Miracle Baby

Young couple's adoption process marked by unusual circumstances

By Scott Noble

SAINT PAUL — David and Anna Guntlisbergen were standing before the judge in Fort Portal, Uganda. Their adoption odyssey was at its final juncture. Earlier that day—June 12, 2013—the bishop of the orphanage where they had just picked up their son told the young couple, “A lot of people had concerns when they saw how young [you] looked at the home. We had a board meeting, and we decided that we’re not going to let you adopt Ronald.”

The couple didn’t know what to say or do. They were dressed up for the court and met with the judge, telling them he would make his final decision after hearing what the bishop had to say. However, there was a catch: ‘told the young couple, “A lot of people had concerns when they saw how young [you] looked at the home. We had a board meeting, and we decided that we’re not going to let you adopt Ronald.”’

The bishop of the orphanage where they had just picked up their son told the young couple, “A lot of people had concerns when they saw how young [you] looked at the home. We had a board meeting, and we decided that we’re not going to let you adopt Ronald.”

Moved by their words, the bishop allowed the Guntlisbergens to go to court and meet with the judge, telling them he would make his final decision after hearing what the bishop had to say. However, there was a catch: ‘told the young couple, “A lot of people had concerns when they saw how young [you] looked at the home. We had a board meeting, and we decided that we’re not going to let you adopt Ronald.”’

The bishop of the orphanage where they had just picked up their son told the young couple, “A lot of people had concerns when they saw how young [you] looked at the home. We had a board meeting, and we decided that we’re not going to let you adopt Ronald.”

By Scott Noble

MINNEAPOLIS — Minnesota Twins catcher Joe Mauer has a驱动 for giving back to the community, according to Twins President and Chief Operating Officer Dave St. Peter.

Mauer has been involved with the Twins Care program since it was established in 2001, and he has made numerous charitable contributions over the years. The program provides support for a variety of initiatives, including education, health and wellness, and community and social services.

For Mauer, it’s about giving back to the community that has supported him throughout his career.

“Joe has been a great ambassador for the Twins and the city of Minneapolis,” St. Peter said. “He’s really committed to giving back, and we’re very grateful for all he does.”

Mauer has been a vocal supporter of the Twins Care program, calling attention to the initiatives and sharing stories of how they are making a difference in the community. He’s also been involved in fundraising efforts, helping to bring in much-needed dollars for the program.

“The Twins Care program is an incredible resource for the community,” Mauer said. “By investing in education, health and wellness, and community services, we’re making sure kids have the opportunity to learn and grow.”

The program’s success can be attributed in part to the support of Mauer and other Twins players, who have donated their time and resources to help make a difference.

“I think Joe is a great example of what it means to be a professional athlete,” St. Peter said. “He’s not just good on the field, he’s good off the field as well.”

For more information on the Twins Care program, visit twins.com/care. And for more on Joe Mauer, visit twins.com/mauer.
Bethel Seminary addresses faith-work integration with initiative

By Chris Verbraken

SAINT PAUL — The average person will work 100,000 hours in his or her lifetime. While that number might seem astonishing, what's really surprising is that although work plays such a prominent role in our lives, very little attention is given to the topic in the Christian world.

Dr. Chris Armstrong, professor of Church History at Bethel Seminary, took note of this discrepancy, saying: "People want to know that their work, which takes up the bulk of their waking hours, has meaning. Unfortunately, the church often does not help them make the most of this connection."

Armstrong believes that many Christians hold a view of work that is not in line with Scripture. He points out that it is easy to see work as a curse, "but Genesis shows us a God who works, and who commissioned humans to work as stewards of the earth."

"In one informal poll of church members mentioned by sociologist Robert Wuthnow, 90 percent claimed to have never heard any sermons or lessons on relating their faith to their work," he said. Another recent study revealed that 84 percent of Christians aged 18 to 29 professed to having no idea how the Bible applies to their professional interests.

Initiative leaders believe that the church as a whole can do more to communicate a healthy theology of vocation, helping congregations "see work through the eyes of faith."

This disconnect is what Armstrong wanted to address last summer when he made the decision to do his part to bring about change through starting the Work with Purpose Initiative at Bethel Seminary. The initiative involves students and faculty of the seminary, as well as local pastors and lay leaders, and is focused on communicating a biblical perspective of work.

