

Remarked

Easter, March 2016
Volume 6, Issue 2

ABOUT THAT 'F' WORD

BY CORA WILMS

So I'm in a book club that meets in a public library on the last Wednesday of the month. We usually rely on the public libraries' book club sets, multiple copies of various titles. As a group we look at the list of titles available, and with the help of short reviews, come up with a list of the ones we think we'd like to read. Our librarian then orders the books months in advance. Sometimes it's easy: we have read stuff by that author before, or we saw the movie, or we've heard good things about it.

But sometimes some of us feel betrayed because of what the reviews didn't say. We come, with our Christian values, across an unexpected and unnecessary explicit description of a sexual act in a book that was otherwise a winner: i.e. *Water for Elephants*. One of my more conservative Christian friends has zero tolerance for vulgar words and cannot overlook or read through the occasional F word in an otherwise good story. Our January selection fit into this category.

My friend had emailed to ask if I'd read the January book already, *The Rosie Project*. She pointed out that it had coarse swearing in it and she was having trouble reading it. "Forewarned is fore-armed" the saying goes and with that in mind, I started reading. It is the first book by this author and highly recommended by other writers whose works I had read. How bad could it be?



Not too bad at all. It's a good plot, a fast read and hard to put down. The middle-aged single man, Don, a geneticist, longs for a girlfriend. He ends up with a woman who is a lot different than his preconceived expectations. The relationship begins when she has questions that she needs his professional help with. Rosie's mother died when she was almost too young to remember and she was raised by her not-very-nurturing father. Rosie, now a medical student, wonders whether he is her biological dad. That's where the geneticist comes in. In conversation she uses the 'F' word frequently. It is her character. But other than that, she is good medicine for Don, gets him out of a rut, updates his wardrobe and challenges his worldview. Don asks her to move in with him, but she insists on getting married. What's not to like about that ending? Most of us like happy endings with all the loose ends tied up. This one is like that. With some humorous twists for good measure.

By Graeme Simsion, *The Rosie Project* and its sequel, *The Rosie Effect*

The book club selection for March is *Lives of Girls and Women*, by Alice Munro.

IT'S JUST A FLOWER...

BY PASTOR BEN

Matthew 28:1-10

"So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples." (Matthew 28:8)

With the disappearing of the snow our family has had the opportunity to begin hiking the trails in the area again. We certainly try to get out as often as we can through the winter months, but there is something great about getting outdoors without being weighed down with winter gear. One of the greatest joys on these early 'spring' walks is seeing the world through our children's eyes. Moriah's face shines with delight as she points out the crocuses beginning to appear along the path. Each new bud she finds only increases her joy and even produces some laughter. "Spring is here Daddy! Spring is here!"



Moriah exclaims. The response from her brothers is usually less enthusiastic; "It's just a flower...let's keep walking..."

In many ways it is 'just a flower,' but I am beginning to realize more and more the beauty of the four seasons we experience. There is much to enjoy in each of the seasons in the Kawartha Lakes, but there is also a lot to learn from changing seasons. The cycle of life that occurs within the seasons reminds me of God's providing hand in creation. With summer we see the provision of a climate that allows a variety of crops to grow. In the fall we gather in the harvest giving thanks to God for the many blessings He gives us. With winter we see nature go to sleep, the leaves disappear; a blanket of snow covers the crops, the cold sting of the climate lies to rest the land. Perhaps this cold sting reminds us of

Cont'd on page 3.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Jennings Creek Christian Reformed Church

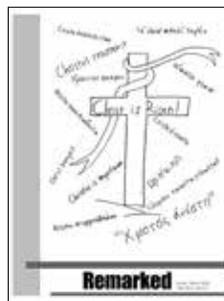
Pastor: Ben vanStraten
 Youth Leader: Kim Griffioen
 Secretary: Sarah Cooke
 Church Office: (705) 328-0177
 CAP Mental Health Network: 1-866-347-0041

Ministry Contacts

Cadets: Richard Wilms
 Gems: Nicole Barker
 Kid Connection: Grace van Oudenaren
 Coffee Break/ Story Hour: Kim Fintelman
 Women's Bible Study: Jeanne Dykstra
 Youth: Kim Griffioen

REMARKED: THE NEWSLETTER

Editors: Cora Wilms and Fiona Karelsen
 Layout: Jess Terpstra
 Cover: Jessie Rolandson



Next Issue: June 19, 2016
 Deadline for articles: May 29, 2016

MARY'S EASTER STORY

BY CYNTHIA SCOUT

Mary Magdalene enters and interrupts a meeting, loudly praising God and her Redeemer.

