“My students and I travelled to the Philippines, Kenya, Guatemala, India and Senegal to film stories about slum dwellers. Right now, more than one in six of us lives in a slum; that’s one billion people! It’s a story not a lot of people know, and even fewer are talking about.” There is passion in the way Mark Volkers (class of 1988) tells the story about his most recent award-winning documentary—The Fourth World (www.fourthworldfilm.com) winner of more than 10 international awards and selected for showcase by film festivals around the globe and by national television networks, including Al Jazeera Arab television network, for broadcast to millions throughout the world. “Rather than giving mind-numbing statistics and facts, we traveled into slums to let these people tell us stories,” said Volkers.

Volkers, a professor of digital media production at Dordt College, said that as a filmmaker he makes a distinction between “Christian films” and “films made by a Christian.” He said that The Fourth World is the latter. “If it was the former, a Christian film, there’s no way it would have enjoyed the global reception.

The Fourth World

Volkers at the Iowa premier screening of The Fourth World

Kuyper celebrates scholarship

The success of Kuyper’s first Student Scholar Day held this past spring led Kuyper’s Scholarship Committee to develop the Faculty Scholar Day to provide Kuyper’s faculty an opportunity to present their academic work to the Kuyper community at large.

Faculty Scholar Day was successfully launched this past fall with over 20 presentations made. The wide variety of topics presented reflected the diversity of interests and passions found at the College. Presentations on worship by Dr. Carol Hochhalter and by Dr. Kai Ton Chau, respectively, explored “Trinitarian Worship” and the importance of “Developing a Pastoral Heart for Worship Leaders.”

Dr. Doug Felch and Kuyper President, Dr. Nicholas Kroese, each presented on the “Relationship Between Religion and Science.” The field of social work was represented by Professor Greg Scott, who introduced the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IVTR), and by Dr. Judi Ravenhorst Meerman, whose presentation centered on “Community Partnerships” in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) research course. In addition to his presentation entitled “Two Cities or Two Kingdoms? The Importance of the Ultimate in Reformed Social Thought,” Dr. Branson Parler introduced his newly published book, Things Hold Together. Other presentation topics included an examination of the college experience of lower income students by Curt Essenburg, director of student life; “A Pedagogy of Engagement for Christian Education Using Hip-Hop Music” by Dr. Richelle White; a study of Willa Cather’s One of Ours by Dr. Lisa Garvelink; and a study of how the issue of immigration challenges Christians to live biblically by Professor Teresa Renkema.

75th anniversary

Very soon, Kuyper College will be celebrating 75 years of equipping men and women for kingdom building service, and we need your help as we make plans for the festivities. We want to gather as many stories as possible to help us reflect on God’s faithfulness throughout the generations.

Do you have a story, photo, memory or piece of College history that you’d be willing to lend us? Could you share with us a testimony of how our alumni have been used to bring God’s love to the world? Please forward your treasures and testimonies to the Alumni Office at alumni@kuyper.edu or:

Alumni Office
Kuyper College
3333 East Beltline NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Thank you for all your help.
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It’s a mantra I hear time and time again from Brach or Aaron, trainers at the gym I (sometimes) attend: “Stretch first, Nick, then exercise!” Yes, they usually catch me trying to be too expedient to jump into and quickly get done with my exercise routine. “You’re going to injure yourself if you don’t.” I usually push back at them with a smile and assure them that I’m not going to exercise that hard! But, all-the-same, they usually get their way—I stretch.

When I read the drafts of the stories going into an issue of The Kuyper News, I look for common themes that help focus my thoughts on the topic of this letter. You may have guessed already from my intro that stretching your faith is what came to mind this time through. This is a very exciting theme to see in the stories this issue presents. It’s exciting because it gives evidence that Kuyper is a college where a strong spiritual dynamic is present and tangible enough to stretch one’s faith. It’s exciting too to realize that this comes not from something we create, but from something we are given—the gracious blessing of God’s Spirit alive and moving throughout students, staff, faculty, classrooms, campus life and off-campus experiences. This is wonderful and humbling!