Armstrong, with support from the Kern Foundation, set to work creating a strategic plan to help pastors and churches get a faith-informed vision for ordinary work. One of the ways the initiative is working towards this through a reading group focused on bringing "seminary students into lively conversation with ordained professionals and economics students from Bethel University's MBA program and the University of Minnesota's Science and Management department."

Students meet seven or eight times to discuss what the Bible applies to their professional interests.

The goal of the initiative is simply to talk about work, however, it is why Work with Purpose has partnered with seven churches in the Twin Cities area. Initiative leaders, working with a curriculum writer and a team at Christianity Today International, have developed a six-week course on faith, which is being offered in partner churches beginning in October.

These courses are facilitated by Bethel Seminary, also hosted a mini-conference October 10 and 11 called MISSION.WORK, which is open to anyone interested in the topic. The event is cost-free, features national plenary speakers and a host of session speakers, and provides opportunities for discussion and processing to get to practical faith-work integration in their lives.

Conference to address immigration and the gospel

MINNEAPOLIS — While immigration reform continues to be hotly debated in the nation's Capitol, local Christian leaders will gather at First Baptist Church in Minneapolis this month to discuss the role of the church and how Christians can take a leading role in demonstrating Christ's love to immigrants.

The Coming Together 2013 conference is titled "The Gospel, the Church and Immigration," and will take place on Saturday, Oct. 12. The event is presented by Transform Minnesota and the Minnesota Conference of Christian Churches.

Workshops will be led by local leaders and will provide practical information and training on crossing cultural divides, leading multi-national congregations and developing a church-based service center. More than a dozen immigrant leaders will lead panel discussions, including Bhutanese, Hispanic, Hmong, Indian, Karen, Liberian and Somali Christians.

The Rev. Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals and former senior pastor of Wooddale Church in Eden Prairie, will serve as the keynote speaker. He has served as a leading voice for immigration reform while maintaining a biblical focus.

Conference sponsors include Bethel University, Wooddale Church, Church of all Nations, the University of Minnesota - St. Paul, World Relief Minnesota and many others.

Pre-registration is $29 and includes lunch; same-day registration is also available but does not include lunch. Additional student discounts are also available.

MCCCL expands global outreach to Finland

MINNEAPOLIS — Last month, Scott Fischbach, global outreach director for Minnesota Concerned for Life (MCCCL), visited Finland and met with the country's Interior Minister Dr. Päivi Ruusinen. The conversation centered on abortion and women's health.

Recently, according to MCCCL, Ruusinen, who also leads Finland's Christian Democratic Party, indicated some controversy when she issued a public call to discuss the country's abortion laws, specifically how it does "not allow health care providers the right to refuse to participate in an abortion," according to MCCCL.

"It is a real honor to meet with the Interior Minister of Finland today," Fischbach said in a media statement. "Her courage to speak out for the unborn from the highest levels of government is inspiring. I am committed to a national conversation about abortion and keeping the human rights cause of life front of the people is a tremendous victory."

MCCCL Global Outreach — MCCCL GO — aims to work with faith-affirming groups on all continents with a "human rights message of equality and respect for all human beings" MCCCL GO is a pro-life NGO program of MCCCL.
homoruns... From page 1

"The power of this... when it's kids who get this or their mom and dad, this is about 22 cents," Crea said. "You get this highly nutritious meal, not just some beans or rice you're putting in a kid's belly, but they're getting a malnourished kid. Then you're distributing it in a way that you know is going to get there."

The reliability of delivery is a crucial element in food distribution worldwide—and one where Crea feels confident in FMSC's ability. "It's also an important consideration when donors determine where to send their money. "Will the food my donation purchased actually make it to those in need?" potential donors often ask.

That reliability "allows our partners to multiply that," Crea continued. "It provides them a foundation that they can then use. We can take our resources if we're a missionary in Haiti, and we can focus some of our health care for these kids. We can put these gifts in the hands of a doctor, knowing that they're healthy and nourished, they're going to actually learn something."

Questions about Living with Macular Degeneration?
Dr. Chris Palmer of Low Vision Optometry of Minnesota can answer your questions.