She says: I just cannot keep quiet. The biggest news event EVER happened this morning. May I tell you about it?

My name is Mary Magdalene and I have a wonderful story to tell. You know our history. When God created the earth it was so beautiful. The people, our ancestors, were perfect. They were created in God's image and God gave them a free will. However, they chose the wrong thing.

The perfect relationship between God and His people was broken. But with that break came also a promise: "I will send someone to heal that break—the promised Messiah".

Many years went by, hundreds went by. People hardly thought about that promise anymore.

In the meantime the Roman Empire stretched out its hand to our country and we lived under a cruel occupation. Oh, if only our promised king would come and free us!

About 30 years ago we heard a strange story about a star presumably leading to a place where a special child was born. There were also shepherds who told about angels singing in the sky. But would not the king have been informed about an important birth? After all, the people who had seen and heard it were only shepherds..... It made news but it was soon forgotten.

Years went by.

Until about three years ago, this rabbi appeared. He traveled around our country, and oh, did he speak!! We were mesmerized by him. He was so revolutionary! Where we had been told, "An eye for an eye", he said, "Love your enemies". When someone grabs your coat, give him your shirt too."

He was so good. No one saw or heard him ever do anything wrong. And not only talk! The miracles he performed! You won't believe it. He healed people who had absolutely no chance of recovery. Blind people SAW. Lame people did not just walk, they JUMPED AND DANCED! Lepers who suffered from that dreadful leprosy were completely and instantly healed.

Cont'd on page 6.

Cont'd from page 2.

death. Perhaps it is in winter we begin to lose hope. But as the white blanket is slowly pulled from the land, creation begins to awaken and come to life. As the crocus begins to bloom and the birds sing a new song the promise of life comes to fruition.

The promise of life in the season of spring reminds me of the future hope we celebrate at Easter. It may just be a flower, yet it points to so much more: it points to the hope of new life. The joy Moriah experiences at the sight of these flowers encourages me to celebrate the resurrection with the same enthusiasm. Her desire to share the news that 'spring is here' challenges me to share the good news of the resurrection with others. For the cold

tomb where our Saviour lay for three days could not contain Him. Jesus bursting forth from the grave provides us with the future hope of everlasting life. As the first witnesses of the empty tomb were filled with joy, we too experience anew the joy of resurrection at Easter. Truthfully this is a future hope we are to celebrate every time we gather as brothers and sisters in Christ.

It is this future hope that brings believers so much joy at Easter. Easter is to be a time filled with joy, laughter and love. The grave is empty! Death has lost its sting, God's love has won. Christ is risen! He has risen indeed!

BECOMING A WIDOW

BY JEANNE DYKSTRA

Our church, with its small membership, counts many widows among its families. I have been asked to tell about my experience as a widow. Many years ago I did this for the Christian Courier over a number of instalments. At that time I received many letters and phone calls from readers, showing appreciation, loving concern, and comments about how they had learned from my story. And also requests to please continue telling the story. I realized how I had made myself vulnerable, and it was painful to open myself up, and go back to the painful journey from the very beginning. Most of my writing was done late at night when the children were asleep. Now so many years later, should I go through that again?

I decided yes, even if only one person was blessed.

It was in the last week of August 1979 when we moved from Bowmanville to Grand Bend, Ontario, straight across the Province. With my husband, Bob, and our five children ranging in age from seven to eighteen we made the decision after much prayer and counsel to make the move.

It was not easy as we left many friends and relatives behind. Bob had lived a very busy life, not only starting a grocery/delicatessen business with his brother, but also being involved in the Chamber of Commerce as its treasurer. Membership had dwindled to zero. People saw him as 'new blood', and with his love for others, and the town, he was able to get most businesses to join forces again with the Chamber. He was often away from home, but I saw it my duty to keep the home fires burning, and enjoyed it.

