 10/31/37  
d. Grand Rapids, MI 4/21/06  
Muskingum College; Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (M.R.E.); WTS '77 (M.Div.);  
Notre Dame (Ph.D.)  
Service to the church:  
Founder of Children and Worship  
(1970-2002) Professor of Christian Education and Director of Master of Religious Education program, WTS  
Dr. Emeritus and Board Member, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

# 130th Commencement



On May 8, forty-two students walked across the stage of Dimnent Memorial Chapel to receive diplomas at Western's 130th commencement service. The seminary awarded thirty-one Master of Divinity, six Master of Theology, and five Doctor of Ministry degrees.

The Rev. Dr. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. addressed the graduates on the subject, "Glory!" Dr. Plantinga pointed out that the "glory" our contemporary North American culture offers is based on celebrity, self-promotion, and P.R. This type of glory is sought by some churches, and even pastors can be tempted by it. Jesus' glory is based on humble service to others, much of which goes unrecognized and



unrewarded by others, but not by God. He urged the graduates to follow Jesus' path to glory: being self-giving and loving. Dr. Plantinga is President and Charles Colson Professor of Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary.

Jeffrey Petersen, a master of divinity graduate from Shelby, MI, addressed the audience on behalf of his class. The Rev. Chang-hua Lin of Taipei, Taiwan spoke on behalf of the master of theology graduates. The Rev. Scott Lokers of Overisel Reformed Church spoke to the audience regarding the

experience of pursuing a doctor of ministry degree, which he received that night.

The liturgy for the event was written by graduates Pamela Bush, Thomas Merchant and Jennifer Porter.



Photos: Dr. Nancy Miller hoods Josh Van Leeuwen; President Voskuil presents Darren Tigelaar with his diploma; Dr. Leanne Van Dyk congratulates Tom Merchant.

## Pray with me please...

We are a community of, a family of, a people of **prayer**. Every Tuesday morning a small group led by Dennis Voskuil gathers in my office to pray for the seminary community and our supporters. Each weekday during the academic year the community gathers after chapel for fellowship and sharing of prayer concerns. And regularly throughout the year a group of prayer partners is lifting up the seminary in prayer.

You may recall my invitation last year to join us as an email prayer partner. The joys and concerns of the community are shared regularly with these supporters (thanks to Beth Smith), and they have been praying faithfully. What a tremendous blessing this has been for us. To those of you who have been part of this ministry, "Thank you."

As we look toward a new academic year, the challenges will be great, but through Christ, all things are possible. Will you consider becoming a prayer partner this year? Simply email [ken@westernsem.edu](mailto:ken@westernsem.edu) to let me know. Nothing sustains the students, staff and faculty of Western Seminary more than knowing prayers of support are being lifted up every day. We are a community of, a family of, a people of prayer. Amen!

--Ken Neevel

Vice President of Advancement and Communications

*The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.* James 5:16

## Faculty News

**Todd Billings**, assistant professor of theology, wrote an article for the May edition of *Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought* called, "The Promise of Catholic Calvinism." [www.perspectivesjournal.org](http://www.perspectivesjournal.org)

On May 12 **Matthew Floding**, director of formation for ministry, conducted an Asset-Based Community Development workshop for the Church of the Savior in Livonia, MI. This community exercise encourages stewardship of God's gifts to a congregation by connecting them creatively to their understanding of God's will for their congregation.

Dr. Floding will be a 2006 Summer Fellow of Vanderbilt University's Peabody College participating in the Summer Institute for Higher Education Management.

**George Hunsberger**, Dean of Journey, will teach a course on Lesslie Newbigin's *Theology for the Church in a Pluralist Society* at Tyndale Theological Seminary in Toronto, June 26-30. The course may be taken for graduate credit or audited.

On March 24 **Chris Kaiser**, professor of systematic theology, presented a paper on "Yahweh Texts in the New Testament and Early Judaism" at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society in Erie, PA (abstract and texts available from [chrisk@westernsem.edu](mailto:chrisk@westernsem.edu)).

**Wendell Karsen**, director of the Master of Theology program, will lead a China Travel Seminar for 34 participants in June focusing on China's Church, history, culture and current situation. The seminar is endorsed by the RCA and the China Christian Council.

This September Rev. Karsen will be resigning his position as Th.M. Director due to other commitments and goals in his life. Under his leadership, the program has flourished into a degree program that combines high quality administrative standards, warm hospitality, and excellence in learning. The seminary is grateful to Wendell for his fine service.

