Alumni minister in Tanzania

Rebecca Laarman graduated from Kuyper in 2000 with a degree in youth ministry. Marc Driesenga graduated in 2011 with a degree in biblical and theological studies. They both minister at Haven of Peace Academy (HOPAC), a Christian international school, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, East Africa, that serves 300 students from over 30 nationalities and different faiths, including Christians, Muslims, Hindus and others. These are their stories.

Laarman’s story

I grew up in West Michigan at a time when being a Christian was pretty much expected of everyone. The question was never, “Do you go to church?” It was, “Where do you go to church?” I grew up in a Christian family attending the same church my grandparents attended. But it wasn’t until I was 16 that I really understood a real, personal relationship with a God that truly hears, cares, and is alive in our lives every moment of every day.

Laarman
continued on page 4

The Kuyper distinctives

Colleges and universities strive to have a set of distinctive characteristics of unusual quality or exclusiveness that helps separate them from others. Kuyper College does as well. However, our distinctive characteristics are active, can be quantified and qualified, and work in concert to achieve and give proof to the reason we exist. As a leading Christian college we focus on excellence to effectively train students to be successful in whatever profession or vocation they pursue. But more importantly, we train them to live lives that will help them make a difference in God’s world! In essence, we exist to help our students bring God’s grace into today’s culture! How we do that is what makes us unique and helps our students impact the world for Christ!

Academics

Through the combination of a rigorous academic curriculum and a biblical worldview, our academic programs completely incorporate faith into the learning process. And beyond the general education/arts and science core curriculum, every student takes 21 Bible and theology credits—making Kuyper one of the very few Christian colleges in the United States requiring this high of a number of Bible and theology credits.

Biblical Integration

Through Kuyper’s intentional program of integration of the Bible, not only in our academic programs, but in every aspect of the College, we help our students discern their spiritual gifts, mature in the understanding of their identity in Christ, and live vibrant and fruitful lives of service to others.

Distinctives
continued on page 5

Kuyper College equips students with a biblical, Reformed worldview to serve effectively Christ’s church and His world.
Letter from the president

Dianne Zandbergen, Director of Library Services at Kuyper, came into my office with a new book in tow: *Mission Drift: the Unspoken Crisis Facing Leaders, Charities, and Churches*. With the recent movement toward Kuyper focusing on “what we do best,” Dianne thought I would find this resource useful in helping frame the development of a new strategic plan, as well as inform us of factors we should be taking into consideration. This book, highlighted in *Christianity Today*, couldn’t be more timely—most of you have received already our mailing, “Shaping the Future of Kuyper College.” If not, you may see it at www.kuyper.edu/shapingthefuture/.

From an institutional perspective, we see many changes afoot in the environment of higher education, but especially so in the realm of Christian higher education. As our society changes, the freedoms and protections which honored our biblical mission, values, policies and practices are seen as slipping away. Yet, people continue to feel called into ministry and service vocations, coming to Kuyper as an ideal college where they can be well-prepared and inspired to pursue their work in God’s kingdom. The question and challenge that comes to us is, “Can we sustain and see Kuyper’s mission thrive in an environment where government support and, even, accreditation were to be withdrawn?”

The stories and testimonials you will read in this issue of *The Kuyper News* will help you see the immediate answer we would give: “Yes!” We realistically and enthusiastically believe that Kuyper, as a specialist college, fills a unique niche in service to Christ’s church as well as in higher education. The ministry and service emphasis we have, along with a campus atmosphere that promotes spiritual development, are what draw students here and provide a value that extends beyond the consequences of changes in our society. We are called to prepare the institution well for such a future.

*Mission Drift* takes note of the changes and challenges around us which cause Christian organizations to ask, “For the good of our mission, couldn’t we just ‘tone down’ our Christian identity?” (page 16). We, here at Kuyper, would energetically respond, “No!” to such a thought. The authors of the book would, of course, agree with our declaration. But, how would they suggest we respond to those pressures that lead toward drift? A key conclusion of theirs is that, “Wisdom lies in anchoring ourselves to the church as the church is anchored to Christ.” (page 173). And so we endeavor to do just that—through you, through our students, and through our mission that calls us “to serve effectively Christ’s church and His world.” Thank you for joining with and praying for us as we seek to do so well.

