



## ARTICLES

### Courage to Assess?

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

I hate evaluations; taking them and giving them!

Ignorance really is bliss. At least to a degree, it's more comfortable to believe "all is well" than to face the reality of our weaknesses.

I grew up having to take the Iowa Basic Skills Tests every year. I dreaded those tests because they took so long, and I knew the results would not be good. I was a slow reader, and the added pressure of limited time caused inner panic, which led me to try to read faster. But that meant comprehension plummeted.

The teachers hopefully found some value in the results and weren't too discouraged by my slow progress. I don't recall much of the results and didn't make any concerted effort to improve in weak areas. I assume the teachers took full responsibility for working on the areas where I was weak. In time some things started to click a bit better. I studied harder and eventually pulled off a 21 for my ACT. (I understand, if you simply mark "A" for all the answers you'll get a 17.) That score was good enough to get me into college.

There, the tests only got harder. I eked through an English literature class, sailed through a computer science class, and was totally humbled by an ear training music class.

Seminary brought more tests and jobs brought more evaluations. Assessments are part of life. Even in retirement, you count the fish you catch, track your golf score, check your blood pressure, and track your allocation of investments.

**DISCUSS:** How do you respond to evaluations?

### **So, what about your spiritual life?**

Did you do the Spiritual Growth Assessment which I gave out on Sunday? Do you have a plan to grow in any particular areas which the assessment addressed?

The questions address the following six areas.

1. Abide in Christ
2. Live by God's Word
3. Pray in Faith
4. Build godly Relationships
5. Witness to the World
6. Minister to Others

These directly line up with the six areas we discuss in our membership class... I will **trust** Jesus as the only Savior and Lord, **connect** deeply with Jesus' followers, **grow** to be like Jesus, **serve** sacrificially as Jesus did, **reach** out to the world with the love and truth of Jesus, and **worship** Jesus as the ruler of all.

Honestly, how are you doing in each area? You probably know where you are falling short, it's just hard to acknowledge and even harder to do something about.

Now it's possible that you are currently implementing all the right habits to maximize your spiritual growth. If so, please let me know your secret.

For the rest of us, this is an opportunity to take one step in the right direction. **There are several great ideas listed in the Spiritual Growth Assessment, but let me make a couple suggestions...**

1. Pray to trust Jesus before you get out of bed every morning.
2. Make church attendance, and lingering afterwards, a priority.
3. Read 1st Corinthians this week.
4. Take our spiritual gift assessment  
at [www.altoreformedchurch.org/discover-your-strengths.html](http://www.altoreformedchurch.org/discover-your-strengths.html).
5. Pray for 5 neighbors every day by using [www.blesseveryhome.com](http://www.blesseveryhome.com).
6. Listen to Christian radio and choose to worship throughout your day.

**Prayer:** Lord, thank you for your grace revealed on the cross. Help us respond to your grace, draw closer to you, and to take our spiritual health more seriously. Move our hearts to action that we may be more like you. Amen.

## Who Are You?

By Doug Shotsky

**1 Corinthians 3:5-9** - **5** What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. **6** I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. **7** So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. **8** The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. **9** For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.

When we read scriptures like the one above we can make the mistake of taking verse seven out of context and end up believing that we don’t play a part in what God is doing. But, if you read the surrounding verses, you see that the bigger point is not that we’re nothing as Christians, but that we should not elevate leaders in the church to such a point where it causes division by creating a spiritual pride about who we’re following.

Paul asks the questions: “What...is Apollos? And what is Paul?” And then he answers it straight away: “Only servants...as the Lord has assigned to each his task.” He later says that those who plant and water each have a purpose and will be rewarded according to the work they’ve done.

God, absolutely, is the only one who can make something grow, but that doesn’t mean that He hasn’t created each of us to fulfill a role in His

purposes. The beauty of this is we're part of the greater Body of Christ; which means that Paul didn't have to worry about being Apollos, Apollos didn't have to worry about being Paul, and we don't have to worry about who and what we're not.

God has created each of us uniquely and it is both refreshing and a relief when we recognize that we have **A** purpose, not **EVERY** purpose. Today as you reflect on God's goodness and who He's created you to be, thank Him for His perfect plan for you. And if you're struggling to understand what that is, don't overthink it, just do the next thing you know to do.

## Pinewood Derby Family Night

By Adrea Daane

MONDAY, APRIL 11TH 5:30-7:30  
ALTO COMMUNITY CENTER

**1ST ANNUAL  
ALTO REFORMED CHURCH  
PINWOOD DERBY  
FAMILY NIGHT**

Join us for a fun free family night! We'll start the night off with a meal and the racing will begin at 6:00. Not racing a car? We'll have other family friendly activities too!

