A boy who was born in Rotterdam. A family, who although faithfully following what they thought were the tenets of Christianity, did not come to know the redeeming power of God’s love until after years of “following the rules.” A teenager who decided he wanted to be a butcher. A young man, who after discovering the free gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ, came to the United States to study the Scriptures. A teacher of Bible and theology at the William of Orange Christian College in the Netherlands. Put it all together and what do you have? Kuyper College alumnus Johannes Molenaar, class of 2007.

“I grew up in a small village nearby Rotterdam called Barendrecht,” said Molenaar. “I had a home with loving parents who showed me, my sister and three brothers how to practice true love in a marriage.” According to Molenaar, his youth was a great time during which he had a lot of fun. He explained: “Even though my parents were not rich, we went on vacation every year. And if it was warm you could find us swimming in the nearby river—the Old Maas.” Molenaar said that his teenage years were easy, enjoying fishing for whitefish, speed biking and...
The accounts you read in this Kuyper News continue to build affirmation to the question asked at our Spring Gala: “Is Kuyper College worth the investment?” What makes these accounts exciting is that they don’t focus on the money aspect of that question but on the ministry aspect of worthwhile investment. These accounts—and so many other stories that are represented by our students and alumni—underscore the beauty, wonder and profound nature of investments they are making for the sake of Christ, for the purpose of bringing God’s grace into today’s culture.

You may think (as I would, I confess) that a question like that is posed first and foremost to raise funds for the institution. But, it is not. Kuyper College is not in the fund-raising business; we are in the service of preparing people for kingdom work. That mission is what draws people to Kuyper and is what motivates them to live and study and work sacrificially so that we may serve His church well. Thus, that question is asked so that we all are reminded and motivated out of the response of many to invest their health, safety, family ties and their future so that the gospel of Christ may be presented to the ends of the earth.

These thoughts bring to mind the difference in how I think of what I invest in compared to what I invest with. It’s easier for me to deal with the former—there’s no lack of worthy causes to invest in! Where God really challenges me and where I struggle most is with what I invest. It has been offered to me many times in sermons, boards and materials I’ve read that I can contribute something from the “W List”: Wisdom, Work, Wealth, Witness, Worship (i.e. “prayer”). The reason I struggle is that I begin to think in terms of trade-offs: “If I can’t (read—“don’t want to”) do this, I can opt out for that.” And, of course, there’s a strong “something” in my Reformed, biblical worldview head that says it’s not just about giving something of yourself to God; it’s about giving your all to God.

So, I learn and am encouraged by the examples of people who do just that, from people who know the joy and fulfillment that comes from giving their all. People who can answer simply and readily “Yes” to the question of Kuyper being worth the investment because they have already made the much bigger investment of giving their all to the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for being part of that investment with us!

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Expansion of athletic program

This fall marks the fourth year of Kuyper College’s entrance into intercollegiate athletic competition. In 2007 Kuyper became a member of the National Christian College Athletic Association (NCCAA) Midwest Region when it fielded both women’s and men’s basketball teams. Since then, Kuyper has added women’s volleyball and men’s soccer. Both volleyball and soccer had previously been club sports. The women’s volleyball head coach is Michael Wiggers. The men’s soccer head coach is Matt Smith.

Prior to coming to Kuyper, Wiggers coached varsity volleyball for 15 years at various schools, including Yokohama International School in Japan, King’s Academy in Illinois, and Algoma Christian School and Sparta High School in Michigan. Wiggers played volleyball for various United States Navy teams in Japan, Australia, Italy, Maine and Illinois. Additionally, while stationed in Australia, he was chosen to play for the Royal Australian Navy volleyball team. He holds a bachelor’s degree in technical education from Southern Illinois University and an Associate of Arts in electronic technology from the University of Phoenix.

