

Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Project Report  
Lilly Endowment Inc.  
February 2006 – January 2007

Christian Reformed Church in North America  
“Creating a Culture of Pastoral Excellence”

Project Activities

Following are the major activities we have undertaken in the past year. They are grouped under our five areas of programming.

1. Promotion and Teaching

- 2006 – Designed and placed three advertisements concerning the project in Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) related publications
- 2006 – Sent informational packets on the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) project to newly ordained pastors
- February 2006 – Wrote to churches informing them that their pastors are members of a peer learning (PL) group
- February 2006 - Postcards sent to all clerks of council requesting that they encourage pastors to participate in PL groups
- February and June 2006 – SPE/Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) course, “The Theology and Practice of Pastoral Ministry”, offered in Anaheim, California and Grand Rapids, Michigan respectively – 34 students attended
- March 2006 – Presentation of SPE project at a classis (regional judicatory) retreat
- March 2006 – September 2006 – Three articles written by staff about the CRCNA-SPE project that were published in CRCNA-related publications
- April and June 2006 – Presentation of SPE project at Home Missions’ conference
- April 2006 – December 2006 – Commissioned five articles on the pastoral vocation that were published in CRCNA-related publications
- July 2006 – January 2007 – Four articles written by non-staff about the CRCNA-SPE project that were published in CRCNA-related publications
- August 2006 – Brochure for pastors’ spouses’ retreat sent to every CRCNA pastors’ spouse
- September 2006 – Presentation of SPE project at Home Missions’ Conference
- September 2006 – *Speaking of Pastors, Persevering in Ministry* and “Effective Leadership in the Church” used as resource material for Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) course
- September – October 2006 – Presentations made promoting PL groups to 18 (out of 47) classes (regional judicatory) of the CRCNA
- October 2006 – Article, “Caring for Pastors” by Bob Zomerrmaand (pastor) posted on Duke Divinity School’s SPE website and in newsletter
- December 2006 - Flyers sent to US classes promoting National Clergy Renewal Grants

2. Mentoring

- 2006 – Mentors assigned to new pastors within six months of their ordination or installation as a CRC pastor
- January – December 2006 – Mentoring advisory group met four times to discuss mentoring in the CRCNA

- March 2006 – Hosted three dinners for CTS senior seminarians and their spouses to present information about the CRCNA’s mentoring program
  - April 2006 – Bi-national mentoring conference held – 110 participants
  - April 2006 – Received and approved two proposals from classes to fund (on a matching basis) the appointment of a half-time regional pastor (such pastors currently devote volunteer time to the job in addition to pastoring their own congregation)
  - July 2006 – Reallocated funds, with Lilly’s approval, from regional pastor grants to new projects (pastors’ spouses’ initiatives, retirement seminars, church visitors’ study, and regional pastor activities)
  - November 2006 – Received and approved one regional pastor grant
3. Peer Learning (PL)
- February - March 2006 – Peer learning (PL) recruiters contacted 218 pastors who had not participated in an SPE PL group
  - March 2006 – Revised overview document and application form
  - May 2006 – Approved fourteen proposals to fund one-year peer learning groups among pastors (approved proposals involved 105 pastors and 100 congregations – 51% of pastors are new to SPE PL groups – 5 groups resulted from PL recruiters work)
  - November 2006 – Approved nine out of eleven proposals to fund one-year peer learning groups among pastors (approved proposals involved 68 pastors and 63 congregations – 51 % of pastors were new to the program)
  - November 2006 – Convened the fourth annual meeting of PL group coordinators for sharing of experiences and mutual learning
4. Continuing Education
- February 2006 – January 2007 – 35 continuing education events held with 432 pastors (plus those linked by computer distance learning), 684 laypersons, and 332 congregations participating
  - March 2006 – Revised overview document and application form
  - June 2005 – Approved six out of seven proposals to fund continuing education events (approved proposals will hold 11 events in five states and one province)
  - December 2006 – Approved 13 out of 14 proposals to fund continuing education events (approved proposals will hold 20 events in six states and two provinces)
5. Dissemination of Learning
- 2006 – Work continued on 2006 *significant training tool* concerning pastoral accountability
  - February 2006 – Web site updated
  - February 2006 – *Preserving in Ministry* sent to every retired CRC pastor
  - February 2006 – Presentation made to CRCNA Board of Trustees
  - February 2006 – Sent project update to Lilly peer group facilitator – Sue Weber
  - February 2006 – January 2007 – Shared reports with Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (CICW – the institute is supported by another LEI grant) and the Center for Excellence in Preaching (CEP – the center is supported by donors)
  - February 2006 – “Toward Effective Pastoral Mentoring”, “Effective Leadership in the Church”, and the SPE survey report/results posted on website
  - February 2006 and October 2006 – Shared reports with Ministry Resource Center (the center is supported by another LEI grant)
  - March 2006 – Submitted the 2006 report to LEI
  - March 2006 – SPE survey report/results emailed to every pastor and clerk of council