As with physical exercise, there is a purpose to the stretching that takes place at Kuyper. Without proper preparation ahead of time, “injury” can result. Often, our students are eager to get on with their calls into ministry and service. It’s hard to take the time to stretch—to be “limbered up” mentally and spiritually before fully engaging in the exercise of faith that comes with engagement in the world. But, stretch they do (and we have very good trainers here to ensure that happens!), and what they come to appreciate and do afterwards is amazing to watch as their own lives are affected and as they have an impact for Christ in the world.

I know you’ll enjoy reading the “stretching stories” that follow. I found that, in both a fun and meaningful way, my own faith was stretched as I read these words of testimony. May you be blessed in this too as you see and feel how the body of which you are a part is actively engaged in personal growth and public impact for the sake of Christ.

Dr. Nicholas V. Kroeze
President

Books by Parler

Dr. Branson Parler, associate professor of theological studies, has been involved in several publications this fall. Two of these publications revolve around John Howard Yoder who, to some, is the most important Anabaptist theologian of the last century. The first, Dr. Parler’s book Things Hold Together: John Howard Yoder’s Trinitarian Theology of Culture, helps us to see and understand how Yoder’s theology of culture upholds the continuity between God’s work in creation and in redemption. Commenting on the book, Dr. Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, said: “In my own wrestlings with Yoder’s thought, I have thought of myself as trying, more than most Calvinists do in depicting Anabaptist life and thought, to give Yoder credit for having developed a complex theology of culture. Now Branson Parler’s detailed study of Yoder on culture has convinced me that things are even more complex than I had been acknowledging—this book is a wonderful exploration of the highly original contribution that John Howard Yoder made to the study of the foundations of Christian discipleship as we prepared to enter the 21st century.” The second, of which Dr. Parler is co-editor, is a new collection of Yoder’s essays, Radical Christian Discipleship. “In these popular-level essays, Yoder pulls no punches,” said Parler. “In them Yoder speaks about the Christian’s call to live a life that is drastically different from the pattern of the world.” Finally, Dr. Parler’s essay, “Two Cities or Two Kingdoms? The Importance of the Ultimate in Reformed Social Thought,” appears in the new book, Kingdoms Apart: Engaging the Two Kingdoms Perspective.

For more information on these books, go to http://www.bransonparler.com/books--articles.html.
The four ‘Cs’

Dianne Zandbergen
Director of Library Services (Class of 1976)

As I sit down to write this article, the College has just completed its Higher Learning Commission reaccreditation visit. Hours and hours, literally two years, of preparation by the administration, faculty and staff went into the Self-Study report that is reviewed and verified by the visiting team members. Once the team arrives on campus, there are two days packed with a variety of meetings. As I reflect back upon the Self-Study preparation and the actual visit, three characteristics about Kuyper College come to mind:

A sense of calling: Most everyone at the College, from board members to administration, faculty, staff and students, is at Kuyper College because they feel God has called them to be at this place at this time.

A sense of commitment: There is the commitment to Christ and His Lordship over every area of life; a commitment to the College’s mission and the core values of the primacy of Scripture, a biblical worldview, Reformed doctrine, academic excellence, holistic development, a caring community, and a commitment to Christ-modeled leadership and being involved in God’s work of restoration.

A sense of community: People care for one another, pray for each other, bear one another’s burdens, study together and mentor each other, praise God and worship together. One of the visiting team members commented that Kuyper College is a very welcoming place, and he wished he could gather our students in his arms and take them home with him. Often students say that when they first come to visit the College, they feel something is different here. They feel a sense that this is where they belong. Alumni often speak of the special bonds they formed with their fellow students and the faculty and staff members.

Calling, commitment, community. There is one more “C” word that often brings us to our knees in prayer: challenges! These are challenging times in which to be a small Christian college seeking to provide a quality education based upon a biblical worldview. At times we can grow weary and be discouraged. Yet at every graduation ceremony when I see the new graduates with their candles lighting the darkness, I gain new hope and motivation. It is worth staying obedient to God’s call to remain faithful. It is worth the commitment of time and labor to invest in students and their education, for it is a privilege and honor to serve in the Kuyper College community. It is a privilege to invest in that which is eternal—people, God’s Word and His kingdom.

