



# The 4th Focus

## *“Loved into the Kingdom”*

These last two weeks has been one of the most physically and emotionally draining periods in my 18 years of ministry. I can't seem to catch up with rest and I have had some fleeting thoughts of calling it quits with pastoral ministry. At the center of this drain have been Ke Rossiter's suffocating struggle and death and all that it means for Beth and family. I detest and have been angered by the chaos and the pain. I have stared into the night sky and wept.

I confess that after suffering with and alongside Ke, a neighbor for 18 years and friend and “spiritual son” for 12 years, I think about getting out of this pastor business because I don't want to experience something like this again. But let me also share with you why I get back into the war and fight some more. In the midst of the confusion and wounds, I see clear evidences of God's grace and love and know that he, and thus we, will win.

One of the most encouraging evidences during this time has come from a review of Ke's life and how God used the Fourth Church family to crack a very tough nut. As I noted in Ke's funeral, from the time that Ke was a toddler, he was beaten down with multiple rejections by key people and was spoon-fed lies that had him believing that he was not worthy to be loved and valued. God used Beth and our church family to extend hospitality and build a bridge of relationships through which gospel truth could be communicated about how God deeply loved and accepted him through Jesus. Beth's brother Paul stood up during the funeral to thank our church family for loving Ke into the kingdom.

I went back to my records to discover that one of the first sermons that Ke heard was the story of a Father who was scanning the horizon waiting for his “no-good” prodigal son to come home. And when that son came home, the Father humiliated and shamed himself by running after the son, forgiving him, granting him the highest honor and throwing a party. I am back into the war of ministry because Ke's heart, life and tender love is glaring evidence that God's grace and truth wins over the most skeptical and hardest of hearts.

My emotional draining has not been due only to grieving and sadness. There have also been strong emotions of joy in the midst of this mess. As Ruth and I joined Beth and family in their home shortly after Ke's death there, Beth pointed to all of the cards and notes of love and encouragement that papered their living room wall. And then she lifted up the flap on a home-made card delivered earlier in the day by my struggling, alcoholic friend, John, who has been well-loved by Ke and Beth in recent years. I had been angry and fed up with John on this particular day because of his intense self-centered focus on getting another drink and then, in this dark and painful place, there was this penciled and yet profound message of love and encouragement. When it appeared that God might be pushed out or absent, I was overwhelmed with the clear evidence of his grace and Spirit as it provided us all with hope and comfort.

I am also back into the war of ministry because Christ was angry at and weeping over death and its chaos and did something about it. He suffered through a suffocating struggle and death so that Ke's death could be a door into the presence of the Father who loves and delights in him. Jesus became like us in our suffering so that we can become more like him in our suffering. Christ's victory over death is ours. He wins and we win!

I am also back into the way of ministry because there is so much more that we must do to love others, like Ke, into the kingdom. Just as the Father scans the horizon and Jesus serves as the true elder brother who searches and sacrifices for errant little brothers like us, there is still no substitute for our searching, sacrificing and making room for those who are looking for love and joy in all the wrong places. Where are you making room in your heart and life for loving others into the kingdom?

- Pastor Tim



Lunch ladies and teachers may have taken a break for a few months, but the GEMS' ministry did not! Each summer, GEMS' leaders plan a few fun events to keep the girls busy, entertained, and connected with Fourth Church and each other.

In keeping with the theme of summer fun, the girls enjoyed ice cream and a nature walk in Rockford, water games and ice cream sundaes at church, and fun in the pool at the Kroc Center. Here are a few highlights:

- Choosing the perfect sweet treat at our favorite Rockford candy store
- Spotting many turtles in the Rogue River, including some that were downright prehistoric!
- Slipping (literally) on the ice cold Slip-n-Slide
- Play tattoos on all extremities!
- Tiny girls braving the very LARGE waterslide at the Kroc Center
- Pizza!!!
- Soaking in the hot tub (that *may* just have been the Counselors)

It was a great pleasure to include some little sisters who will be entering first grade, and we are looking forward to a great fall start-up. Our theme this year is "Think right: win the fight" based on Philippians 4:8 - "*Finally, brothers (sisters), whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.*"

We'll be helping the girls learn how to focus on God while exploring what it means to be His child. Please consider helping by being a Special Friend, providing a snack, helping with crafts, attending meetings, and, most of all, by covering the leaders and girls in prayer. It all begins at 6:30 on October 1.