- March, April, June, July, October, and January 2006 – Posted stories on grantees on web site
- April 2006 – *Persevering in Ministry*, “Effective Leadership in the Church” distributed to 2006 ministry candidates
- April 2006 and January 2007 – Mailed LEI recently published items
- June 2006 - Display board at Synod (the governing body of the CRCNA)
- June 2006 – *Persevering in Ministry* distributed to those taking “The Theology and Practice of Pastoral Ministry” course
- July 2006 – Article “How Congregations Can Sustain Pastoral Excellence” by Duane Kelderman published in Concord Pastoral Residency Program’s newsletter (A “Transitions into Ministry Program” funded by Lilly)
- August 2006 – *Speaking of Pastors* (monograph) and “Closing Well – Continuing Strong” (*significant training tool* for 2005) published
- August 2006 - Two CRCNA-SPE representatives attended SPE conference in Indianapolis
- August 2006 – Display on communication of SPE project for annual Lilly meeting
- September 2006 – *Preserving in Ministry*, *Speaking of Pastors*, and “Effective Leadership in the Church” used in CTS course
- October 2006 – *Speaking of Pastors* and “Closing Well – Continuing Strong” distributed to every pastor, every CRC council, every ministry associate, and every retired pastor
- November 2006 – Presentation on project to date given at SPE Advisory Board meeting
- November 2006 – Created display board for PL group coordinators’ meeting
- November 2006 – Advisory Board meeting held
- January 2007 – “Heading to Healthy Congregations” articles packaged and posted on website
- January 2007 – Began project to produce the 2006 *significant training tool* concerning clergy marriages

#### 6. Other Activities

- February 2006 – responses to external evaluator’s recommendations completed
- April 2006– Pastors’ spouses task force face-to-face meeting
- June 2006 – Spouses’ “question and answer” page added to website
- June 2006 – Harold Winter replaces Jerry Dykstra as an SPE Implementation Team member
- October 2006 – Revisions for 2007 SPE survey begun
- October 2006 – Letter of intent for grant renewal sent to Lilly
- November 2006 – Pastors’ Spouses’ Retreat held with 136 spouses attending

#### Impact

One of the requirements for all grants we award is the completion of reports. It is through these reports that we most often see the impact the grant has had on the participants. Comments reflecting the impact confirm that our project is indeed helping pastors to sustain pastoral excellence.

#### 1. *The Mulford Ministers* Peer Learning Group

*The Mulford Ministers* peer learning (PL) group is made up of three pastors, who were roommates together on Mulford Avenue while attending seminary, and their spouses. Since graduating, each pastor was struggling with feelings of isolation in his ministry setting. It was the concern of isolation, and the implications that their calling had on their spouses, that promoted them to request a PL grant.