Dr. Nicholas V. Kroeze
President

South Sudan

Teresa Janzen, Kuyper College senior development representative, and her husband, Dan, recently returned from a mission trip to South Sudan. Decades of war and conflict have left the country in poverty and the people with very few resources with which to rebuild. As the newest country on the planet, South Sudan is in need of development, and that is where the Janzens deployed their skills in some of the most remote areas of the country.

In addition to her experience in fund development, Teresa completed Kuyper’s certificate program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in 2014. “I not only learned how to teach English,” said Janzen. “I learned how to teach any subject across cultural and language barriers.” Dan used his experience and education in agricultural development to embrace the challenge of the sub-Saharan climate of central South Sudan.

Together, the Janzens travelled to villages among the Dinka people—one of the largest ethnic groups in the country—to teach biblical stewardship and life skills such as literacy, agriculture, and time and money management. “People came to a workshop with a look of despair,” said Dan. “They left with a glimmer of hope.” Teresa said that she enjoyed meeting with the women for Bible study. She used a technique of oral Bible induction that works well in this environment where few people, especially women, ever learn to read.

The Janzens each had a Sudanese ministry partner with whom they worked. For Dan it was Michael, farm manager at Memorial Christian Hospital, and for Teresa, it was Mary, women and children’s ministry coordinator at the hospital. Their partners served as interpreters and cultural guides, but more importantly, the Janzens worked to transfer the knowledge and skills they taught in their workshops to Michael and Mary so that the work could continue long after the Janzens came home.

Teresa Janzen, Kuyper College senior development representative, and her husband, Dan, recently returned from a mission trip to South Sudan. Decades of war and conflict have left the country in poverty and the people with very few resources with which to rebuild. As the newest country on the planet, South Sudan is in need of development, and that is where the Janzens deployed their skills in some of the most remote areas of the country.

In addition to her experience in fund development, Teresa completed Kuyper’s certificate program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in 2014. “I not only learned how to teach English,” said Janzen. “I learned how to teach any subject across cultural and language barriers.” Dan used his experience and education in agricultural development to embrace the challenge of the sub-Saharan climate of central South Sudan.

Together, the Janzens travelled to villages among the Dinka people—one of the largest ethnic groups in the country—to teach biblical stewardship and life skills such as literacy, agriculture, and time and money management. “People came to a workshop with a look of despair,” said Dan. “They left with a glimmer of hope.” Teresa said that she enjoyed meeting with the women for Bible study. She used a technique of oral Bible induction that works well in this environment where few people, especially women, ever learn to read.

The Janzens each had a Sudanese ministry partner with whom they worked. For Dan it was Michael, farm manager at Memorial Christian Hospital, and for Teresa, it was Mary, women and children’s ministry coordinator at the hospital. Their partners served as interpreters and cultural guides, but more importantly, the Janzens worked to transfer the knowledge and skills they taught in their workshops to Michael and Mary so that the work could continue long after the Janzens came home.

Peter Greer and Chris Horst with Anna Haggard; Mission Drift: the Unspoken Crisis Facing Leaders, Charities, and Churches. *Bethany House Publishers; Minneapolis, Minnesota; 2014.*
In My Words: The 2-2-2 Chain

Jeff Fisher, Ph.D.—Assistant Professor of Theological Studies

In my final sermon as a pastor in Prinsburg, Minnesota, I preached on the Scripture text that I consider the summary of God’s calling on my life. In 2 Timothy 2, Paul charges his young protégé, Timothy, to remember the gospel (v. 8-9), to remind others of the gospel (v. 14), and to do his best to correctly handle the Word of truth (v. 15). More specifically, in v. 2, he gives the charge to Timothy to be a faithful teacher of the great truths of the Christian faith: “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”

As I was concluding my time serving that local church, our family was preparing to move to Kathmandu, Nepal. My wife was pregnant and our oldest son was not quite 2 years old. But we knew that God was calling us to live this passage in a context that greatly needs it. Less than 2 percent of the population in Nepal identifies as Christian, but over the last 60 years (when Christianity was really first allowed a presence in Nepal), there has been an explosion of growth. As a result, Nepali Christian leaders identify the greatest need as equipping godly leaders for this young, growing church.