1. To get help with glasses, does it matter if I have wet or dry ARMD? No. Low vision doctors are concerned with how much residual vision is available. Our telescope, microwave, FlipCam, and panoramic glasses work for both wet and dry ARMD.

2. Are the glasses expensive? No, but the glasses are expensive. Both low vision glasses and hearing aids allow for a better quality of life and are well worth the investment.

3. What if my eyes change or get worse? Low Vision glasses can usually be altered in prescription and magnification, should the need arise. At our office, there is no charge for changing the Rx or magnification for one year from the date of the examination.

4. What about this new telescopic implant I've heard about? The Implantable Miniature Telescope may be a wonderful advance for a select few ARMD patients. However, there are significant risks involved. After your low vision evaluation, I will be able to assist you in making the right decision about surgery or glasses.

5. Do I have to come in for an appointment to know if you can help me? Yes. I need to view your face and use the free low vision telephone interview to determine what your chances are of being helped. The questions I ask on the phone allow me to predict how much help is available and then make an informed decision about an appointment.

Toll Free (888) 882-2040
Dr. Chris Palmer, Optometrist
www.LowVisionCare.com
www.LowVisionEYEDoctors.com
Don’t be afraid of the ‘nones’

The ‘nones.’ You can hardly look anywhere these days and not see or read something about the growing number of people who don’t identify with any particular religion, faith, or religious groups. Some have been talking about this cohort for some time, but the past few years have witnessed the mainstreaming of this new religious category.

To be clear, the Pew Research Center’s Religion and Public Life Project reported that one-fifth of the U.S. public defines themselves as religiously unaffiliated. That figure grows to one-third when those under 30 years of age.

Since this development has become widely known over the past couple of years, some have worried about the decline of Christianity. A couple of years, some have worried about the decline of Christianity. Instead of a game changer for Christians—and that’s, I think, a chance we’re missing a broader development—

No, the prospect of an increasing number of people who do not identify with Christianity should not cause us to lose our hope and confidence in the future. Instead, this should ignite our passion to demonstrate Christ—without the baggage we so regularly experience—with young people who have yet to see the life-changing power of the gospel.

Don’t be afraid of the ‘nones’

John Piper

fers both to the act of working and to the product of work. So the Greek word ergon refers to the act of working: “Be steadfast, immov- 

able, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). And ergon refers to the product of the act: “Are not you our episcopacy in the Lord?” (1 Corinthians 9:1). The essence of work into work—a

object, or a state of affairs, that did not exist before. The glory of work in reliance on our Creator (big C) is to create (little c).

This is the common denominator between our work and our leisure. The crossword puzzle is, at last, full. The Scribble is high. The T-shirt is scarfed. The scarf is knitted. The ultimate Frisbee game had some amazing catches. The fish is caught. The novel is understood and enjoyed.

Work is a glorious thing. If you are starting to grow weary and ambivalent toward work since the Fall, it is hated because of futility (Romans 8:20); and it is loved because of a sense of creative purpose and meaning in life. But the image of God in human

What would Minnesota look like if it were transformed by the power of Jesus? When we think about our call to follow Jesus and His mission, are we bold enough to envision what the Kingdom of God could really look like? Do we believe that through the transformative power of Jesus, adding sins can be broken, relations-

ships can be restored, human trafficking ended, the vulnerable protected, racial divisions healed and over and life preserved—and ultimately people restored to relationship with God? I believe that God desires this to happen, and He can and is build- ing His Kingdom through the work of thousands of churches in our state.

Like the story in the book of Nehemiah when the facilities rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem in just 52 days, the followers of Jesus can do the seemingly impossible by each doing their part and working together.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to P.O. Box 131003, St. Paul, MN 55113.

MCE is an independent Christian newspaper founded in 1978 by Terry D. White. Column viewpoints are of their respective authors and do not necessarily represent the opinion of MCE management or staff. The MCE is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts.

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gether because of their affiliation with the school she attended. "I just began traveling with them over the next several years, and things just kind of began to grow for me," she said. "What just kind of started out as a way to help me make my way through school has remained my profession the last 30 years." 