Since the group members were geographically distant, their regular meetings were accomplished by conference calls. In addition, they participated in a devotional blog—which they updated weekly, had an online sermon forum, and regular email exchanges. These forms of

communication allowed the group to develop a sense of community without the advantage of physically being together. In addition to these activities, the group was able to gather together with their spouses four times during their year together. One member said, “Our goal to integrate family and ministry, to include our spouses in this adventure, was a little difficult to do but well worth the effort. The opportunities to retreat together were timely, needed respites from ministry and family life. It was good for my marriage.” \*

The peer group has impacted each of the members, and ultimately their congregations, in several ways. These isolated pastors have experienced “a safe, inspiring, trust-building, faith-deepening experience.” As husbands, they have looked carefully at how they need to be more nurturing with their spouses “especially when the congregation and [the husband’s] desire to minister are so demanding.” They shared that the “greatest reward the group experienced was rejuvenated life in ministry” and that their “ministries have been bolstered and [their] spiritual lives, deepened and strengthened.”

When asked to summarize what the group had learned from their PL group experience they responded, “Ministers must intentionally form prayer-based friendships, relationships, and communities of peer learning with each other in order to receive the kind of intimate, understanding, soul-care they need to become healthy, well-supported, well-motivated, and well-rounded pastors in and to their congregations.”

*The Mulford Ministers* peer learning group continues to interact electronically. However, their goal is to get together, with their families, whenever possible.

\* All quotes are taken from *The Mulford Ministers* PL reports

## 2. *The Soggy Bottom Boys* Peer Learning Group

A group of four pastors on the Canadian prairies came together to form *The Soggy Bottom Boys* in order to “gather together to encourage, support, and share [their] knowledge, challenges, gifts, and joys in ministry.” \* For some members this meant a six hour drive—one way.

The pastors reported that the group meetings “have improved our relationship between each other, in our homes, in our church councils, and in our churches.” They shared that the group has had a “huge impact on each of [them].” They have received “encouragement for each other, a fresh perspective on ministry, life, and relationships within [their] congregations and inside [their] marriage and family situations.” One pastor said, “I was more encouraged in ministry after our first meeting than I was in the five meetings I attended with my local ministerial association combined.”

The peer learning experience impacted their congregations in that the pastors were “helped...to express [their] concerns, joys, and ambitions to [their] churches. Not so much in a public speech, but through pastoral care, preaching, and leading.” In addition, their congregations “have seen positive actions/reactions. They see a refreshed pastor on Sundays [and] a theologically energized pastor in education classes. They see a shepherd who doesn’t react but thinks pastorally, then delivers a response.”

One of the group’s activities was to attend “The Theology and Practice of Pastoral Ministry” course that SPE offers in conjunction with Calvin Theological Seminary. It was a rich experience for the pastors. One pastor said, “it [was] both encouraging and challenging for me, and certainly strengthened my resolve and intent to pastor well and to stay the course.”

*The Soggy Bottom Boys* peer learning group has welcomed a new member and continues to meet.

\* All quotes are taken from *The Soggy Bottom Boys* PL reports

### Personal Assessment

#### 1. What We Are Learning

Increasingly, we are hearing from pastors about the necessity for refreshment and renewal in their busy schedules. In many lives, this has been accomplished in the peer learning group setting. Pastors are able to remove themselves from demanding pastorates for a time of rest—even if this is only for a few hours. The opportunity to meet with colleagues who can relate to their lives on so many levels offers the pastors much needed support and encouragement. There are often times of extended prayer that lift their spirits and sustain them as they continue to minister to others. One pastor said of his peer group experience, “This process was key in setting in motion a season of personal, spiritual, and professional revitalization. I was close to burning out and this process gave me a new passion and direction for my ministry.” Another reported, “I have gained a new understanding that developing and nurturing ME personally and spiritually is crucial for my ministry. It’s worth the time and effort.”

Pastors that are refreshed and renewed are better able to sustain excellence in ministry. We’ve witnessed this over the past four years. We believe it is vital to pastoral excellence and therefore have a piece in our grant renewal proposal that aims to assist pastors with it. We have proposed that sixteen learning events be held for pastor couples—and possibly their families. The events will combine continuing education with a time of refreshment and renewal. Seminars and resources related to ministry and family issues will be offered by the faculty and staff of Calvin Theological Seminary as well as others with expertise in these areas. Opportunities will be given at the events for the pastor couples to enjoy quality time together and perhaps some family time as well.