For as long as my visa would allow me to be there (one semester), God provided me the opportunity to pass on what had been entrusted to me. My wife and I had the opportunity to play a part in training the next generation of reliable Christian leaders so they could be qualified to teach others.

Now I have the privilege of living out this calling at Kuyper College. As we seek to effectively train students to make a difference in God’s world, I get to pass on these great truths here. My teachers, pastors and mentors were faithful to “entrust” the things of the gospel to me and equip me to teach others. Now it is my turn in this great chain: the gospel → teacher → reliable, qualified people → more reliable, qualified people. I desire to pass on these great truths in a way that helps to qualify our students as “reliable people” who will also join this great chain by teaching others, who can then teach even more people and keep this chain going. Then, by the grace of God, we will impact the world for Christ.

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

Stewardship: Scholarships Make a Difference

At the annual Kuyper Scholarship Dinner, senior Jae Won Park, a pre-seminary studies major and recipient of a Kuyper International Scholarship, shared with the audience of donors about the Korean church. “It has grown rapidly,” he said. “It is one of the largest in the world today.”

Yet according to Jae Won, there is still a lot of work to be done. He explained:

“In Romans 10 Paul talks about how faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. He also talks about ‘How are they to hear without someone preaching?’ and then he adds these words, ‘How are they to preach unless they are sent?’ Yes, God is the ultimate sender. God sent me from South Korea to the States, and He will send me from the States to South Korea, but He delights to work with us. He delights to use us as the means to achieve His ends. When you generously invest in the lives of the future generation, when you generously invest in the lives of Kuyper students, you are sending us; you are sending me—with God—to preach and to reach the lost. You are making a difference in the world!”

There are hundreds of stories like Jae Won’s among past and present Kuyper students. Stories made possible by the generosity of friends of Kuyper like you who have invested in the lives of our students by giving to both the Kuyper Scholarship and General Fund. Your gifts have made, and continue to make, a difference. More than 98 percent of Kuyper students receive financial aid and scholarships, with the average financial aid package being nearly $14,000 per year. Last year, Kuyper awarded more than $4.2 million in financial aid.

Would you again consider coming alongside Kuyper students like Jae Won and investing in each of their lives as they prepare to join Kuyper alumni who are transforming communities through God’s grace? Your support, combined with their training and enthusiasm, creates a partnership that is reaching around the globe with the love of Christ.

For more information on how to give to Kuyper’s Scholarship or General Fund, please contact Ken Capisciolto at kcapisciolto@kuyper.edu or at 616-988-3676.
When I graduated from high school in 1994, I didn’t know what I wanted to study in college, so I took a gap year. During the summer of 1995, I worked at Cran-Hill Ranch summer camp as a wrangler. While there, people started affirming my ability to work patiently with kids that were scared of horses. Also at camp, I met a few Kuyper students. They told me about youth ministry. I didn’t know that was something you could do as a career! So I applied and started during the winter semester of 1996.

It was a life-changing experience. Before coming to Kuyper, I had no experience with people from other cultures. At Kuyper, I also received a deeper understanding of my faith and myself. Not only did I grow academically, but I also grew in self-confidence and leadership. Additionally, there was the excitement of knowing many of us would literally be all over the world after we graduated. I am still in touch with many of my classmates through social media where we can encourage and support each other.