Patty has performed for many thousands of people in the last three decades and will perform for many thousands in the future. She hopes that people who attend her performances will understand in a deeper way how much God loves them. "I hope they go away wanting to seek Him more, wanting to be more like Him every day," she said. "That doesn't mean we will always get it right. In fact, there are a lot of days that we will get it wrong. But God never leaves us forsaken and that is a promise I really cling to. When we know that," she said. "As she grew older, Patty wanted to be a teacher. When she attended college, she had an opportunity to meet and travel with Bill and Gloria

Nelson...

Continued from last page

MINNESOTA RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FORUM

October 24, 2013, St. Paul RiverCentre
Visit mnreligiousfreedom.org to register online

A one-day seminar empowering people of faith to work and live according to their deeply held religious beliefs.

Workshops provided by prominent Minnesota attorneys and legal experts from Alliance Defending Freedom.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Michael McKeen, Director of Faith Initiatives for Hobby Lobby, a multi-million dollar corporation founded by his family, will share the inspira-

tion story of his family's fight against the federal government to run their business according to their faith, and why they chose to fight for their beliefs in court.

Jee Infurna, Senior Legal Counsel with Alliance Defending Freedom, will open the "Pre-

serving our First Freedoms: Navigating Challenges & Overcoming Threats to Religious Liberties," and lead breakout sessions for faith-based organizations.

Workshop sessions will address:

Conducting your faith-based business according to your religious beliefs • Rights & responsibilities of houses of worship & religious organizations • Expressing your faith in public as a child or adult • The effect of the new marriage law on you & your work • Religious organizations participating in government grants/contracts • More religious liberty hot topics affecting you.

Bonus Training: Alliance Defending Freedom Regional Legal Academy for attorneys – Friday, Oct. 25

October 2013  MINNESOTA CHRISTIAN EXAMINER  5

MINNESOTA CHRISTIAN EXAMINER

October 2013

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North Metro grief series begins in October

**COON RAPIDS — The North Metro Grief Support Coalition, which consists of churches, the Faith Community Nurse Program, and Mercy and Unity Hospitals, is sponsoring the “Growing Through Loss” series focused on grief and loss. Individual classes include topics such as coping with grief, how long does grief last and getting through the holidays. The first event will take place on Thursday, Oct. 10 and will run weekly through Nov. 21, with no class held on Oct. 31. Church of the Epiphany in Coon Rapids is hosting the series, which runs from 6:45 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. No pre-registration is required. For more information, call (763) 413-2983.**

Hymnology conference will feature the Gettys

**SAINT CLOUD — Keith and Kristyn Getty will lead the one-day conference “Hymns for the Christian Life” on Friday, Oct. 18 at Calvary Community Church in St. Cloud. The Gettys will also perform at a concert following the conference. The event “is a thematically focused original collection showcasing Irish melodies, as well as American bluegrass and country music influences,” according to an announcement. For more information, call (320) 293-1217 or visit www.gettymusic.com/tour.aspx.**

Groups band together to address religious liberty

**SAINT PAUL — Alliance Defending Freedom, the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the Minnesota Family Council and Transform Minnesota will host the Minnesota Religious Freedom Forum on Thursday, Oct. 24 at the Saint Paul RiverCentre. The event will address legal and practical concerns related to religious liberties. General sessions and workshops will address questions related to the new marriage law in Minnesota, workplace issues concerning religion and a variety of other issues. For more information on the event, visit www.transformmn.org.**

For more information on these events, call (763) 420-4774 or visit www.gmnministries.org.

Chamber choir and orchestra kicks off new year

**BLOOMINGTON — Exultate Chamber Choir and Orchestra will kick off its 18th season on Saturday, Oct. 26 at 7:30 p.m. with a concert at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Bloomington. The concert will feature Frederic Handel’s “ Dixit Dominus,” Franz Schubert’s “Mass in G” and a concerto and two choral selections. General admission tickets are $20; seniors and students under 16 are $15. For more information, visit www.exultate.org or call (651) 707-0272.**