It is our hope that by offering these events, both pastors and congregations will increasingly realize the pastor’s need for refreshment and renewal and how pastoral excellence will be sustain as a result of it.

Directly related to refreshed and renewed pastors are pastors’ spouses who play a key role in the health of pastors and their excellence in ministry—healthier spouses contribute to healthier pastors. One pastor has commented, “If the pastors' spouses are cared for, the pastors will be encouraged and empowered in their ministries. Happy, supportive spouses will make a huge difference in the ministry that happens in our denomination.”

In response to this learning, we chose to use a portion of our interest funds to host a retreat for pastors’ spouses, which 138 spouses attended. Forty-eight hours were set aside to encourage, refresh, and support pastors’ spouses so that they could in turn do the same for their spouse, the pastor. One attendee said, “I think this retreat was a very good idea and that it should continue. If the pastors' spouses are cared for, the pastors will be encouraged and empowered in their ministries. Happy, supportive wives will make a huge difference in the ministry that happens in our denomination. Encouragement and refreshment bring renewed energy, joy, and determination to continue on.”

A few weeks after the retreat our annual SPE Advisory Board meeting was held. It was wonderful to hear several of the pastors on the board remark on what a blessing the retreat was for their spouse. It was evident that the impact of the retreat was also felt by these pastors.

The retreat reinforced the importance of the pastor's spouse's role and the relationship with his or her pastor spouse—which ultimately impacts pastoral excellence. We are continuing to work with spouses in a number of ways for the remainder of this grant. In our grant renewal proposal, we have proposed the formation of peer learning groups for pastors' spouses. We believe that these groups will not only directly encourage and support spouses, but indirectly the pastors as well.

## 2. Strategy for Sustaining Pastoral Excellence

The strategy for sustaining pastoral excellence that has worked best in our project is to help pastors approach their work *communally* with other pastors, particularly through peer learning groups. In a culture that tends to have an understanding that pastors *go it alone* in a vocation with many responsibilities, peer groups provide community for those in ministry. It is vital to the health of our pastors, and ultimately their congregations, that they know they do not need to be alone in ministry. One pastor said, "The grant has provided the foundation for our congregations and . . .ourselves to see the value of community and peer learning."

If pastors are to be sustained in pastoral excellence, they need to experience community with peers. However, quite often pastors say that they are too busy to commit to meeting with peers on a regular basis. Peer groups do take time but it is time well spent. One pastor reported, "[The group's] mutual conclusion was that the peer group was one of the best things we had for ourselves and for our ministries."

To date one half of CRC pastors have joined an SPE PL group. Seventy-two percent of the groups have indicated that they plan to continue to meet after their funding ends. The pastors involved in the groups have come to appreciate both the community experienced and the importance of that community.

## 3. What Has Not Worked Well

As communicated in last year's report, we are very pleased with all aspects of our project to date except for the regional pastor (RP) matching grants we offer. In our denominational structure, regional pastors are experienced pastors who counsel and otherwise support all pastors in their classis. In most cases they do this in addition to serving their own congregation.

We wanted to strengthen this system by testing the benefits of relieving regional pastors of some of their duties by providing the classis with a part-time person whose salary would be covered by a grant and matching funds from the classis. But we have not realized the results we were hoping for. We believe the reason why the RP grants have not had the same success as the other parts of the project is because of the required matching funds. Many of the classes just do not have the funds. As one pastor said, "Our classis doesn't have two nickels to rub together."

We originally budgeted \$250,000 for the RP grants. By the spring of 2006, only 60% of the funds had been awarded. We had decided in the early stages of the grant that all the RP grants would be awarded by the end of 2006. Therefore we potentially had 40% of the budget underutilized.

