



The 4th Focus

“Beat It Into Their Heads”

Many of you are already certain that I am a bit strange and so here I go with another reason for you to think so. Every day, I struggle with wanting to beat you and myself over the head. Let me explain. In Galatians 2:14, Paul examined Peter’s symptoms of racial pride and spinelessness and diagnosed his problem as not being in step with the truth of the gospel. So what does that mean?

Our vision statement states that we are seeking to be a joyful, welcoming community that is transformed by the gospel... This gospel transformation is possible only to the extent that the gospel is wonderfully worked in and applied to every area of our thinking, relating, working and behaving. The power of the gospel is staggering! Angels long to look into this gospel power all the time (1 Peter 1:12). The gospel IS the power of God for the life-long journey of our salvation (Romans 1:16). The gospel is the blessing of God with immeasurable benefits for anyone who comes near (1 Cor. 9:23). It is the light of the glory of God himself (2 Cor. 4:4-6).

The gospel has the life of God. We are given birth through the gospel and then it is the means by which we make progress in spiritual growth and faith. Paul wrote that the truth of the gospel is bearing fruit and growing since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth (Col. 1:6). We see here that: 1.) the gospel is a living thing (Rom. 1:16) 2.) the gospel is planted in us and bears fruit to the degree that we deeply soak in its greatness and implications understanding God’s grace in all its truth, and 3.) the gospel continues to grow in us and renew us throughout our lives.

We also see here that the gospel has a content with profound doctrine. It is the truth about God’s grace AND it is a living power that persistently expands its influence in our lives, just as a tree would grow and dominate more and more of an area with its roots and fruit. And so the gospel is about much more than getting our ticket punched for the banquet feast of heaven. The gospel is God’s ordained means for our growth (Gal. 3:1-3) and renewal. Our own hard work and efforts, apart from gospel application, will only work to strangle us. When Paul left the Ephesians, he committed them to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up (Acts 20:32).

And so I struggle with wanting to beat heads over being out of step with the gospel. We are not thinking through and using the gospel in and on all parts of our life. Richard Lovelace says that most people’s problems are just a failure to be oriented to the gospel a failure to grasp and believe it through and through. Luther explains it as only he can: "The truth of the Gospel is the principle article of all Christian doctrine...Most necessary is it that we know this article well, teach it to others, and **beat it into their heads continually**" (on Gal. 2:14f).

And so, what I see every day is how all of us, to some degree, live around the truth of the gospel but do not "get" it. So the key to continual and deeper spiritual renewal and revival is the continual re-discovery of the gospel. A step up in our renewal and joy is always related to the discovery of a new implication or application of the gospel--seeing more of its truth. Beau’s fresh discovery and application of the gospel a few months ago is a great example of this. But I also see this in my counseling, conversations and preaching each week. Last Sunday, we discovered how the gospel impacts our ability to experience deep and genuine rest by finding genuine rest and satisfaction in our work just as God rests and is satisfied in the work of his Son. Our value and identity is found in our union with Christ. God turned away from Jesus and made him infinitely restless like the wicked so that we can be perfectly accepted and receive deep, eternal rest. As one of you wrote in response, we can rest from an endless spiral of reaching for more in our work.

It’s a great challenge and delight to be a part of beating it into your heads as I beat it into my own head.

- Pastor Tim



Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior

What a wonderful year we have had meeting the Savior! We started the year with a hayride. After seeing all the live animals and seeing the millions of stars in the sky, we had a huge fire. How great for the theme, "Feed the Fire". At the beginning of the year some of the youngest girls were not able to read,

however, by the end of the year they were even able to find verses in the Bible. Also, the CITS grew and matured in their helpfulness over this year. I offer many thanks to our GEMS counselors who give of themselves each meeting.

We are so grateful to the many Special Friends who so caringly remembered their GEM girl and sent cards and gifts.

Our service project turned into a real winner when the young serviceman came back to tell us how much the cards meant to him and his platoon.

We ended the year on a High note-----The Store. All of the GEMS girls bought treasures to take home as a reminder of how much fun they had this year at GEMS.

Thank you for all the support we receive from 4th Church members. Please remember these lovely GEMS girls in prayer to keep them safe over the summer months.