“In My Words” is a feature of The Kuyper College News highlighting first-person stories by Kuyper College faculty and staff.

Cheering up can be hard work

A little boy was lost inside a busy shopping mall, repeatedly crying, “I want my mommy!” as sympathetic shoppers gave him candy and loose change to try and cheer him up. Finally, a salesperson from the floor walked up to the distraught little boy and said, “I know where your mommy is, son.” The little boy looked up with his teary eyes and said, “So do I, but please keep quiet, I got a good thing going here!” (From “His Word Is Enough” by Pastor Steve Malone.)

Thankfully, there are much better ways to cheer up! Here are five of them, based on joy-filled principles from the Word of God:

**Enjoy God Himself.** God loves it when we “count our many blessings,” as the classic hymn encourages us to do. But He enjoys it even more when we love the giver more than the gift. The prophet Habakkuk discovered that beautiful truth when he declared, “I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior” (Habakkuk 3:18).

**Hear a Kind Word.** Are you worried about something? Is someone you know going through a difficult time? Proverbs 12:25 reminds us that “Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.”

**Enjoy a Job Well Done.** Isn’t it a satisfying feeling to look out over a freshly mowed lawn or recently weeded flower bed? Or how about leaving work knowing you met someone’s need or accomplished something important? These are all gifts from God, who wants to bless you and give you joy in your work (Deuteronomy 16:15).

**Apply God’s Word.** Try memorizing one Bible verse a day to “flush the junk out” and get your mind in tune with God. He’s living the truth of Psalm 19:8—“The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.”

**Protect Your Family.** Without an up-to-date will your family may encounter unnecessary expenses and heartache. A will will protect them, as well as all other named individuals and charitable organizations you may want to include. An up-to-date will is a great way to experience peace of mind and a joyful heart.

For a FREE copy of our special bulletin “5 Ways to Cheer Up Today” contact Kim Kolbe at 616-988-3620 or at kkolbe@kuyper.edu.
and made the impact it has,” he said. “However, a film made by a Christian is a different thing. The message is there and it’s clear, but it’s not overt. Our film is being watched by people the world over because of the way it’s presented.”

Long before he thought of becoming a filmmaker, Volkers was one of four kids growing up in a loving home headed by his father, a barber, and his mother, a stay-at-home mom. “My parents met while my mother was a student at Reformed Bible Institute (now Kuyper College). Dad was in barber school in Kalamazoo and would make the drive to Grand Rapids to court her,” said Volkers. “I am so grateful for parents who took their vows to each other and the Lord seriously and have walked the walk, not just talked the talk. They have been and continue to be an inspiration to me and to my siblings.”

Growing up in Holland, Michigan, Volkers said he accepted Jesus as Savior at the age of 13, but not as Lord until the age of 17. “What this means,” he added, “is that I had assurance of salvation at 13, but it was not until I was 17 that I consciously and deliberately began to live with Him being in charge, rather than me.” Volkers also said that he knew by the time he was 14 that he was going to be a missionary: “And I knew it was going to be in Africa. A few years later, the Lord laid Kenya on my heart, so I went to Kuyper to study missions and theology. I looked into other schools, but I wanted the Reformed world- and life-view that I knew Kuyper would give me. I wanted to be trained so I could give proper training to new Christians.”

While at Kuyper it dawned on Volkers that although he was there learning all about being a missionary, he had never actually experienced being a missionary in a cross-cultural situation. “I was heavily involved in Evangelism Explosion, as a participant and a trainer, and while I did a lot of evangelism in the Grand Rapids area, it was never in a cross-cultural setting like young people do today,” he said. So, during his junior year, he applied to and was accepted by AIM (Africa Inland Mission) to be part of a brand new program called TIMO (Training in Ministry Outreach). TIMO, according to Volkers, paired young, “wanna-be missionaries” with experienced missionaries. “I was sent to a small village in Kenya, East Africa, where I helped plant a church among the Luo, a Nile valley people that came to Kenya from Sudan in the distant past,” he said. “There I learned the Luo language which helped me to share the gospel. It was a difficult but fantastic two years of living in that small African village, but the time there helped to confirm my calling to be a missionary.”