In response to the potential excess funds, we requested, and received, a reallocation of \$100,000 of the RP grant funds to cover four programs areas: retirement seminars, regional pastor activities, pastors' spouses' initiatives, and "church visiting". The retirement seminars will assist pastors nearing retirement as they make the necessary transitions out of the parish. The training tool "Closing Well—Continuing Strong" will be used as a resource. The regional pastor activities are gatherings to assess the current structure the regional pastors' work and to determine if changes would improve this form of support for pastors. The pastors' spouses' initiatives involve a number of regional events for pastors' spouses. The "church visiting" piece will identify ways

in which the current system, where two pastors from each judicatory regularly visit local congregations, can be improved on.

All of these program areas will ultimately sustain pastors and pastoral excellence.

#### 4. Program Changes

We have made a couple of program changes in response to our ongoing evaluation of the project. In the spring of last year, we had veteran peer learning (PL) group members contact over 200 pastors who had not yet participated in an SPE PL group. These PL recruiters were not part of our original plan. The idea came about as a result of seeing the success of the PL program and the impact that it was having on the participating pastors. We realized that those pastors who were the “movers and the shakers” were the ones who had taken the initiative to form peer groups up to that point in time. We wanted to reach out to those pastors who may have needed some personal encouragement to consider submitting a PL proposal. This effort resulted in five new peer groups within a couple of months.

It was our intent to host a bi-national mentoring conference this spring for mentors, mentees, and their spouses. While the conference we hosted in April 2006 was appreciated by those who attended, we felt that having smaller, regional events would allow for more interaction among the attendees. The format of the conference was, for the most part, plenary sessions with very little opportunity for interpersonal sharing of experiences and challenges. The format planned for the fall events will facilitate sharing in smaller groups. In addition, we are asking pastors to form the groups that will gather together for the events. We feel that this will result in greater participation from those who attend the events. It is our hope that a richer experience will be had from the more intimate gatherings.

And finally, as noted in the previous section, we have made changes to the regional pastor grants program.

### Theological Understanding

In our reports over the last couple of years, we have talked about the theological understandings that have been emerging in our project. These understandings continue to be evident and will, we believe, contribute to sustaining a culture of pastoral excellence in the Christian Reformed Church long after the grant is completed.

#### 1. Character

To those who participate in our SPE programs the ongoing formation of their character in Christ increasingly becomes a priority, even though it is not necessarily so at the beginning of their SPE experience. When pastors complete a PL group proposal they are asked to list what their spiritual formation goals are. We receive a surprisingly large number of proposals where this question is not answered. When pressed for a response, the pastors sometimes ask, “What are you looking for?”

Some pastors assume that spiritual formation happens in their congregational life, others that it is an individual matter between them and God, but they soon discover rich opportunities for spiritual growth as they share their struggles, hopes, and yearnings with their peers. It has been gratifying to those of us who lead the SPE project to see this occur.

#### 2. Renewal

Pastors are in constant need of renewal (physical, spiritual and academic) and re-equipping (gaining of skills). The demands of ministry are great. If pastors are not renewed and re-equipped,

they can easily become overwhelmed. Almost without exception our PL groups experience renewal in significant ways. After meeting for some time pastors are asked how their grant will make a difference in their life, ministry, and church a year from now. Pastors said:

- “[Our group] will make a significant difference in our life, ministry, and church. Our church members will be changed. Our ministry will be more joyful and fruitful. . . . the process itself will change us as pastors even before changing our members in this essential task of life transformation.”
- “We discovered that our project has improved our overall well-being as pastors. Don mentioned that he is able to give himself permission to take a daily walk as a necessity for good ministry. We have also seen again the importance of meeting with trusted colleagues. In the long run our congregations can only benefit from the mutual support we give each other as pastors.”

We are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of renewal being done in community. When pastors were students in seminary their learning was generally linear, cognitive, and deductive in nature. New information was *poured* into their heads and was later *poured* back out for exams and papers. Once away from the academic setting and engaged in ministry, pastors realize that this way of learning and knowing is incomplete. It should be a much more holistic, relational, and communal event.