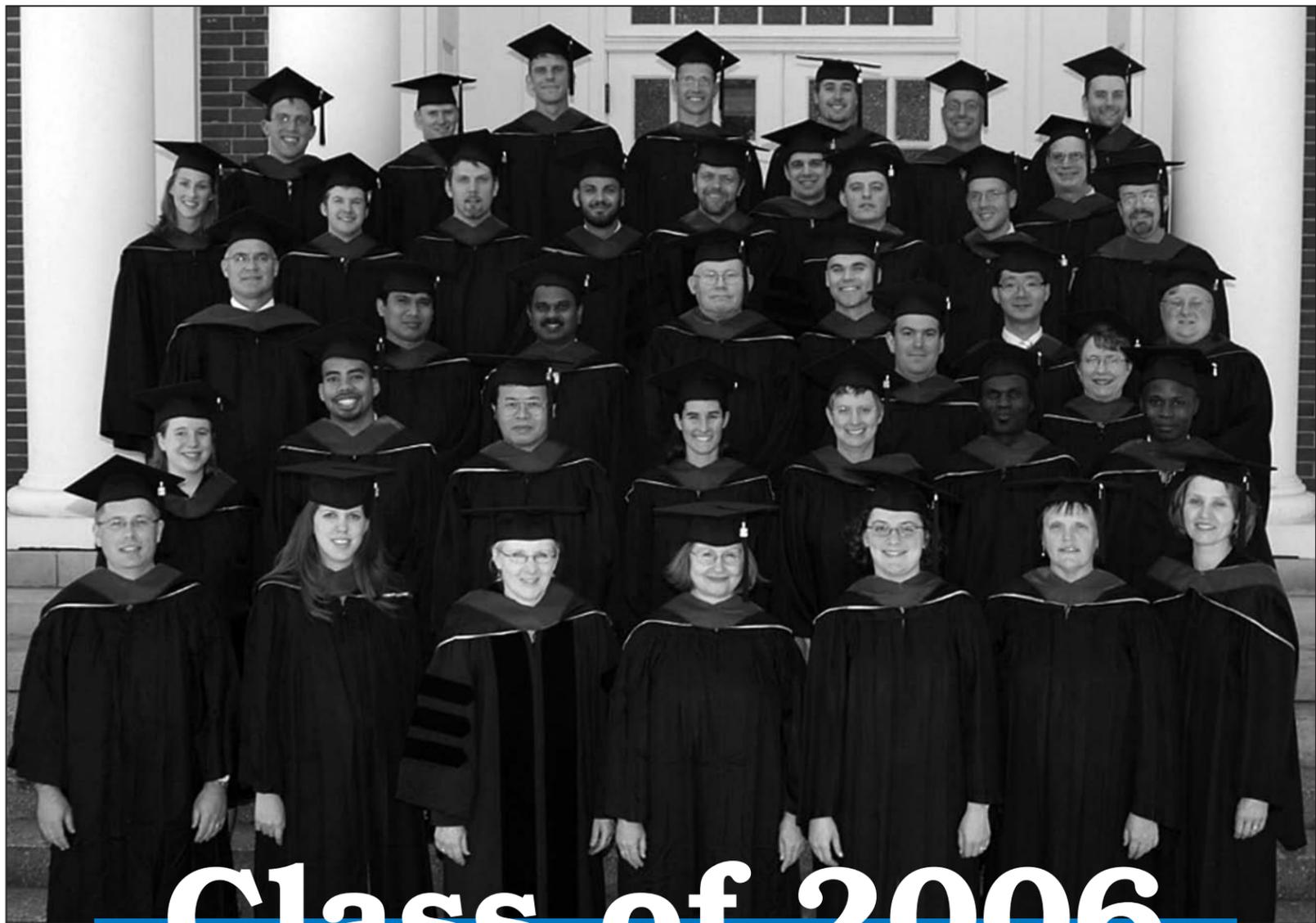
Missiology and evangelism professor **Vern Sterk** and cross-cultural studies adjunct professor **Carla Sterk** will return to Chiapas for the summer. In June Vern will host Christian basketball players from Hope College and other Midwest colleges to play in the Chiapas State Open Basketball tournament. This yearly event is aimed at Christian witness in Chiapas. In July Vern will teach "Cross-cultural Mission" to the students of the Chiapas Mission Agency. Vern will also finish work on the Concordance of the Tzotzil Bible. Carla will assist indigenous musicians to complete two hymnal projects in the Tzotzil language.

New Testament professor **Robert Van Voorst** along with Christian education professor **George Brown** recently participated in an Association of Theological Schools consultation on faculty identity and seminary governance in Pittsburgh, PA.