SIGN UP AND GRAB A CAR KIT & INSTRUCTIONS AT OUR CHILDREN & FAMILIES RESOURCE CENTER. CLASSES RANGE FROM 1ST GRADE - ADULT



SIGN UP DEADLINE - MARCH 20TH

## International Missions

By Jessa Ter Beest

As we get closer to our High School Jamaica Mission Trip in June, I wanted to share excerpts from an article that, 5 years ago when we first decided to go to Jamaica, really helped open my eyes to the “why” of doing all types of missions both at home and abroad. While reading this, keep in mind the ways our students do the following missions:

E-0: Coming to youth group, inviting friends to youth group and retreats

E-1: See You at the Pole, Prayer at lunch, visiting nursing homes, helping at the Food Pantry, mission trip to Wisconsin Rapids, helping at VBS

E-2: Mission trips to Memphis, TN or Kentucky

E-3: Mission trip to Jamaica where we bridge divides both in language (deaf culture) and Jamaican culture.

### **Mission Discovery**

#### **Kevin Mahaffy Jr, Shelter Rock Church, Long Island, NY**

“A few months ago one of my students asked: Why do we bother going to countries that speak other languages? Wouldn't it be more valuable to just go to English-speaking countries? Not long after my student asked me that question, a woman sitting at the table with me at a church event asked: With all of the poverty and need in America, why don't we just do missions work in the United States?

These are fair and valid questions. Perhaps you have asked, or been asked them. There are indeed issues within our own country and our own communities that present opportunities for service. Indeed, we must address these issues. But it is a false construct to pit ministry at home against ministry abroad. I heard a saying many years ago that I always emphasize: *The light that shines the farthest, shines the brightest at home*. It would be a mistake if all we did was serve abroad while paying no attention to the needs at home. However, it would likewise be a mistake if all we did was serve on our home turf without serving the greater needs of others around the world. The bottom line is this: it is not either-or, it is both-and. We seek to engage our students in

ministry opportunities in our own back yard throughout the year as well as in other countries, typically in the summer time.

In response to the question about why we go into cultures different than our own, I point to the various levels of missions and/or evangelism. Donald McGavran has identified several levels needed to reach different groups of people.

E-0: Evangelism is needed to win church-goers to Christ. It produces internal growth.

E-1: Evangelism is needed to win those of our own culture to Christ. It, too, produces internal growth.

E-2: Evangelism is needed to reach those who are slightly different from us. It produces cross-cultural evangelism.

E-3: Evangelism is needed to reach those vastly different from us. It produces bridging growth.

This idea is rooted in Jesus' words to His followers in Acts 1:8, which illustrate these levels of evangelism:

Jerusalem and Judea (Acts 3): E-0 and E-1

Samaria (Acts 8): E-2

Ends of the earth (Acts 13): E-3

Through summer missions trips we are seeking to help students minister at E-2 and E-3 levels. It doesn't negate the other levels (which we also seek to minister at), but we want to develop Christians with a global Christian worldview, not just ones that are sheltered within their own cultures. In this we are taking our cues from Jesus Himself. Jesus was the ultimate cross-cultural missionary. Philippians 2:5-11 says, "... *Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"

Imagine if Jesus had just stayed where everything was familiar to Him. Imagine if Jesus only wanted to go where people “spoke His own language” (if you will). He would have stayed in heaven with God and never ventured to the earth where people desperately needed to know God and His purposes, and where the very earth itself needed to experience healing and renewal from the destructive effects of mankind’s sin. Jesus said, “Go into ALL THE WORLD and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15). The fact that we live in a time in history in which we have the technology to literally be able to go into all of the world is incredible. And so, following the example of Jesus, we want to have a heart for God’s whole world – all of His children and creation – and to go and serve in humility and love.”

## Library News

By Mary VanderKooi

Why should a person read? 100 reasons are probably available, but here are a few: it exercises your brain; it improves your ability to focus/concentrate; it increases your vocabulary; it’s free; it provides you with new experiences; it can give inspiration and perspective (The Bible gives all that and wisdom for living life).

So are you drawn to thrillers, lawyer intrigue, Regency novels, romance, historical novels, WWII stories, “fluff” stories that simply entertain, Christmas stories? Would you appreciate having a variety of children’s books for your children to read?

All these are available in our church library. Check it out.

## MESSAGES

Thank you for your kindness, support and comforting words. We appreciate the cards, flowers and kind expressions of sympathy during this difficult time. Also, thank you to Pastor Kevin and Pastor Doug for being there for our family.

-The family of Marcella "Sally" Vande Berg.

Many "Thanks" to everyone for prayers, cards, food, calls and visits following my surgery. I am truly blessed.

-Ann Boerson

## EVENTS

**Mark your calendar...**

**Alto Reformed Church**  
*March 2022*

**March 02** *Ash Wednesday Service*  
Join us for the Ash Wednesday service at 7pm.

**March 13** *Crops & Industry Prayer Service*  
Join us at 7pm for a time of prayer and worship.

**March 18** *Middle School Stay-in Retreat*  
Middle Schoolers are invited for a stay-in retreat March 18-19.

**March 31** *VBS Decorating Day*  
Join us from 9-11am in the church basement to prepare decorations for this summer's VBS. Adults and kids welcome!

For detailed information:  
Call 920.346.5505 or email [office@altoreformedchurch.org](mailto:office@altoreformedchurch.org)

## NEWS

### Alliance of Reformed Churches

Keep up with our new denomination by checking out their website <https://arc21.org/> and following their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/AllianceofReformedChurches>