I came to HOPAC to be an academic counselor. God had created this job just for me! HOPAC already had a college counselor that worked with college admissions. I was hired partially to help him, but mostly to help prepare students for life after HOPAC—especially with the transition from high school to college. My time at Kuyper, my eight-year experience in a university working with international students, and my master’s degree thesis on the university’s role in the transition from host culture to home culture for third culture kids had prepared me well. I was also encouraged to take my camera around with me. The person who had been the school photographer the previous year had left.

At HOPAC my eyes have been opened to the struggles of being a teenager in Tanzania. Parents are working early morning to late evening six days a week, or may even be working in another country to try to make enough money to support the family and provide an education for their children. We talk about a generation gap in the States, but that is minimal to what our students are juggling here. Our students are watching Western movies and television. Yet their families are only one or two generations removed from tribal villages. I had a couple students over to work on a project. It was the first time they had been invited over to a teacher’s home. As we sat and talked, they asked how long I was staying in Tanzania. One student said she felt staff came, “did their time,” and left. Until that point I thought that with my two-year contract, my role here was short term. Maybe I would renew, but I would decide later. I had been living in a studio apartment and hadn’t really made it home. Why buy anything if I was going to be leaving in a year or two? As we were talking that night, I changed my perspective. I decided to stay until God said it was time to go home. I found a new place to live where I could have students over. I made it home. Recently, I had a few 11th grade students come over to study math. Not that I could help them, but it was a comfortable atmosphere conducive to studying. As they left, one student said, “I didn’t know we could do that.” I laughed and said, “That is what I meant when I said you are welcome anytime.” She said, “I didn’t know we were THAT welcomed.”

While all of our students are required to take Bible courses and attend assembly/chapel, they are not required to be believers to attend the school. It is a unique atmosphere to teach in—thirty-plus countries represented with Christian, Muslim, Hindu and other faiths. From conversations with my Muslim students about the differences in our religions to conversations with Christian students wanting to know how to witness to their classmates, the soil is rich. I have no plans to leave. I am here to be their academic counselor, but also I am here to be their mentor, their friend, their big sister. They feel it is safe to ask me any question.

As a missionary I am not working in the bush, squatter camps or slums. It wasn’t until I had been here a year that I could confidently and unapologetically say that my ministry is my students at HOPAC. Even though our students might not be the most economically disadvantaged—and most are far from wealthy—they do not all know Christ. They need role models and people to invest in them since they have the best potential to have influence in their country in the future. If they are taught to see injustice, poverty and corruption, they will be in a position to be change makers.
theological frustrations, prompted me to head to Kuyper, in large part to escape, but also to find answers. It was during that time that my faith became my own. But it wasn’t intellectual pursuits that captivated my heart; it was a relationship. I became close friends with Dr. Felch. During my first stint at Kuyper, he, unbeknownst to him, became a father figure to me. Later, when I returned to Kuyper to finish my degree, he became my spiritual role model, one of the few people I aspire to be like in most areas of my life. The thing that always struck me deepest about Dr. Felch was that he lives his theology. It’s not just an intellectual endeavor, but daily living. Through his classes and through our friendship, I finally understood what living the Christian life was all about.

After marrying Gretchen in 2005 and graduating from Kuyper in 2011, we moved to Tanzania in 2013 with our three children: Isaac 7, Hope 4, and Geneva. I serve at HOPAC at the secondary level as a Bible teacher. I never in my life would have thought of myself as a missionary and even today have a hard time wrestling with that name: “missionary.” To me it did and still does conjure up images of people living in remote, far-off villages, learning new languages and living in mud huts. For me, my calling is to be a teacher, and I want to be obedient to whatever God calls me to do. And that is working at HOPAC, where 60 percent of students are Muslim, Hindu or atheist, and where the student body is comprised of one-third children of missionaries, one-third Tanzanian children, and one-third children of expatriates living in Tanzania. Many of the Tanzanian and expatriate students come from wealthy families who are looking for a solid education with access to college and universities in the West (Britain and North America). Many of these students will come back to Tanzania and hold prominent positions in business, law and politics, and shape and mold the next generation of Tanzania. Others will do similar things in their passport countries. In this way, HOPAC is truly strategic for spreading the gospel throughout the world and preparing students to be servants, leaders and stewards in God’s world.