In May, Dr. Van Voorst's 85-page treatment of the Gospel of Luke was published in volume three of the *Pastor's Bible Study* (Abingdon Press). This book, co-authored with four other seminary professors and parish pastors, is designed to provide biblical and pedagogical resources to lead Bible study groups. Dr. Van Voorst dedicated his section of the book to the WTS students in his 2005 "New Testament Language and Interpretation" course, who studied Luke in depth with him as they learned interpretive methods.



The latest issues of *The Reformed Review* are available online: [www.westernsem.edu/Brix?pageID=13663](http://www.westernsem.edu/Brix?pageID=13663)



Denise McElrath Photography

# Class of 2006

**Row 1:**

<b>Drew K. Sweetman</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Hudsonville, MI
<b>Hope-Ann Germoso</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Medford Lakes, NJ
<b>Kathryn M. Neville</b> , B.A., J.D., M.Div.	Grand Haven, MI
<b>Margaret Mary Hoekstra</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Cascade, IA
<b>Stephanie Ruth Huisman</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Lincoln, NE
<b>Mary Jane Climer</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Highland, IN
<b>Joyce Carol Zaagman</b> , B.S., M.Div.	Grand Rapids, MI

**Row 2:**

<b>Rebekah Jo Cogan Zоргdrager</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Lansing, MI
<b>Steven Germoso</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Paramus, NJ
<b>Chang-hua Lin</b> , M.Div., Th.M.	Taipei, Taiwan
<b>Jennifer Porter</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Marysville, MI
<b>Pamela Joy Bush</b> , M.Div.	Des Moines, IA
<b>Emmanuel Tsibo Quarshie-Konuah</b> , B.A., M.A., Th.M.	Accra, Ghana
<b>Muwanguzi Ssendi Latimer</b> , B.Div., Th.M.	Kampala, Uganda

**Row 3:**

<b>Scott Andrew Rees</b> , B.A., M.Div., D.Min.	Fishers, IN
<b>Kinurung Maleh</b> , B.Div., M.Th., Th.M.	Banjarmasin, Indonesia
<b>James Elesha Taneti</b> , B.D., M.Th., Th.M., Th.M.	Samalkot, India
<b>Thomas Ervin Merchant</b> , B.S., M.Div.	North Muskegon, MI
<b>Adam R. Navis</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Rylan Scot Kahly</b> , B.S., M.Div.	Tustin, MI
<b>Heun Kyu Joo</b> , B.A., M.Div., Th.M.	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Norma Lynn Knoll Hook</b> , B.S., M.Div.	Zeeland, MI
<b>Brian Douglas Dykema</b> , B.S., M.Div.	Hudsonville, MI

**Row 4:**

<b>Jenna Kirsten Burtch</b> , B.S., M.Div.	Holland, MI
<b>Stephen Scott-Sidney Luchies</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Fremont, MI
<b>Jonathan T. Garbison</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Des Moines, IA
<b>Jeffrey Philip Petersen</b> , B.S., M.Div.	Shelby, MI
<b>Arthur B. DeBruyn</b> , B.A., J.D., M.Div.	East Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Cody Lee Statema</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Zeeland, MI
<b>Joseph Michael Huizenga</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Chicago, IL
<b>Timothy Stephen Breen</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Middleburg, IA
<b>Timothy James Alicki</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Grand Rapids, MI
<b>Glen Byron Maiden</b> , B.A., M.T.S., D.Min.	Muskegon, MI

**Row 5:**

<b>Nathan Paul Huisman</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Wellsburg, IA
<b>Kris Allen Van Engen</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Inwood, IA
<b>David John Van Opstall</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Holland, MI
<b>Darren Allen Tigelaar</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Hudsonville, MI
<b>Joshua John Van Leeuwen</b> , B.A., M.Div.	Hull, IA
<b>Blaine Curtis Newhouse</b> , B.A., M.Div., D.Min.	Holland, MI
<b>Joshua David Hansen</b> , B.S., M.Div.	Ada, MI

**Not pictured:**

<b>Jesse Abbott</b> , B.B.A., M.Div., D.Min.	Coldwater, MI
<b>Scott R. Lokers</b> , B.A., M.Div., D.Min.	Hamilton, MI

**Reflections from a third-generation WTS graduate**



*Dr. David Breen '75, Rev. Peter Breen '52, Rev. Stephen Breen '77, and Timothy Breen '06*

Now that the transcript has been finalized and the diploma is firmly affixed to the wall, I've had a bit of time to reflect on the many ways my three years at Western Seminary have shaped my ministerial self.

The unmediated educational experience of my last thirty months has been only the most recent appendix to a lifetime of instruction rooted in Western's rich heritage. Long before I set foot on campus, I was witnessing a family of WTS graduates model the vision that my time in Holland would bring to sharper focus.