As time went on and with his leadership abilities he was asked to run for Town Council. He became a councillor with an overwhelming majority. I clearly recall him saying, "Who am I that I may do this?" Little did we realize how complicated and time consuming this would be. He often needed to make difficult decisions, and at times would ask my opinion. We always prayed together for wisdom, and looked for God's guidance in His word. When

the area became a Region, he again ran for the position and became a full-time councillor. This also meant becoming a member or chairman of many committees: financial, planning, building & zoning, children's aid, etc. It meant he was seldom home anymore. He also sold his part of the business to his brother, feeling it wasn't fair as he was so often away from the business.

Yet there was little family time left, and with children becoming teenagers, they needed both parents. So that's how he became manager of a mobile home park in Grand Bend, also earning a real estate license.

The children were enrolled in the public school and Forest High School, while our oldest son attended University of Toronto. Finding no homes for rent, but against our better judgment, we bought a small house near Lake Huron for little down payment, hoping that our home in Bowmanville would sell. But it didn't and Bob became quite concerned about that.

In November he went to see a heart specialist in London as he'd had a heart attack eight years earlier. Many tests were done and all came back excellent. We all rejoiced and thanked God for his mercy and goodness.

But only weeks after such good news, he suffered a fatal heart attack on December 18, 1979 and died at the age of 46. As I travelled home from London, the children in school, I did not know how to tell them. I prayed again for wisdom (something that became my daily prayer), and he put the words in my mouth. Even today the children remember that moment.

I learned to walk day by day, the children needing a strong mother in a strange surrounding. I did not feel strong, and became very possessive of my children when it looked like we would lose both homes. The bottom had fallen out of the real estate market and interest rates were soaring. The value of our Bowmanville house plummeted while the interest rate on our Grand Bend house went up to

Cont'd on page 5.

Cont'd from page 1.

22%. I pleaded with God—if he took my home, so be it, but....please do not take my children. I had to learn to hand my children over to him. I had to learn that they did not even belong to me; they were loaned for a time.

My new title, "widow" was very foreign to me. In the little evangelical church we attended, I was the youngest of a number of widows. All of them rallied around us, and I would often go to them for advice. It was a whole new unknown journey with many hills and valleys. I learned that God's word holds many promises for widows and the fatherless, and also promises for all of us. Praying for wisdom comes with a promise. If we lack wisdom, we will receive it in abundance. I relied on this promise and found it to be true. A well educated person is not necessarily a wise person.

I realized I could not handle this huge responsibility on my own insight. I was also asking God questions, "Why did this happen when he'd just had a "perfect" medical testing?" I did not ask "why did this happen to us?" but "why now?" when we felt so certain of being in God's will, hoping to spend more time at home. And our financial matters on a teeter-totter. None of the children were married yet nor had found their place in life. I learned to wear a mask, especially on their graduations and weddings and the birth of grandchildren. I did my best to teach them gradually to become independent and not be tied to my apron strings. They all did well in school and I showed them to use their wings. But, at times, I said: I didn't think you'd fly that far away!!.. One in Amsterdam and one in Seattle. Ouch! The distance hurts and will always hurt.

I also helped the children with homework at all levels up to university. Through it all I was gaining an education myself. It helped me when I went back to college once I'd moved to Lindsay. Around the dinner table I encouraged the children to talk about Daddy. They were afraid to talk, not wanting to upset me, but it was so good to open up. It brought

both sadness and laughter as we thought about 'when'. Yet the 'never again' hit us all.

One learns to live as a widow, but never becomes comfortable with it. It is a very lonely life and at times having a meal in front of the TV seems good. Warmed up meals can also become a 'bad habit'.

Resignation is not acceptance. Accept pain without bitterness. From our acceptance of personal loss we can grow in compassion for others who are hurting.

As couples, young or old, prepare. Talk about the possibility of having to carry on alone. And make a plan. It may be difficult, but not nearly as difficult as being unprepared.

Then live life to God's glory, joyfully and unafraid of what might happen. And remember the little things each day: a touch, a hug, a shared moment.

And above all, end each day together in prayer.