As a family, we have really enjoyed living in and learning a new culture. My wife and I often say to each other, “We are living in Africa!” Sometimes it’s hard to conceptualize just what a distance there is between us and where we started from in Grand Rapids! We also really enjoy our friends and community here. We are now friends with folks from all over the world, something that would not have been possible if we had not come here! Our great joy is seeing students at HOPAC and people at God’s Tribe (our church) come to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. It never gets old praying with someone to respond to God’s call on his or her life, and by God’s grace, we’ve had those opportunities to lead students and adults to Christ.

Distinctives
continued from cover

Faculty
Our faculty-to-student ratio—1-to-15—allows our students to receive highly personalized and customized instruction from a dedicated faculty known for their subject matter expertise. This also provides professors and students the opportunity to establish life-enriching relationships as they get to know each other outside of the classroom.

Community
Kuyper’s student body representation of more than 25 denominations allows students to live and interact with others of like faith yet different denominational practices. We also place a high value on welcoming cultures from all over the world. These denominational and cultural differences provide a representation of God’s love for the whole world, as well as visible and tangible examples of how to live that love through our relationship with others.

Internships
In partnership with nationally recognized ministries, non-profits, governmental entities and business organizations, Kuyper’s robust internship program, which is part of our standard curriculum, provides students the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they’ve acquired in the classroom to everyday situations.

Global Education
To provide a broader global perspective of places and people beyond their present environment, students have learning and service opportunities not only in the United States, but also in locations throughout the world, including Israel, China, Kenya, Japan, Switzerland, South Africa, Mexico, Ecuador and Romania, among many others.

Christian Leadership
At Kuyper we practice Christ-modeled leadership. We equip our students to become Christian leaders by training them to take responsibility for who they are; to accept where God has placed them; and with the skills He’s given them, make a godly impact on those around them.

Exceptional Value
Kuyper provides an exceptional value by ensuring that our high-quality education is very affordable. Our tuition is significantly lower than comparable Christian colleges—an average of $6,000 less per year. In addition, Kuyper offers many scholarship opportunities that help to further reduce costs.
Internship in Ecuador

Editor’s Note: Social work majors Elizabeth Vogt and Amanda Van’t Hul—December 2014 graduates—spent four months in Quito, Ecuador, during their social work practicum internship. They worked under the auspices of Compassion International in the Carmen Bajo Mission, serving the children and teen moms of one of Quito’s impoverished neighborhoods.

“In 2012 I traveled to Zambia with my church,” said Amanda. “While I was there, God really began to change my heart and open my eyes to work outside the United States. Hope College, where I was attending at the time, didn’t offer international internships for social work majors, so I transferred to Kuyper. After a long process of researching internship options, God opened my heart to Ecuador.”

According to Elizabeth, throughout her high school years she wanted to study abroad. “I chose to go to Israel my freshman year at Kuyper,” she said. “However, I really wanted a more adventurous trip that could also fit my internship, and Ecuador seemed to be the perfect fit.”

During their time in Ecuador, Amanda and Elizabeth worked in preschool classrooms as teacher aids for children ages 3-5. “We also worked one day a week with teen moms helping them to develop and implement life skills which included a baking class—in Spanish and at high altitude, no less!” said Elizabeth. “It was hard and at times discouraging work, but totally worth it!” Amanda agrees. “Liz and I had to take the initiative in a culture and language that we were both very unfamiliar with. Riding buses three hours each day—one-and-a-half hours each way—to and from our internship. There were definitely days that Liz and I both wanted to scream from having to sit on three separate buses for so long, but then we realized that buses were great places to take little naps. Yet, regardless of the difficulties, we were able to truly invest in the lives of the preschool kids and the teenage moms and build strong relationships with them.”