Church to host sex trafficking seminar

**BURNSVILLE — Faith Covenant Church in Burnsville will serve as host for the Sex Trafficking in the Midwest Seminar, sponsored by Annex Seminars, which is a subsidiary of Source Ministries. The seminar will take place on Saturday, Oct. 19 at 9:00 a.m. and aims to bring awareness to the issue. Speakers include Heidi Carlson, the men’s program director at Domestic Abuse Project, and Peter Wohler, director of Source. The seminar will also include the “Take a Number” travelling art exhibit. Pre-registration is $20 or $10 for seminars and groups. Same-day registration is $20. Other events this fall include a Fallout Benefit Concert on Nov. 23 at the Source Banquet on Nov. 23 at North Heights Lutheran Church in Arden Hills. For more information on the seminar and to register, visit www.annexseminar.eventbrite.com.**

Conference to address ‘work’

**SAINT PAUL — Bethel Seminary will host the Mission Work conference for pastors and workers Oct. 20 and 21. The event is hosted by the Work With a Purpose initiative of the seminary and will address the kingdom value of work and its potential. Plenary speakers include Dr. Steven Garber, founder and principal of the Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation and Culture; Dr. Will Messenger, executive editor of the Theology of Work Project; and Dr. Amy Sherman, senior fellow of the Sagamore Institute. For more information or to register, visit www.bethel.edu/events/mission-work.**

Ministering to those with cancer

**NEW HOPE — The Elim Faith Community Nursing Fall Workshop will address “The Cancer Journey: What’s Next?” on Thursday, Oct. 10 and 11. The event is hosted by New Hope Church, will teach people how to minister to those within the church who have cancer.**

For more information or to register, visit www.transformmn.org/events/transformmn.org.

Class to address effective youth and family ministry

**BLOOMINGTON — Youth Leadership will hold the two-day training seminar “Establish: Principles for Effective Youth and Family Ministry” Oct. 14 and 15 at the organization’s training center in Bloomington. The class, led by Tiger McLuen and “surprise guests,” will “shape your vision for ministry, [help you] understand why you do what you do, learn how to build a team, develop strategies to understand and partner with parents, reflect on how to develop your leadership and stay healthy at the same time.” The cost for the two-day event is $225.**

For more information on this event and others sponsored by Youth Leadership, visit www.youth-leadership.org.

Prophetic Healing and Deliverance Service!

Featuring Pastor Mohan Peters, Pastor Mattie Austin, Pastor Les Peters, Reverend Ann Fruge, and Usher Antoinette Sprung

You are invited to worship and witness the miraculous healing power of God. Supernatural anointing of God will be released upon all who need healing from:

- Sickness, disease, and pain
- Emotional hurts and confusion
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October 19, 2013 at 6:00 pm

Doors open at 5:00 pm

Brooklyn Park Community Center

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Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

Free and open to the public!

Sponsored by:

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1628 County Rd. 10E

Spring Lake Park, MN 55432

Mohan Peters

763.458.5163

mohanpeters@yahoo.com
Worship artist to release debut album

TWIN CITIES — Lauren Becker, a contemporary Christian worship artist, recently released the single “The Son My Father Sent,” which is from her debut album “Total Abandonment.” The album will be released Nov. 19.

“I am so excited for people to hear this album,” Becker said in a statement. “We’ve put a lot of hard work into it, and I can’t wait to see how God chooses to use this music for His glory.”

For more information about Becker and her music, visit www.facebook.com/lauren.becker му.

Organization celebrates refugee milestone

RICHFIELD — World Relief Min-
nesota (WRM) recently announced that it has settled its 9,000th refugee. With partner organizations and area churches, WRM trains or-
ganizations and individuals to serve the most vulnerable.

The 9,000th refugee was part of a family of Bhutanese refugees from Nepal.

In the past 25 years, WRM has helped refugees from nearly 50 countries find new homes and new opportunities in the U.S.

For more information about its work, visit www.worldreliefmn.org.

Bethel University galleries display diverse works

SAINT PAUL — The Olson Gallery at Bethel University will display “Half Round” by Becker and her music, visit www. www.christianexaminer.com

 halftime

“Trinity” and “Spiritual Death” are explained in the Bible, by God! These two subjects are just two of 25 in the book

“Last call?” A Christian Challenge to Atheists, Agnostics, & Skeptics!