After two years in Africa, Volkers returned to Kuyper for his final year of college. “Of course, all my classmates had graduated while I was gone,” he said. “But I quickly made new friends, including a girl by the name of Janelle Timmer from Willmar, MN, a transfer from Dordt College. To make a long story short,” he added, “we fell in love and got married. We now have three kids and one grandchild. In addition, Kuyper also gave me a love for the Scriptures and a desire to understand doctrine. There, I learned how to present the gospel in a clear and understandable way. I also made friends with individuals that I still work with on a regular basis, all around the world.”

In 1991, two years after graduating from Kuyper, the Volkers left for Kenya with five-month-old Elsa, their firstborn. As missionaries with the African Inland Mission, they started the Ahero Evangelical School of Theology (AEST) in Ahero, a small town about 18 miles from Lake Victoria in the westernmost part of Kenya. Volkers said that when they arrived they found that in western Kenya, on average, one pastor ministered to nine churches dispersed throughout a wide geographical area. “In effect,” he said, “this scarcity of pastors left laymen and women in pastoral roles during the many weeks the pastor was not present because he was attending one of the other churches under his care. While passionate about their faith, many of these lay leaders were completely untrained in the Scriptures, theology, doctrine, homiletics,
“Right now, more than one in six of us lives in a slum; that’s one billion people! It’s a story not a lot of people know, and even fewer are talking about.”

—Mark Volkers—Class of 1988

exegesis and teaching skills needed to effectively minister the Word. The AEST was established to meet this need.”

While the two main languages in Kenya are Swahili and English, Volkers said that from its start the school functioned completely in the Luo language. “We did not want the school to exclude people called of God simply because of language issues,” he said.

Volkers added that the school’s courses and schedule, segmented into eight-week blocks of time, were developed to accommodate the needs of the students. “Men and women chosen by their local churches to be part of the two-year program would have two weeks of intense hands-on training at the school, and then they would go home for six weeks to attend to their farms and families,” he said. During the six-week period Volkers would visit the students to evaluate and continue training in their local church setting.

“I will always look with fondness at my years at Kuyper. The friends I made there are still my friends. I met my wife there and can’t imagine life without her. The understanding of the Scriptures, of theology and missions I received have served me well and continue to give on a daily basis the grounding in God’s Word that I need.”

For more information on The Fourth World contact Mark Volkers at mrkvolkers@gmail.com or through www.fourthworldfilm.com.
Annyeonghaseyo!

As a graduate from Kuyper College, I want to share with you a first-person account of how God rescued me and where He has brought me. Annyeonghaseyo (“Hello” in Korean), my name is Jesse VanderKodde.

My two biological siblings and I—an older brother and a younger sister—started out in a broken home clouded with drugs, darkness and disillusionment. At a young age we were placed in foster care until a family would hopefully choose to adopt us. Looking back I can only see the merciful heart and hand of God at work. I can see no reason why anyone would want to adopt some “crazy kids.” But my parents did. Even though they had one child of their own and three adopted children from Korea, David and Donna VanderKodde were moved by the Spirit of God to adopt the three of us into their family. In one miraculous moment, at the age of 5, I did not just have one brother and one sister, but three brothers and three sisters—seven of us—what a handful! Our parents worked very hard to foster the spiritual growth of us kids. At home they read the Bible and prayed with us around the dinner table and with each one of us individually. We also attended church regularly on Sundays and during the week, as well as Christian schools. Christ and the Christian life were something that my parents lived and tried to impress upon us both privately at home and publicly.

We lived in a simple house on a dead-end street in Sparta, Michigan. I shared a room with my new older brother, Justin. At night, he would usually try to scare me. However, on a rainy night when I was 6, he did not. Instead, he asked me if I knew the Savior and if I had ever asked Jesus into my heart. I told him I hadn’t. He persisted, asking me if I wanted to. I told him I did. That night my big brother led me in a prayer where I acknowledged my sin and asked Jesus to save me. I remember being filled with an excitement that I had never felt before. I jumped out of bed and ran down to the end of the hallway to tell my parents what had just happened. Given it was near midnight, they took the news rather well!