- Sharon VanTimmeren
Head Counselor

May

- 2 - Amy Baragar
- 7 - Tyler Berthiaume
- 7 - Kara Berrevoets
- 7 - Jaidyn Ann Bolt
- 9 - Tim Randall
- 14 - Sam Wammack
- 19 - Jean Stadt
- 21 - G. Wammack
- 22 - Jeff Boehm
- 23 - Jeremiah Parks
- 24 - Larry Kelly
- 24 - Brad Berrios
- 24 - Bill Pyper
- 24 - Beka McDowell
- 26 - Norma Boehm
- 27 - Greg Hawkins
- 28 - Mike Berrevoets
- 29 - Aaron Wetzel
- 30 - Ralph Simone
- 31 - Amy Parmeter
- 31 - Ethan Parmeter

June

- 2 - Julie Schalk
- 3 - Caren Bills
- 5 - Lorraine Smith
- 8 - Dawn Faasse
- 9 - Brandon Gleason
- 12 - Owen Parmeter
- 13 - Laura O'Brock
- 14 - Eric O'Brock
- 14 - Sam Tubergen
- 16 - Trish Studebaker
- 21 - Bjorn Bylsma
- 21 - Alyssa Bylsma
- 23 - Betsy Coutchie
- 24 - Marty Pyper
- 24 - Leslie Hawkins
- 28 - Becky Berrevoets
- 28 - Linda Randall
- 28 - Roy Giron
- 29 - Katherine Ring

Happy Birthday!

Reflections by Nancy Aukeman

It was a balmy spring evening when my sisters and I stood around my mother's rocking chair as she held our baby brother.

It was a cold January day when my sisters and I stood around the casket that held our baby brother 28 years later. The call came in the middle of the night. Through a fog of sleep I heard the urgency in my brother-in-law's voice as he told me to get up and answer the door.

Then came the news. It was an overdose, cocaine, the police found Mark dead in his apartment. There was screaming and then the long drive to my parents' home. I have never known more sorrow than in those dark hours and have never felt more vulnerable. Well meaning people questioned me again and again. Was he saved? Do you think he is in heaven? Did he know the Lord? Was he saved?

I was spent and the questions kept coming as I grappled with this horror I now knew. In the weeks following his death the questions came in the night as I tried to sleep.

What could I have done? What went wrong? Why didn't I see this coming?

Is he saved? Is he saved? Is he saved? Is he saved?

On one particular night I woke up sweating. I had a dream that Mark was sitting in a chair in my room speaking to me. He was telling me that if he could have done it over again ..and then he stopped. What! What would you have done? Tell me!! I cried out to God. I can't take this! I can't figure it out God! I can't do this! I am just about insane trying to figure it out! Take this Lord because I can't carry it. I can't understand this and it is too much for me.

Then stillness and peace came over my room. The sweet peace of Jesus. The quiet of rest in Jesus. Jesus, the man of sorrows, sat beside me in the darkest hours.

I lay my brother at his feet. Take him Lord. You gave him life now take him to yourself.

I surrender him to you Creator God. I lay down all the questions of this unspeakable sorrow.

The History of 4th Reformed Church - The New Century

With the approach of the twentieth century, Fourth Reformed Church stood firmly established and anticipated steady growth. Over the nearly four decades covered in this article, church membership grew from 285 in 1890 to 385 in 1900 before decreasing slightly to 360 in 1910 and 304 in 1920. Dedicated pastors shepherded the congregation, their ministries highlighted by important events in the life of the church.

The ministry of Rev. Peter A.J. Bouma began following his installation on August 20, 1891. During his pastorate, the church began a Christian Endeavor Society, (predecessor of today's youth group movement). This organization was heartily supported by the church until around 1960. A YMCA chapter, ladies aid and missionary society were also begun. Church membership grew by 20 families during the first year of Rev. Bouma's pastorate which ended in 1894.

Rev. John W. Warnshuis served as president of Grand Rapids' minister's council. He had an apparent gift for strengthening weak churches, seeing his previous congregation grow from 28 to 200 members in his first year as pastor. This pattern would continue during his five years at Fourth (1895-1900). During this period, the remaining property debt was eliminated.

Rev. Jacob Van Houte had been a principal speaker on "Holland Day" at the World's Columbian Exposition world's fair in Chicago in 1893. He accepted the call to Fourth Church in July 1900 and arrived later that year. The Grand Rapids *Evening Press* reported that he received almost unanimous congregational approval and would receive an annual salary of \$1,000.00. During his pastorate at Fourth which ended in 1903, the parsonage was moved from 593 North Ionia to 20 Page Street.