- Amy Adams



## Sept

- 1 - Mary Proos
- 2 - Dale Springfield
- 4 - Abbie Schalk
- 7 - Timothy Brinks
- 8 - Ruby Parler
- 9 - John Gebhart
- 9 - Travis Bolt
- 10 - Dan Springfield
- 11 - Katie Faasse
- 11 - Norm Schalk
- 12 - Jajuan Woods
- 14 - Tawnie Springfield
- 15 - Elisabeth McDowell
- 17 - Eleanor DeFouw
- 19 - Jessica Berrios
- 22 - Barb Funckes
- 23 - Marty Berthiaume
- 23 - Verta Burggraaf
- 23 - Deb Wild
- 26 - Steve Burggraaf
- 26 - Eric Schalk
- 27 - Elise Leasure
- 30 - Lisa Fles



## Oct

- 1 - Dave Randall
- 1 - Becky Tubergen
- 2 - Marissa Fles
- 3 - Kintaro Rossiter
- 4 - Julie Gleason
- 5 - Leah Walton
- 6 - Joshua Schalk
- 11 - Sandy Gleason
- 11 - Analie Woods
- 15 - Sue Hawkins
- 15 - Jennifer Wammack
- 15 - John Bills
- 17 - Brian Tubergen
- 18 - Richanda Bolt
- 18 - Adam Villalobos
- 19 - Diane Christians
- 20 - Rick Fles
- 21 - Grace Parmeter
- 21 - Addison McDowell
- 22 - Bob Scherpenisse
- 25 - Bob Burggraaf
- 26 - Nancy Aukeman
- 28 - Suzanne Bolt
- 30 - Phyllis Berrevoets
- 30 - Dianne Waterloo

## A Very Quiet Ministry

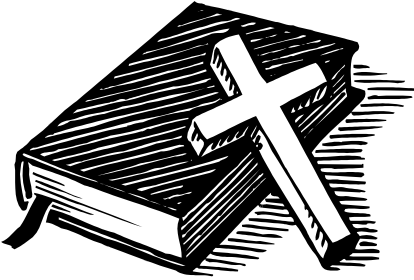
Over a long period of time, several women from Fourth have faithfully shown up at the Christian Rest Home to volunteer. The first Thursday of each month is our assigned date, and for two to three hours the clean laundry is folded and stacked for pickup by the staff for return to the residents' rooms. It is helpful for keeping costs down at the Christian Rest Home, and they reciprocate by providing coffee and cookies each time we come and giving us a thank-you lunch once a year.

Women involved currently include Marge Berrevoets, Marilyn Frasier, Eleanor DeFouw, Verta Burggraaf and daughter Barb Piccard, Betsy Coutchie, Vera Baar, Marty Berthiaume and her former co-worker Ruth, Betty Webster. Give thanks to God for the many other women who have worked at this quiet ministry in years past, and for those who will continue to take a turn in the future.

## Reformed Church Heritage - *New Amsterdam Becomes New York, Part 1*

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Because of its strategic position between New England and Virginia, New Netherland had long been desired by England. On July 28, 1664, four warships appeared off New Amsterdam. Bristling with cannon and loaded with 500 soldiers, they were soon joined by troops from Long Island. Meeting with city officials that included Rev. Johannes Megapolensis and his English-speaking son Samuel, the English commander Richard Nicholls demanded the surrender of the entire colony.



Resistance was hopeless. Only about 400 men were capable of bearing arms, and the fort had deteriorated from a lack of upkeep. Most significant was the fact that the people had no will to resist. Although Governor Stuyvesant tried to rally support to fight, he was presented with a petition signed by 93 citizens calling for surrender to prevent pillage and bloodshed. Although he had not signed the petition, Rev.

Megapolensis was largely responsible for circulating it. Thus, the colony was turned over to the English without firing a shot. Later, the West India Company criticized Stuyvesant for *lending an ear to preachers and other chicken-hearted persons*. New Amsterdam was renamed New York and Fort Orange became Albany.

The relationship between the new English government and the local population was defined by the 1665 Duke's Laws. These initially applied to predominantly English areas but were extended to the entire colony after the region was briefly retaken by the Dutch, then returned to the English. For the Dutch Reformed and other groups, complete freedom of religion was guaranteed. Each parish was to be provided with a church large enough for 200 persons. Local church upkeep would be the responsibility of an eight man committee. The Reformed Church benefitted, since its members constituted the vast majority in many communities. Religious freedom continued after the English retook the colony. The Duke of York ordered Governor William Andros to *permit all persons of what Religion soever quietly to inhabit within the precincts of your jurisdiction without giving them any disturbance or disquiet whatsoever or by reason of their differing Opinions in matters of religion, Provided they give noe disturbance to ye publick peace, nor doe molest or disquiet others in ye free Exercise of their Religion*.