Information for Christians! • A challenge to non-Christians!
The Johnson Gallery will display "The Return of the Widow" by Deidre Scherer. Gallery hours are Mon-Sat 1-3pm and Sun 1-4pm. No admission charge. The deadline is the 18th of the prior month. Have your event listed for FREE! E-mail to calendar@christianexaminer.com or fax to 1-888-305-4947. Or visit www.calvinchristian.org.
COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Celebrate the organ
SAINT PAUL — Berlon Great Hall on the campus of Bethel University will host the 10-year celebration of the university’s 4,000-pipe Blackington organ on Friday, Nov. 1 at 7:30 p.m. Special guest will be Dr. Richard Elliott, who is the principal organist at the University of Minnesota. He is also an accomplished for the Tabernacle Choir.

We are free and open to the public.

For more information, visit www.bethel.edu/events arts.

Weeklong school to address God’s love
BIG LAKE — Spirit Life Church in Big Lake will host “Experiencing the Father’s Love” Oct. 13 to 19. The weeklong event aims to help participants experience God’s love and develop a foundation for His place in the Christian’s life.

The event will be led by Trever and Linda Galpin of Footholder Ministries and Jim and Julia Herz of Spirit Life Church.

Registration is $425, or $395 if registered by Oct. 7. For more information, call (763) 624.6757.

Celebrating freedom from addiction
MOUNDS VIEW — Bethlehem Baptist Church’s north campus will host “Called Out of Darkness” on Friday, Oct. 11. The event, which includes Cosby Aubry, will feature testimonies and encouragement from those who have emerged from sexual and relational brokenness.

There is no charge for the event, but a free will be offered to the public.

For more information, visit www.bethel.edu or call (622) 338.7653.

Ignite to train in evangelism
SAINT PAUL — Christian recorded artist Lincoln Brewster, the Unified Twin Cities Worship Band and evangelist Matt Brown will highlight the Ignite Conference on Nov. 16 at the University of Northwestern–St. Paul.

The daylong event will include worship, prayer and plenary sessions designed to provide practical training tips on evangelism and reach out to the public.

For more information and to register, visit www.ignitelive.org.

School to host Holocaust survivor
FRIDLEY — Holocaust survivor Inge Auerbach will speak at Cal- vin Christian High School on Sun., Oct. 6 at 4:30 p.m. Auerbach is a child survivor of the Holocaust and an award-winning author.

The program will be held on the campus of Grace Evangelical Free Church in Fridley and is free and open to the public.

The Auerbach family spent several years in a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia and eventually immigrated to the U.S. in 1946.

For more information on the event, visit www.calvinchristian.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

BOOKS

The “Firstly” and “Spiritual Death” are explained in the Bible by God’s word. Controlled 40 Days

EDVATION

Bankruptcy or immigration Paralegal, Training and placement. $995. (651) 523-9085.

FOR SALE-AUTOS

Lowest cost used cars: Dealer: (651) 554-7074, after 5pm: (651) 387-5798.

HELP WANTED

Own a computer? Put it to work up to $1,500 per month. IT/PI, Free info, www.gophie.com.

HELP WANTED

Team building and Challenge Course facility in Jordan. Need part-time staff. Love of outdoors, adventure and encouraging people. 870.80 at a plus. Please call Dru at (651) 352-1443 or email jjohns@cd.org Real Estate - Vacation

REAL ESTATE - VACATION

Lake Home, Summer or Yearround, 8’ wooded acres, 3/2+1, sharks, Hunt, Fish, canoe, kayak, raft, canoeing, fishing, playground, swings, Near Jackson, Kalamazoo, 2 miles. $1,350 annually.

ROOMS FOR RENT

Christian male to rent two rooms. Three mad, cow room, partially furnished with utilities. Includes 2/3 in bath in Newly renovated. Off street parking. $250/month includes utilities. Available October 1st. Call Steve (651) 533-5206. Email: stineke@gmail.com.

Christian family home to share my home. Rent smoking, pets. Your own bathroom, living room, kitchen, bedroom. $500 deposit of utilities includes no cable TV. Available Nov. 1, 2011. Call (651) 689-0042, 689-6042.

Families, Christian or not, please share my home that I smoke. Pets, your own bathroom, living room, kitchen, bedroom. 500 deposit of utilities includes no cable TV. Available Nov. 1, 2011. Call (651) 689-0042, 689-6042.

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Are you stuck? Five years ago, the Rev. Corey Magstadt served as a pastor of a church plant in the Chaska area. He noticed a group of young people who seemed disconnected from the congregation and “were kind of on the fringes of life and community.”