Prior to coming to Kuyper College, Smith was an assistant soccer coach at Western Michigan University for the women’s soccer program. Before that, he was the head coach for the men’s and women’s soccer teams at Tennessee Temple University in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he also taught as a member of the physical education department’s faculty. For six years prior to that, Smith held the position of athletic director at NorthPoiinte Christian High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Smith played soccer at Tennessee Temple University, from where he holds a Bachelor of Science degree. He also holds a master’s in sports management from the United States Sports Academy.
A life-changing journey

Lisa Hoogeboom
Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies

Fast-dry clothing…check. Granola bars and kid-friendly crafts for the plane ride…check. Enough diapers to get us through the first week in Egypt…check. These were a few items on the packing list for a journey through the Middle East I took several years ago with my husband, two young children and several college students. We planned carefully, studying as much as we could about each location, including the climate (hot everywhere), language (“tea” would be the same word in all countries) and customs (shoes off at the door). Like Frodo in J. R. R. Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings, we plunged into a foreign world and came back from our adventure changed forever.

Today I still have the privilege of taking exciting journeys with students, though rarely do we leave the confines of our classroom. These adventures are even more remarkable than that trip many years ago. They are journeys into the Bible. As we venture into this book, we learn about ancient customs and political climate. We inspect carefully, taking time to consider the original languages—Greek and Hebrew—to uncover the nuances of the text. We learn to see every story, every Psalm, every command in light of the big story about a God who loves His people so much that He makes a way to dwell with them forever. As we journey down this road, we are reminded anew that this is our own story—a story about our people and our God.

In the eyes of the world, such rigorous study of the Bible must seem like a waste of time. Even some of our students, many of whom juggle a full-time class load, a job to pay the bills, and other obligations (like keeping up with friends on Facebook!) at times question the necessity of such in-depth, time-consuming study. However, they inevitably come to realize that this intense, careful walk through God’s Word brings about a mysterious change. They report that, as they are wrestling with the details and placing them into the big story, they gain renewed passion for God. They testify that when they’re digging deep into the Word, they find themselves with increased understanding and love for the people around them, both fellow travelers and those wandering the roads far away from God.

We’re a bit like Tolkien’s Frodo. We come back from our journey through the Bible changed—re-energized, reoriented and ready for our next adventure into God’s Word and His world.

“In My Words” is a feature of The Kuyper College News highlighting first-person stories by Kuyper College faculty and staff.
swimming with friends. “The door at home was always open, and so at times the house was filled with teenagers,” he said. Church was also very important to the Molenaar family, who attended a Reformed church. “We read and learned the Scriptures, went to church twice on Sunday, to Sunday school after the morning service, and catechism class during the week,” said Molenaar.

“However, our church was a strict, conservative congregation with a strong focus on the holiness and righteousness of God and the total depravity of men, and did not have much of a notion of the true joy of a Christian who is eternally saved through the blood of Christ. There was, therefore, not much talking about spiritual life in our family.”

At the age of 15, while still in school, Molenaar decided he wanted to become a butcher. So he completed in the next three years the Butchers’ Education Program at the SVO Slagersvakschool in Rotterdam. “After graduation, I began working as a butcher,” said Molenaar. “Sometime after that I began to pay attention to the teaching of a friend who preached only Christ, and Him crucified. It was then I knew that I was saved only by the redeeming work of Jesus Christ and not by following church tradition.”

Over the next few years, Molenaar took courses in theology, pastoral work, Greek and Latin at Christelijke Hogeschool Ede and at the University of Utrecht. But it wasn’t until 2000, when he enrolled in the Master of Divinity program at the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, that Molenaar’s life took a radically different turn.

“I came to Puritan because of my desire to pursue ministry. It was a big move for our whole family to come to the U.S.,” said Molenaar. After finishing his education at the Seminary and because of the status of his student visa, Molenaar made plans to return to the Netherlands. However, after doing some investigation in the Netherlands about his M.Div., he found out that his degree would not be accepted unless he also had a bachelor’s degree. So he contacted Kuyper.

“The first time I came in contact with Kuyper College was in August of 2000,” said Molenaar. “I needed to take some English courses. The openness toward each other I saw there and the easiness of talking with the professors and students was something I had never experienced. But most important to me back then was the school’s foundation—a Reformed worldview based on the Word of God.” It was because of this former experience, and he believes the guiding of the Lord, that Molenaar came to Kuyper College to earn his bachelor’s degree.