Despite good mutual relations, there was also confrontation. Andros insisted that the Dutch take an oath of allegiance, with no deferment against fighting their countrymen in another war. One incident involved the attempt to place an Anglican in a Reformed pulpit. Nicholas Van Rensselaer had been licensed to preach in the Reformed Church, but never ordained. Now an Anglican, he was recommended by the Duke of York for a pastoral position in the Reformed Church to assist Rev. Gideon Schaats. His secret installation at Albany was met with a storm of protest. Van Rensselaer complied fully with conditions set by Classis Amsterdam, which permitted him to preach, but not administer the sacraments, but he was soon removed for scandalous conduct. Another old problem that persisted was the meager financial support of ministers. In time, the English governors found it loathsome to force non-Dutch to pay the salaries of Reformed pastors, and this part of the Duke's Laws was repealed.

In 1685, the Roman Catholic Duke of York became King James II. He continued to permit religious liberty, but only to allow for greater Catholic settlement. A fear of Protestant persecution on both sides of the Atlantic brought a change. In June 1688, a secret offer was made for Dutch stadtholder William III and his wife Mary, the Protestant eldest daughter of King James II, to rule England. Upon William's arrival, James was driven from power and fled to France. Although William had been a member of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, a conflict was to arise in America where the Reformed Church became deeply involved.

- Eric O'Broek  
Next-New Amsterdam becomes New York, Part II

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## *The View From the Alley*

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One beautiful summer day I was privileged to see Grand Rapids from a new point of view. It was time to cash in the "Police Car Ride" from the NCN auction, and I spent an eight-hour shift in the front seat of Officer Chad's car, roaming around the northeast Grand Rapids quarter. It was fascinating to see all the technology at work in the car, and even more fascinating to see a veteran observer at work keeping the peace. I missed so many things he saw, such as a young man's furtive phone use as we drove past; a crazy driving move on Leffingwell. He's really quick at identifying you from your license plate. I was startled to hear him addressing a driver: "No, no, Lulu, don't do it!" She was attempting a left turn where we had traffic blocked, and Chad had casually checked her license while we were in a conversation about something else. It takes him a split second to open his cruiser door and emerge as a presence when the occasion calls for it, and I saw this several times throughout the day.

From landmarks like the parsonage and the mansion overlooking Plainfield, to back alleys through the neighborhoods, we looked at life from both sides. He stopped traffic so a tree crew could do its' cleanup; investigated an indecent exposure; did back up for a parole violation stop; wrote up an accident ticket; pulled over two moving violations; answered a call to a domestic disturbance; and answered questions about parking and U-turns. Did you know that a U-turn is sometimes allowed? Now I know. Oh yes, all that and lunch at Fat Boy's, too! You could be next -- mark this on your bidding list for **NCN's Fall Auction, November 3rd.**

- Betsy Coutchie

## *Kids Hope USA*

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We are beginning our 14<sup>th</sup> year of partnership with Kent Hills Elementary School! Wow – time has flown by! When I began as the director of this ministry, my son was only 3 years old and is now a junior in high school! I began mentoring a 7 year old boy who is now turning 21 in November. This is hard for me to believe at times. As I think back over the years, I wonder what has changed other than the fact that we've all grown older. Have I changed? Have we made a difference in the lives of others? Have we made a difference at Kent Hills School? Are we being God's hands and feet? With God's help and blessing, I believe the answer is a resounding "YES" to all of these and many other questions that we could ask! God has used us and this ministry that we call Kids Hope USA to change lives, including my own! We have seen through the seeds that we've planted, people coming to faith! This ministry has grown and stretched me in ways I would have never imagined. Could God use this ministry to change you? YES HE COULD! Will you let him? There are many children at Kent Hills just waiting for someone to come and be the hands and feet of Jesus for them. You don't need an educational background ... you just need to be able to love a child, and to allow God to use you to touch the life of another. I would love to sit down and talk to you about how you may become a mentor. We have a new mentor training coming up on October 4 to equip you ... so don't delay, see Mary Kay today!