He began to see that an entire generation of young people was having difficulty transitioning into adulthood: more of them were living at home with their parents and having difficulty transitioning into adulthood. Magstadt believes the generation of young people was “kind of on the fringes of life and community.”

“Stuck was really the word that kind of jumped out at us,” he said. “That everybody just seemed like they were stuck. This was something new that was happening. This was certainly the case before, but it seemed to be a broader generational thing that was moving across all social boundaries. Everybody was struggling to make this jump into adulthood.”

That observation served as the impetus for Launch Ministry where Magstadt now serves as executive director. Launch helps young adults in that transition to adulthood, including developing life skills, finding opportunities to lead and learning spiritual formation practices.

The core of Launch Ministry is to help young adults keep—or form—a connection with a local church. At Launch Ministry’s first Bible study—with about 20 people in attendance—the group introduced themselves and told a bit about who they were.

Workers build a garden at the Launch Pad, which is the ministry’s house for homeless young men.

“We were just blown away by the stories that we heard,” Magstadt said. From being pregnant to having a parent die to drug addiction, Magstadt heard everything and realized this was not what he had expected.

Is this something new? While it’s nothing new for young people to explore their faith—and even other faiths—as they move away from home into adulthood, Magstadt believes the changes we are experiencing now are magnified.

“Today we have some other pieces that are tied into it because now you have the social elements as well,” he said. “With all of the growing up pieces that are taking longer, so now you have kids not finding their career until their early to mid 30s. You have them staying at home until their mid 20s, late 20s, and living with their parents. You have college taking a lot longer. And particularly the identity formation stuff. The identity formation that used to happen in adolescence is now extending well into the late 20s, even into the 30s.”

These formation pieces, Magstadt believes, are now happening away from the church, meaning the church is having less influence on the lives of those who call it home. “That’s the case, then what’s the remedy?”

Relationships. While there are no doubt a variety of proposed remedies for this problem, Magstadt believes relationships form the core of any solution.

“We haven’t necessarily done a great job of preparing youth in our churches for their faith and their own and moving into an adult kind of faith,” he said. “A lot of it has to do with relationships. Young people who have relationships with adults in the church—whether it’s mentors or formal or informal mentors or with their pastor—if they are relationally connected with people in the church, then their faith sticks.”

Those who don’t have deep and powerful relationships within the church often struggle to “see their faith grow and develop into adulthood,” Magstadt continued.

There is no simple remedy that can be applied across the board; however, Magstadt believes there are several things for churches to keep in mind as they try to help young adults deepen their faith.

The core of Launch Ministry focuses on mentors connecting young people with mentors in the church who can invest their time, energy, experience and love with another person.

The key relationship that you have to get outside the walls of the church and actually invest in young people’s lives,” he said. “There is no easy program. It’s really just a long, individual, one on one, taking time conversations. And over time that develops into something really powerful.”

One pastor Magstadt knows has decided to move his office hours from the church to the local coffee shop, where many young people from his church visit. It’s a way to be available emotionally socially and spiritually and make time for investing in other people’s lives. And, one of the possible misconceptions people have about young people today is that they are not interested in having relationships with older adults.

“Millennial is an adult,” Magstadt said. “They love to spend time with people who are older than them. And hear input from them. They absolutely love it. They want you to spend time with them. I think it’s just a huge opportunity for churches [to allow this to happen].”

While the challenges to faith will always be present—and maybe even more so in our current age—churches can make the decision to invest in young people’s lives. It’s that key relationship that often plays a pivotal role in how someone comes through a struggle or challenge to their faith.
Presented by Homeward Bound Theatre Company
Directed by Bruce Kirkpatrick

*Dear God, How did you know you were God?*
*Dear God, Are you really invisible or is that just a trick?* Sixteen tuneful songs and assorted scenes explore timeless issues.


Sat. Nov. 2nd at 2pm & 7:30pm and Sun. Nov. 3rd at 3pm
Tickets $18 adults and $15 for seniors and students

FALL DATES:
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Faith Covenant, Burnsville

Nov 8 Fallout Benefit Concert
Fallout Urban Art Center, Minneapolis

Nov 23 Source Fall Banquet
North Heights, Arden Hills

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