Watching Dad, I learned about the great joys and profound responsibilities of the pastoral life. Through Uncle Dave's ministry, I came to appreciate the resonance of the gospel's creative core. And Grandpa's stalwart faith has long served as a signpost to the simple dignity of Reformed theology. To these ministers, and to the institution that formed them, I'll always be thankful.

—Tim Breen '06

## Special Gifts made to Western Theological Seminary

### In Memory of Marion Koets

Myra V.B. Barkel  
Ethel VandeBunte  
Bob & Ruth VandeBunte  
Harlan & Becky VandeBunte  
Roger & Dawn VandeBunte

### In Honor of Emily Mouw

Mary Mouw

### In Memory of Robert VanVoorst, Sr.

Rev. & Mrs. Robert G. Vrooman

### In Memory of Henry Mouw

Emily Mouw  
Mary Mouw

### In Memory of Sonja Stewart

Dr. & Mrs. George Brown, Jr.  
Mr. Clarence & Rev. Mary Merrill  
Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of  
Theology & Worship

### In Memory of Bruce Mogk

Mr. & Mrs. Earl Mogk

### In Memory of Rev. Harold Oppermann

Zion Evangelical & Reformed Church

Gifts made February 9 - May 18, 2006

## New Administrative Structure



**Dr. Leanne Van Dyk**  
Dean and Vice President  
of Academic Affairs



**Norman Donkersloot**  
Vice President of Finance



**Kenneth Neevel**  
Vice President of Advance-  
ment and Communications

During the last ten years, Western has transitioned from a small to a mid-sized seminary, with consistent growth in students, programs, financial needs and donor support. To respond to this growth, the Board of Trustees evaluated the structure of Western's administrative staff and approved several changes.

The administrative restructure creates three vice presidential positions: the Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs (Leanne Van Dyk), the Vice President of Finance (Norm Donkersloot), and the Vice President of Advancement and Communications (Ken Neevel).

The president and the three vice presidents will meet regularly and will have the authority to manage, evaluate and act upon matters of internal administration related to their areas. They will continue to work closely with their direct reports and represent the needs of their specific areas to each other and to the president. These changes will become effective July 1, 2006.

Let classmates and colleagues know about the milestones in your life. Send your news items to "Alumline", Western Theological Seminary, 101 E. 13th St., Holland, MI 49423; fax 616-392-7717; or [carlaw@westernsem.edu](mailto:carlaw@westernsem.edu).

### June 2006, Vol. 9, No.3

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**Editorial Council:** Dr. Dennis Voskuil, Dr. George Brown, Dr. Robert Van Voorst, Dr. Matthew Floding, Ken Neevel

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## Sonja M. Stewart

October 31, 1937 –  
April 21, 2006

Many words describe Sonja Stewart. She was a daughter, sister, mother, and grandmother. To Westminster Presbyter-

ian Church in Grand Rapids, MI, she was a deacon and later an elder. Sonja was a student—earning degrees at Muskingum College, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and the University of Notre Dame—and a teacher, serving on Western's faculty from 1970 until ill health led to early retirement in 2002. "Author" would describe her. *Young Children and Worship* (1989), co-authored with Jerome Berryman, became a best-seller. It was followed in 2000 by *Following Jesus*.

Sonja engaged children in a fresh and creative way. Unlike the classroom model of teaching and learning, she fashioned her distinctive approach around the rhythm of Christian worship. In the years following Sonja's development of *Children and Worship*, many an M.Div. student at Western Seminary could be seen carrying a familiar gold box into Sonja's classroom to present a story.

In 2005 Sonja took part in a 20th anniversary celebration of the *Children and Worship* training program, a cooperative ministry of the RCA, the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. *Children and Worship* has impacted hundreds of congregations in North America, El Salvador, Hungary, India, Japan, Nicaragua, Russia, South Africa, Spain, and Zimbabwe.

Sonja also gave visionary leadership to a new Master of Religious Education program at WTS, launched in 1985. The new design included innovative features such as intercultural immersion and engaging students in learning projects directly related to their ministries.

Dr. Sonja Stewart played a pioneering role in theological education in the RCA. When she began teaching at Western in 1970, women in leadership roles was still quite new for the RCA. Those years were filled with the challenge of confronting stereotypes and helping change expectations and attitudes.

In the last years of her ministry, Sonja maintained a positive spirit during her battle with cancer. Grounded in a deep spirituality, hers was a steady, confident witness to God's grace and power, a legacy admired and remembered by those privileged to serve with her in this school of faith.

—**Dr. George Brown, Jr.**  
Associate Dean and  
G.W. and Eddie Haworth Professor of  
Christian Education

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