“The Academic, Business and International Student Offices made it possible for me to remain in the U.S. and study at Kuyper. I received the necessary financial help for the first semester and a full scholarship for the next year. In addition, I was privileged to work at the College in the maintenance department,” said Molenaar.

According to Molenaar, his first impression of the College back in 2000 had been correct. “As a full-time student I found a loving community, people who listened and showed respect for each other, and a Christ-like atmosphere throughout the campus,” said Molenaar. “I also found a high degree of academic challenge by professors who cared, which helped to shape part of my thinking, especially in Christian ethics.” Molenaar acknowledges that Kuyper had a very positive impact in his life. “I was theologically formed through the studies already done before I came to Kuyper,” he said. “But Kuyper helped me to become more personal and practical in my ministry. At Kuyper I especially learned how to speak with and relate to young people who come from a wide range of backgrounds.”

In the spring of 2009, after living for nine years in the U.S., Molenaar, his wife, Lena, and seven of their nine children returned to the Netherlands. One married daughter, and another daughter who became a U.S. citizen,
remained in the U.S. “We are still adjusting to the new Dutch way of living,” said Molenaar. “It has been more difficult than I thought it would be. The kids needed to learn Dutch, and we found out that a lot of things have changed in the past nine years. However, the Lord continues to shower blessings on us.”

Presently, Molenaar, together with four colleagues in the theology department, teaches Bible and theology at the William of Orange Christian College, a 1400-student institution in Waalwijk where 60 percent of the student body is not Christian. Molenaar said that besides teaching, he is also having plenty of opportunities to share the gospel. He explained: “One of my students, Gamze, a young Muslim girl, came to me after I had finished teaching my lesson. She asked me if I also believed in Mohammed. I told her that I probably believe in him as I believe in my kids and my students. I asked her why such a question. She told me that the names of many prophets, including Jesus, are also mentioned in the Koran. I explained to her what ‘to believe in’ means to me—to place all my trust in another. In my case, I told her I had placed my trust for eternal life in Jesus Christ as my Savior, so that without any work on my part I am saved and have a right to eternal life which will be spent with Jesus my King. My prayer is that she will think about it and continue to ask me questions.”

As for the future, Molenaar believes God is calling him to church ministry. He stated: “God in His great mercy called, and as I believe, He is calling me to work in His ministry. The words in 1 Corinthians 9:16, ‘For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!’ are alive in my heart. So at this time I have the privilege of coordinating and coaching the Bible study groups of the church we attend. In addition, we are in contact with two churches. However, it’s best to wait and trust in the Lord as the true guide for our life.”

Johannes Molenaar—The Netherlands

Kuyper’s largest graduating class

Kuyper College held its 69th commencement on Friday, April 30. This year’s graduating class was the largest to date, with more than 75 graduates.

After a welcome from Dr. Nick Kroeze, president of the College, Rev. Henry Admiraal, chairman of the College’s board of trustees, opened the ceremony by praying for the graduates. Following this, music and worship majors sang “By Faith,” the lyrics of which convey the class of 2010’s mission:

*We will stand as children of the promise We will fix our eyes on Him our souls reward Till the race is finished and the work is done We’ll walk by faith and not by sight*

Graduating senior Monique Carter spoke on behalf of the graduating class. After highlighting notable moments and experiences, she said, “We are more than just classmates, more than just peers, and more than friends. We are family.”

Dr. Ben Meyer, Kuyper’s academic dean and registrar who retired this past June after serving the College for eight years, gave the commencement address—“Extravagant Giving”—from Acts 6 and 7. “Take your education and your life and live and give and love extravagantly,” he emphasized.