According to Elizabeth, her time in Ecuador was more difficult than she had imagined. “Being a minority and feeling discouraged because of not knowing the language led to many times ofloneliness and homesickness,” she said. “But God was so faithful in those moments to point me to His call for the orphan, the outcast, and those who feel like they do not fit in. My minority status had an end date after four months, but there are so many people in this world whose status does not end—people who are rejected because of the color of their skin, their religion, or where they come from. So many people that need to know that it’s okay to come to Jesus just as they are, even if they do not feel like it is enough.”

Both Elizabeth and Amanda said that God taught them “so much” during their time in Ecuador. “I know that I could write a novel about all that God taught me while in Ecuador,” said Amanda. “One of the things God made very evident to me is the importance and necessity of community. In Ecuador, God quickly opened my eyes to the fact that there are communities out there that are living wholeheartedly for the Lord. The staff and students I shared my Ecuador experience with loved, supported, encouraged and challenged me in ways that I didn’t realize were possible by a body of people. They showed me that there is a way to do community that is truly seeking to live in complete obedience while also extending grace because no one is perfect.”

Elizabeth said that even during moments when she felt worthless, God was there. “While teaching the kids in a language I did not quite understand, when I could not complete a task correctly because I couldn’t quite grasp the directions... those moments were when Jesus was looking to draw me to Him,” she said. “When another taxi driver took advantage and overcharged me, I had to decide whether I was going to reflect Christ or not! I am so thankful I had four months in this beautiful country to see God work things out, moment by moment. Those kids did not love me from the start, and I did not know how we would make it through. But by the end of my time there, they stole my heart, and God showed me just how far He reaches, past cultural boundaries and language barriers. He reaches through hearts, including mine. He can redeem and restore anything!”

Now that they have graduated, Amanda and Elizabeth are taking different, but in some ways similar, paths. “I am moving to Texas to pursue social work jobs with the foster care system,” said Elizabeth. “I am excited to see how God uses my passion for restoration in that community!” I would like to work for a few years to pay off my student loans and then allow God to lead me somewhere overseas in long-term missionary work. I have a dream to plant churches that can be the main provider of social services from the source of it all—Jesus!”

“I’m not opposed to moving back to Ecuador or to another Spanish-speaking country,” said Amanda. “One thing’s for sure, I want to continue learning Spanish regardless. Ecuador will never be just a memory that I talk about. What God did in my life through my Ecuadorian experience changed how I look at life, how I live life, and how I will continue to make decisions as I now venture into this new stage of my life.”
Class Notes

Marriages:

Kaase Boer (2012) and Kelly Oosterbroek (2014) were married on October 11, 2014.

Matthew Rahme (2013) and Kailey Spencer were married on December 27, 2014.

Benjamin Campbell and Joelle Garcia (2014) were married on December 28, 2014.

Matthew Hochhalter (2014) and Lori Nederveld were married on January 2, 2015.

Births:


Ryan Kimmel (2009) and his wife, Tiffany, along with big sister Kennedy, welcomed baby boy Jedidiah Lee on February 2, 2015.


Homegoings:

Rev. James Medendorp Sr. (1956) passed away on September 8, 2014. He was 79.*

Ruth Slagter (1948) passed away on September 20, 2014. She was 92.

Ken Navis (1956) passed away on January 3, 2015. He was 79.*

Eloise Van Laar, wife of the late Kuyper Professor Jack Van Laar, passed away on March 28, 2015.

*Besides being alumni, Rev. Medendorp Sr. and Mr. Navis were brothers-in-law.

Kuyper’s Gala

Impacting the World for Christ was the theme of this year’s Kuyper Spring Celebration Gala held on April 13 at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. Doug DeVos, President of Amway, brought the keynote address to the more than 400 assembled friends of the College. During the evening, the H.J. Kuiper Founder’s Service Award was presented to Ben and Cleo Boersma in appreciation for their many years of faithful involvement and support of the College, and their service to the West Michigan community.