After graduating from high school, Kuyper was an obvious choice because my mom worked there. I started out as a pre-seminary student, but after reflecting on my love for kids, I decided to make the switch to an elementary education major. From the very beginning I received support and encouragement from the staff, faculty and students at Kuyper. Relationships in this small, Christ-centered community are highly valued. And it was in those relationships where I learned valuable lessons about God and life. I was taught about the personal, practical and professional implications of what following Jesus means. I was challenged and tested academically and personally to stand for my faith and to be able to give a reason for the hope that was within me.

I remember Dr. Kroeze leaning forward while standing on his toes, with his long arms stretched out wide, emphasizing a point about Abraham. I remember Dr. Bremer’s classes where he would often leave us with thought provoking questions or stories. Dr. Felch was another professor who thought of simple ingenious ways to make the content engaging and often humorous. And it was not just in class that professors engaged us, but outside the classroom as well. I remember relaxing at Dr. Felch’s cottage by the lake enjoying a burger and a cold mug of root beer while talking about what was going on in our lives.

Today, I teach English at an elementary public school in Ulsan, South Korea. My personal vision is the sum of five elements I am passionate about: Christ, kids, culture, education and conversion. My educational philosophy is that education is a gift given by God by which students are given access to the world. Students are also a gift and should be treated with respect, appropriate expectations, and loving discipline when necessary. As an educator I am called to be part of that process whereby students learn to engage their world and appropriately function in it to the best of their individual and God-given ability.

Teaching in South Korea has been quite an experience so far. God has truly been good to me by preparing and equipping me. He has given me His presence and assurance, the kindness of the Korean people, Christians for support, curious and enthusiastic students, and vision for the future. I know that I’ve created none of this. It has been given to me by God, purchased by Christ, powered by the Spirit, and meant to be lived to its fullest by me. People here know that I am a Christian because I have told them. I hope they will also know because I have shown them. As I look back to where God has taken me from and what He has taken me through, I know He has done it all and deserves all the glory.
News:

- Kuyper professor of theological studies, the Rev. Dr. Douglas Felch, made a presentation at Cornerstone United Reformed Church in Hudsonville, MI, on Wednesday, September 19, 2012, at the inauguration of their Family Night program for the year. The title of his presentation was “In Praise of Christian Education in the Church.”
- Students in the Introduction to Social Work class, taught by Kuyper’s professor of social work, Greg Scott, attended the Grand Rapids ACCESS Poverty Simulation at Ivanrest CRC on Tuesday, October 23. “This was an intense exercise, which taught our students what it is like to live in poverty and homelessness,” said Scott.

Events:

- Winter Orientation — Saturday, January 5, 2013
- Youth Pastor Lunch ’N Learn — Friday, January 25, 2013, & Friday, February 22, 2013, 12:00 p.m. in the West Dining Hall
- Winter Choir Concert — Friday, February 22, 2013, 7:00 p.m. in the Vos Chapel
- Men’s Basketball — Schedule can be found at www.kuyper.edu/Mens_Basketball/
- Women’s Basketball — Schedule can be found at www.kuyper.edu/Womens_Basketball/
- Kuyper Experience Days — Schedule can be found at www.kuyper.edu/visit
- Join us for Chapel — Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10:10 a.m. in the Vos Chapel

Correction

Leanne Penny, class of 2007, is the author of the article “Hungry for Connection” which appeared in the 2012 fall edition of the Kuyper Newsletter. We incorrectly identified her as Leanne Perry. Please accept our apologies.

Births:

- Chris and Mindy (Bultman) Bouma (2006), along with big brother Jonas, welcomed home baby sister Eloise Joy on April 14, 2012.
- Andrew (2010) and Christy (Hochhalter) Johnson (2010) were blessed by the arrival of their son, Aaron Fisher, on November 11, 2012.

Marriages:

- Nicole Bengelink (2012) and Thomas Doll were married on August 24, 2012.
- Jordan Lipan (2010) and Alizbeth Zokoe were married on September 22, 2012.
- Sue Hoag (2011) and David Johnson were married on September 29, 2012.
- Kaleigh Borrink (2012) and Andrew Scholma were married on October 20, 2012.
- Amy Alkema (2009) and Kenneth Holubeck were married on November 10, 2012.
- Ashley Kooistra (2012) and Ryan Huisman were married on December 28, 2012.