Following the presentation of diplomas, each graduate was given a traditional Kuyper Lamp—a reminder of the calling that brought them to and through Kuyper and of the charge given by Dr. Kroeze, that they are now to “Go! And let your light shine!” The Kuyper Lamp is also symbolic of the global reach of the College and broad scope and diversity of the student body. The Lamp is made from seven different types of wood, each representing various parts of the world—including African ebony, Mexican rosewood and English walnut.
Meyer continued from cover

Cambodia—a country that, back then, was just beginning to emerge from years of communist rule and a genocidal civil war. “I was blissfully happy doing what I was doing,” explained Meyer. “Yet I went home and discussed the opportunity with Judy (Meyer’s wife). We talked about whether we had ever shown extravagant love, whether we had ever done anything extravagant for the sake of the kingdom.” Going to Cambodia would entail Meyer’s early retirement from his post at Jenison and Judy taking a one-year leave of absence from her job. In 2002 the Meyers left for Cambodia, where they led a team of educators to set up an English program at the Royal University of Law and Economics in Cambodia’s capital of Phnom Penh. “We found a university that was close to ruin,” said Meyer. “Most of the professors had been killed, and all the books had been burned. We found literally nothing.” Meyer relates how, during that time, they needed guards to protect them and their property. The whole team had moved in together into one house. “A young man named Wei Ming took over the job of guarding us,” said Meyer. “Every night as the team gathered for devotions and singing of hymns, Wei Ming listened while standing outside our window. One day, he came to me and said: ‘Could someone tell me about Jesus?’ I had the privilege of doing so and also leading him to the Lord.”

After a year of hard work in setting up the program, which to this day continues to provide an effective witness to the students of the University, the Meyers returned home. Soon after, Meyer received a call from Dr. Mel Flikkema, Kuyper’s provost, offering him a position. He accepted and began his work at the College in July of 2002.

As to what changes he has seen in the past eight years, Meyer said: “Programs have grown, majors have been added, the size of the student body has doubled, and yet the most important things have not changed. What impressed me most when I first arrived at Kuyper, and still does today, is the quality of our students. They come to Kuyper because they want to serve the Lord. And the faculty and staff’s commitment matches that of the students.”

Asked if he wanted to share any final thoughts with the College family, Meyer said: “Do not lose your vision of being a ministry-focused Christian leadership college. And do not be afraid to continue to broaden your definition of ministry.”

Kuyper College Zondervan Library is open to the public

The Kuyper College Zondervan Library features a quality collection of books, DVDs and videos, periodicals and other materials, including many resources relevant to various ministry-related activities, such as Bible studies, commentaries, youth ministry information, and children’s and women’s ministry resources. The Library also has a large collection of personal spiritual formation materials and works on the spiritual disciplines, as well as many Christian biographies—resources that may not necessarily be found in a public library. The public-at-large can have access to the Zondervan Library’s collection. Visitors to the Library will need either a library card or a guest-patron card that can be purchased for a one-time fee of $5.00. Zondervan Library materials can also be obtained by submitting an interlibrary loan request through a local library. Kuyper College invites the public to take advantage of this great opportunity!

During the summer, the Library is open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. During the school year, the Library is open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Questions? E-mail the Library at library@kuyper.edu or check the Library’s web site at www.kuyper.edu/library.

Kuyper College Spring Celebration Gala

On Monday, April 19, nearly 500 guests gathered for the annual Spring Celebration Gala at Noto’s Old World Italian Dining in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to celebrate God’s goodness to Kuyper College over the preceding year. After dinner, Ken and June Holtvluwer were presented with the H.J. Kuiper Founder’s Service Award—named for Rev. H.J. Kuiper and conferred every year to an individual, or individuals, who have consistently shown sensitivity to the spiritual climate and needs of the church and the College.

Kuyper’s president, Nick Kroeze, gave the keynote address. His presentation made a compelling case for investing in Kuyper. “Is an investment in Kuyper worth it?” Kroeze asked rhetorically. “Yes, it is,” he answered, “because it is an eternal investment.” Kroeze then proceeded to persuasively give proof of the extraordinary results that donations (investments) in Kuyper have produced. One such example (among many) was that of a student who, while working as a prison guard, attended Kuyper. Today, she ministers as a social worker to many women who deal with the same issues as those she once guarded.