MARCH

BY BETTY RINZEMA

and it is back to Daylight Saving Time.
 Longer days of sunshine are real fine.
 A time to clean up from winter's wrath,
 And again be able to walk down a nature path.
 To see green peeking through here and there...
 Birds are nesting with great care.
 All is very new again,
 And we get our usual days of rain,
 To help bring all to life and grow,
 After months of cold, ice and snow.
 So happily we put winter in the past,
 And look forward to flowers that into summer will last.

WORKING ALONGSIDE

BY LEO KUIPERIJ

The Christian Reformed Church in the Dominican Republic (D.R.) started in about 1975 when small, rural congregations mostly of immigrant Haitian sugar cane plantation workers listened to Spanish *Back to God Hour* radio broadcasts and liked what they heard. They wrote and CRWM missionaries stationed in Puerto Rico began to visit, beginning a partnership which assisted the churches to grow and organize together. Today, this vibrant denomination continues to grow mostly in poor urban areas today, still mostly among the Haitian community, with nearly 200 congregations, about 12,000 adherents and about 125 ordained pastors. *(Taken from CRWM information flyer)*

Today, one full time missionary remains in the D.R. One of his tasks is to facilitate short term mission teams to help in construction projects. Several co-ordinators help with the teams by doing the hands on things such as ordering building materials, arranging food and lodging and being a chauffeur for the teams that help. I worked with Duane Postma, from Iowa.

The first team that I was a part of came in late January. We all had flights cancelled due to a snow storm in the eastern US. Several were 3 days late in arriving and it limited the work we were able to accomplish, as this was supposed to be a 1 week trip.

The day I arrived, I heard of 2 tragic incidents that had just occurred. In one of the churches, during a worship service, suddenly a young man entered and ran up the aisle, being chased by another young man. As soon as he got to the front, he was shot and killed by the person chasing him. The shooter then left as fast as he entered. I did not hear anything else about this incident or how it was dealt with. The other event concerned Mario Matos, probably the mostly highly educated national in the church. He teaches at the institute where pastors are trained. His brother was a police officer in the capital city. He was killed for no other reason than for the police issue gun he was

carrying. Violence is always present and wherever we go, we are careful in heeding the advice of those who are leading us.

As I mentioned already, we try very hard to work alongside the nationals, getting to know them and helping them realize their goal of seeing the buildings completed. We take no ownership of anything, we just come to help and leave again. We may visit at a later time, which encourages both the churches and the teams. The dedication of the pastors and some of the members is inspiring. They receive no monetary pay, but the members try to meet the pastors' needs in other ways.

The second team I helped with worked in Pedernales, in the south west part of the country, near Haiti. The need for a new house was very obvious to us; his house was just a small shack. Even though most of the church members also lived in small shacks, they were not jealous in any way. They felt happy for their pastor and many came out to help.

If there is anyone who would like to join me on a future trip, please speak with me. Some people have indicated that they would like to do this someday. Perhaps, "someday" is the winter of 2017. Consider this opportunity prayerfully, I realize it's not for everyone but is God calling you?





2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.

1. When our time was over, we all gathered for prayer. New Testaments in Spanish were handed out. The church members will install the doors and window shutters.
2. The metal brackets we installed are called hurricane ties. They were donated by Frank Geerlinks of Home Building Centre and Don Dyck of Kingdon Lumber. The D.R. suffered much when hurricane Georges came through in 1998. Almost 400 lives were lost and many buildings were destroyed so they want to be better prepared for the next one. We were able to retrofit previous buildings with these brackets because we I was able to bring 250 of them. These brackets were appreciated very much.
3. The last sheet was nailed down in the rain, making things a bit slippery. We felt blessed to be able to finish the roof because the locals have very little experience with roofing.
4. As long as the person on the left stays where he is, the person in the middle will be fine. The scaffolding came from 6 hours away and so we made do with the few frames we had. The 2x4s were later used as rafters.
5. The children were eager to help and most of them did not go to school. Some do, needing to walk about a half hour. The present pastor's house is to the left and the church is to the right, in the background.
6. All the poured concrete, including footings, columns and beams have rebar. The children catch on quickly and gladly help out.
7. The sand and gravel were brought by truck and dumped on the side of the street. The water was pumped into an existing cistern. Cement bags are stored in the church with the rebar and the tools. Everything was mixed by hand right on the street. It's great to work together. Who is helping whom?