Rev. Cornelius Kuyper was the first of the church's pastors to be born in the United States (Pella, Iowa). Previous to this, all ministers had been born in the Netherlands. His pastorate lasted from 1904-1911. The long transformation from the Dutch language to English in worship began during this time with the introduction of a weekly evening English language service. Rev. Kuyper later served as president of the Particular Synod of Chicago (of which Michigan was then a part), joining former Fourth pastor Peter DePree who held this office in 1887.

Rev. Gerrit Bosch was installed as pastor on October 24, 1912. During his ministry, the first directory listing household heads was published with the 1912 financial report. Rev. Bosch left Fourth in April 1915.

Rev. Harke Frieling was installed on September 8, 1915 after having declined an earlier call extended by the congregation. A steam heating system was installed in the sanctuary in 1916. During the world-wide influenza epidemic that would eventually kill 3% of the world's population, individual communion cups were first used in 1918 in place of the common cup. In the same year, the directory listed all communicant and baptized members. The church introduced a regular monthly morning English language service in February 1919. Rev. Frieling left Fourth in January 1920.

Rev. Cornelius Muller's ministry at Fourth Church began on October 1, 1920. During his pastorate, an extensive music program was begun. An electric pipe organ installed in the sanctuary in 1921 eliminated the need for the "pumper", a person who manually generated forced air for the organ. The organization of a choir took place during this period. The gradual elimination of Dutch continued with the introduction of a second weekly English service. Regular Dutch language worship services would end by about 1940. English also replaced Dutch in the written word in 1922 when the financial report was first published in English. In 1926, an unsuccessful appeal was made to move the church to the corner of North and Page Street. Lifetime terms for consistory members yielded to a two-year term system in 1927.

The departure of Rev. Muller in 1928 marked the beginning of the end of the so-called Roaring Twenties, a time mostly characterized by outward prosperity. Just ahead lay the Great Depression followed by World War II, a time that posed new challenges for our nation and church alike.

By Eric O. Brock Next - Part 3 *Moving Forward*

**A PUBLICATION OF
FOURTH
REFORMED CHURCH**



1226 Union Ave. N.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Pastor Tim Meendering
Phone: 454-1561
www.fourthchurch.com

Sunday Service
9:30 AM

Family Fellowship
Lifeline Groups
5:00 PM

Christian Education
11:15 AM

Our Vision

Seeking to be a joyful,
welcoming
community that is
transformed by the gospel,
nurtured in God's
Word, and led by His
Spirit - to redeem the
city and beyond."

**A COMMUNITY REDEEMED TO
REDEEM OUR COMMUNITY**

Women's Ministry

For those of us old enough to remember them, The Dating Game, The (almost) Newlywed Game, and the Price is Right were fun shows to revisit at the triple bridal shower given for the Bachelorettes of Fourth last month.

Indeed, we now know more about Elise Hauser (Bachelorette #1), Rachel Goulart (Bachelorette #2), and Janice Reitsma (Bachelorette #3) and their respective bachelors! We were all rather delightfully surprised, actually, at how well the male lineup did at recalling details about dating days, as well as fun facts to know and tell about each bride.

That being said, Janice definitely does need to think about dropping some strong hints before her next birthday comes around!

Beka and Sarah did such a marvelous job of planning the shower and coordinating the delicious desserts! There was a perfect balance of entertainment from the games (we did have to exercise our brains a bit for The Price is Right), as well as time to visit and snack (which, as we all know, the women of Fourth take very seriously). One of the most heartwarming moments of the evening, however, was when each bride-to-be was presented with a bag of surprises and a gift card in the amount of \$360.

It is so good to see God's children loving each other so well! We wish these three beautiful and godly young women all of God's blessings as they begin their new adventures. Our prayers and love go with you!

- Dawn Faasse

Apple Oatmeal Recipe (from Lenten Breakfast)

4-5 servings

Cooking Time: 5-6 hours (old fashioned oats); 2 1/2-3 hours (quick oats)

2 cups milk	1 cup dry old-fashioned oats
2 Tbsp honey	1 cup chopped apples
1 Tbsp butter (no substitute!!)	1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)
1/4 tsp salt	2 Tbsp. brown sugar
1/2 tsp cinnamon	1/2 cup raisins, cranberries or other dried fruit

1. Mix together all ingredients in greased slow cooker.
2. Cover. Cook on Low 5-6 hours or 2 1/2 63 for quick oats. (Thanks Beka!)

TRIP Tidbit

Eat at Russ's often? The \$50 gift card earns
7% for NCN. \$10 cards earn 5%.



Support the ministry of New City Neighbors by buying
gift cards from NCN at face value. Questions? Stop in
the office after church. Our 2011 goal is \$3000!