Professional Developments:

- Sara (DeJong) Boscher (2009) is on staff at Wedgwood Christian Services in Grand Rapids, Michigan, as a youth care specialist.
- Sarah (DeWitte) Lang (2010) is a response to intervention teacher working with kindergarteners through third-graders at Campau Park Elementary School in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Ricardo Tavarez (2010) is the director of outreach for Madison Square Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Erin VandenHoek (2010) graduated from Grand Valley State University with a degree in nursing.
- Karen Wiersma (2010) is a case manager for Good Shepherd Centres—Mary’s Place Women’s Shelter, in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Homegoings:

- Leona (Zylstra) Botting (1942) passed away on September 9, 2012. She was 94.
- Elmer DeJong (1942) passed away on September 26, 2012. He was 97.
- Loren H. Meyer (1967) passed away on August 26, 2012. He was 77.
- Helen (De Wit) Stam (1945) passed away on July 7, 2012. She was 91.
- Bertha (Ebbeling) VanDyke (1949) passed away on October 14, 2012. She was 85.
“I am the baby of my family,” said David Weber. “I was born in a small town into a non-Christian home where the only time I heard the Lord’s name was when my father used it in vain.” According to David, the lack of a spiritual life wasn’t the only drawback as he was growing up. He describes his father as “a man of anger,” where even the smallest of things would set him off into uncontrollable rage. “Even though my father provided a life in which all material needs and wants were met, material things could never fill the void left in my life by his absence,” he said.

At the age of 15, David’s sister introduced him and his mother to a local church, where both felt embraced by the congregation. “My mother and I jumped head first into our newfound faith and were both baptized together,” he said. However, soon after David’s parents divorced, David and his mother had to move from their home into his sister’s basement. “I began working close to 60 hours a week during high school to help my mom in any way I could. We moved time and again, and living out of boxes became familiar, and a way of life,” he said.

In the midst of all of this turmoil, David had the opportunity to go on a mission trip. The trip would be used to define what God had planned for his life. “My youth pastor called me up three days before the youth group was to leave for a summer mission trip to Red Lake, Minnesota. I didn’t have the money I needed; however, God provided the funds for me to go,” he said. “While at Red Lake I was privileged to work with the youth in the community. I knew by the end of the trip that youth ministry was my calling.”

David’s choosing of Kuyper was based on the research he had done on different schools that offered youth ministry as majors, as well as a coin flip. “It came down to two letters I had received from different colleges,” he said. “I didn’t know which one to open first, so I left the choice to the flip of a coin. I opened Kuyper’s first, and confetti fell out and littered my floor. I was sold.”

According to David, he hoped Kuyper would help to shape and focus his calling. “Thus far I haven’t been disappointed,” he said. “Through its academic programs and the interactions of students and faculty, Kuyper has helped me to truly hone my skills in ministry and bolster my faith. I have come to understand that both classroom and community are grounds in which learning can take place.”

David said that Kuyper has proven to be a place where opportunity and great experiences go hand in hand. “One such experience happened last summer. I lived and served in Nazareth, Israel, fulfilling my field education credit with Serve Nazareth. Yet, I gained so much more than credits,” he said. “Being outside of my comfort zone was invaluable. Fresh views and the story of people are just two benefits which I received while in Israel,” he added. “I was blessed, and hope that I was a blessing, in the community of Nazareth, as on a daily basis I put into practice the model of relational ministry I learned at Kuyper.”

David said that his time at Kuyper has taught him that education is not a destination. “My education will not stop after I leave Kuyper; it will continue for the rest of my life,” he said. After graduation David plans to pursue a Master of Divinity degree at Spurgeon’s College in England. “After that, my objective is to serve young people both in a school setting as well as through a backpacking ministry,” he said.

David believes he has come a long way. “Every new day I am reminded that I have a purpose,” he said. “Despite what has happened in the past, I have been called to serve—youth, communities and the whole of humanity—in any way I can. I pray that I will continue to do so as long as there is one ounce of breath in me.”