The evening was brought to a close by the music of a student ensemble that sang both contemporary and traditional numbers.
Kuyper College social work majors conduct research project

Sixteen Kuyper social work majors recently completed a semester-long research project in the Heartside community of Grand Rapids—a part of the city served by several ministries, including health clinics, homeless shelters and social agencies. The research was designed to gauge the degree of overlap and gaps in services to residents of the community. After conducting in-person interviews and administering surveys to residents and other stakeholders, the students analyzed the data and prepared a summary report of their findings. The report was presented at a recent forum attended by representatives of the agencies serving the area. It will be used by the different agencies to better coordinate services among the constituents they serve.

Kuyper welcomes incoming freshman class at Journey

Kuyper College’s incoming fall freshman class was welcomed on May 14-15 at “Journey,” a campus overnight visit hosted by the Admissions Office. The annual event seeks to bring new students together so that they can become acquainted with other students, get a feel of the campus, and meet professors and staff before entering school in the fall.

Save the date—2010 Kuyper International Golf Tournament

The 18th annual Kuyper International Golf Tournament will be held on Monday, August 30, 2010, at Watermark Country Club. The proceeds from the tournament help Kuyper College offer scholarships and financial aid to international students. As always, one of the highlights for players is the Presidential Putt on the 18th green, where golfers use a hand-made wood putter, crafted by Dr. Nick Kroeze, to sink their round’s final putt. The longest putt wins the club! For more information, e-mail events@kuyper.edu or call 616-988-3709.

Marriages:
Sarah Terpstra (2006) and Tim Van Ryn were married on October 9, 2009.
Marc Algra and Tracy Vruggink (2003) were married on July 24, 2009.

Births:
Adam and Lindy (Poll) TerBeek (2004) were blessed with the birth of Nolan Samuel on July 4, 2009. He was welcomed into their home by big sister Isabelle.
Jon Walters (1998) and his wife, Tabitha, along with big brother Justin and big sister Anya, were blessed by the arrival of baby Eli Jonathan on July 21, 2009.

Achievements:
Steve and Naomi (Girwarnauth) Sponible (2004), and brothers Nicholas and William, were blessed by the birth of Ella Mae Aishwarya on September 30, 2009.
Justin and Jennifer (Kammeraad) Rash (2006) were blessed by the birth of a son, Josiah Israel, on December 28, 2009.
Matthew and Karen (Bonham) Chitwood (2003) were blessed with the arrival of their first child, Kaylyn Marie, on January 25, 2010.
Mitchell (2002) and Heather (Faber) Brink (2002), and big sister Sophie, welcomed Magdelyn Grace into their family on March 31, 2010.
Justin and Sarah (Couwenhoven) Behm (1997), along with big brothers Luke and Nathan, were blessed with the birth of Peter Alan on Thursday, April 4, 2010.
Justin and Kari (Berthiaume) Bierens (2005) were blessed by the birth of Molly Elizabeth on April 26, 2010. She was welcomed into their home by big sister Madilynn.

Professional Achievements:
Benjamin David Bras (2008) received his Master’s of Social Work degree with an emphasis on individual and family therapy and clinical mental health from Loyola University in Chicago.
John Burden (2008) received a Master of Divinity from Calvin Theological Seminary.
Karen (Bonham) Chitwood (2003) accepted a position as child and family therapist at Northern Lakes Community Mental Health in Michigan.

Craig Coffey (1998) began serving as the administrative director at Northgate Wesleyan Church in Owosso, Michigan, on June 1, 2010.
Barbarita Lee (2000) received a B.A. in Nursing from Excelsior College on May 21, and is serving at the San Diego Hospice Pediatric Program. She continues to live and serve as a missionary across the border in Tijuana, Mexico.
Wade Remer (1982) was named the gift-in-kind officer for Wycliffe Bible Translators.
Jon Walters (1998) has been appointed director of youth ministries at Trinity Reformed Church in Holland, MI.

With The Lord:
Rudolph Huizenga (1950) on December 1, 2009. He was 91.
Tena (Kamstra) Prins (1945) on December 14, 2009. She was 89.
There are many special events that take place at Kuyper College. There is also an e-Newsletter. If you would like to receive event information and the e-Newsletter online please send your e-mail address to: advancement@kuyper.edu.