Commencement

Friday, April 24, 2015, 7:30 p.m.
at Sunshine Community Church

Kuyper Experience Days

For a detailed schedule visit www.kuyper.edu/visit.

Events

Marcs Andreas, professor of business leadership, joined the West Michigan Colleges & Universities Group (WMCUG) of Business Department Chairs.

Teresa Renkema, professor of intercultural communication, recently presented at the MiTESOL (Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) conference on the subject of differentiated teaching.

Dr. Richelle White, associate professor of youth ministry, was the keynote speaker at the Christian Community Development Association West Michigan Conference. She spoke on “Empowering Youth.”

Dr. Nick Kroeze, Kuyper College president, presented a three week series on faith and science at First Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.

News

• Marc Andreas, professor of business leadership, joined the West Michigan Colleges & Universities Group (WMCUG) of Business Department Chairs.

• Teresa Renkema, professor of intercultural communication, recently presented at the MiTESOL (Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) conference on the subject of differentiated teaching.

• Dr. Richelle White, associate professor of youth ministry, was the keynote speaker at the Christian Community Development Association West Michigan Conference. She spoke on “Empowering Youth.”

• Dr. Nick Kroeze, Kuyper College president, presented a three week series on faith and science at First Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.
I was born in Kamperveen, Netherlands, but moved to Listowel, Ontario, in 1999. I grew up on a dairy farm for the first six years of my life in the Netherlands, and then with my parents, my three older brothers and one younger sister, I moved to another dairy farm in Canada. I had quite a normal and blessed life growing up, having had the opportunity to attend Christian schools from elementary through high school.

I have known of Christ and known Him as God all my life! Praying to God not as an impersonal being but as someone who heard me when I prayed, led me to believe. And while there were times of doubt, confusion, or even short periods of rejection, God always held me and by grace made Himself known when nothing else made sense. I owe many thanks to cadet counsellors, catechism teachers, youth group leaders, and other caring adults in my church who gave a great environment for faith to take root and grow. As for my own receptivity to the interest in digging deeper in the Word and being engaged in what I was being taught, I can only credit the Holy Spirit who is the provider of faith and new life in Christ.

Heading into 12th grade I began looking into colleges. Having considered a couple of other schools, Kuyper kept coming back for me to look into. Both my pastor and a teacher/guidance counselor at my high school recommended it as they thought it matched with what I wanted to head into. After deliberate prayer and weighing out the pros and cons between Kuyper and other schools, I decided on Kuyper because of its ministry and leadership emphasis and the fact that I would be earning a double major—intercultural studies and Bible/theology.

Coming to Kuyper I hoped to receive a hands-on education because of their low student to professor ratio and Kuyper’s emphasis on being God’s agent of grace into the world both near and far. Involvement through on-campus leadership and off-campus volunteering was something I valued, and I have been able to do both these things in different ways that I imagined—volunteering with Youth for Christ’s Juvenile Justice Ministries where I have a visiting and mentoring role to those in the juvenile system in Kent County. In addition, I have found amazing friends who challenge and encourage me intellectually and spiritually—all part of the Kuyper community which is deeply caring and wants to serve others well. And the community includes professors who are knowledgeable, personable, caring and approachable. It has been a blessing to have dinner at their houses and learn from them outside the classroom. While in high school I was not the student I am now, as Kuyper has led me to enjoy academia. Kuyper is a place where students can flourish in multiple aspects of life. That includes my internship which will hopefully be in Toronto, Ontario, to work with refugees and immigrants. I am excited to do inner city work with people from different religions, cultures and ethnicities, and I am hoping that my internship will reveal what work I am truly passionate about to a specific degree.

All that being said, whether God calls me to serve refugees, those in prison, as a missionary abroad, or to look after people in another pastoral role with a Master of Divinity degree, it is up to His will. While I may be unsure of the details of my future vocation, I am certain of my future, which is to serve God and His people faithfully by seeking labor that will be fruitful for His glory.