Without the pressures of exams, papers, and the teacher’s expectations, pastors are discovering a kind of learning and knowing that is deeper and more transformative—the work that the Spirit does in refreshing one’s heart and renewing one’s will. Here is how one pastor puts it. “There was a growing recognition, through the sharing of ideas and pooling of wisdom, that this work best, and most deeply, happens as a company, as a prophetic community of shared discernment.”

### 3. Change in Practices

We have noticed a number of changes in practice that are resulting from pastors’ SPE experiences. These include such things as better boundaries, healthier balances between work and leisure, broadening the scope of books read, and deeper prayer lives. We have noticed an increase in pastors writing sermons in community. Several PL groups have focused on sermon writing. Some of these groups had their members preach a sermon in each of the churches represented in the group. This allowed the congregations to experience and appreciate several pastors while allowing the pastors to experience worship in a variety of churches. It also allowed the pastors to cut down on their sermon preparation for a few weeks—which they enjoyed!

At a session of the course, *The Theology and Practice of Pastoral Ministry*, the students discussed the benefits of pastors writing sermons in community. During their discussion, the leader said, “It dawned upon us that perhaps one of the radical implications of the Trinity, the divine community that is God, is that pastors should never do anything alone, that all ministry should be done in community.”

The theological discussion about pastoral excellence continues to deepen as the project progresses. Increasingly pastors and congregations are becoming aware of the SPE project and the impact that it is having. This is resulting in more discussion about pastoral excellence and what it entails. In March, the CRCNA launched the Sustaining Congregational Excellence (SCE) program—which has been patterned after the SPE project. SCE is a program to support and strengthen congregations so they can be used by God to transform lives and communities. Pastoral excellence and congregational excellence compliment each other. We anticipate much collaboration between the two programs. And we are confident that the discussions concerning both pastoral and congregational excellence will continue to increase and be fruitful.

### Plans for the Next Year

This is the final year of our grant. It is hard to believe that we have reached this point already. Over the past four years so much has happened, so many lives have been impacted by the SPE project. And yet, it feels as if we are just getting started. The work that we have done to date has begun to cultivate a culture of pastoral excellence in our denomination—which was our goal. But in order to nurture, further develop, and sustain this culture, more time and work is needed. Therefore, in our final year we will continue to administer our current programs in mentoring, peer learning, and continuing education. We will continue to promote among CRC pastors and congregations the understanding of excellence in pastoral ministry we have developed. We will use the proven, successful activities that have been mentioned earlier in this report to accomplish this. We will work with pastors' spouses, regional pastors, retirement seminars, and "church visitors" and thus will broaden the impact of the project. We will continue to address the sustainability of the project with the denomination and the agencies/initiatives that have been partnering with us over the last several years. Two new partners, Sustaining Congregational Excellence and The Leadership Institute of the CRC, will join SPE in creating a culture of pastoral excellence.

Specific activities for this year:

- Publish and distribute two significant training tools (topics: pastoral evaluation and clergy marriages).
- Conduct an external evaluation of the SPE project.
- Conduct a denominational-wide survey to assess the impact of the SPE project and to determine if we indeed are creating a culture of pastoral excellence.
- Hold ten regional mentor/mentees events.
- Hold ten regional pastors' spouses' events.
- Host a bi-national regional pastors' conference.
- Offer "The Theology and Practice of Pastoral Ministry" seminary course twice.
- Award two rounds of peer learning and continuing education grants.
- Gather peer learning coordinators' for the annual learning event.
- Conduct the final Advisory Board meeting.

### Project Leadership

- Jerry Dykstra is the Executive Director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). He bears ultimate responsibility for the project. \*
- John Bolt is the Chief Financial Officer of the CRCNA. He has general oversight of the financial accounting of the project, although the day to day accounting is handled by the denomination's controller, Chris Cok.
- The Project Director is Michael Bruinooge. He is responsible for implementation of the project.
- The Project Administrator is Lis Van Harten. She makes program decisions and administers the project on a daily basis.
- The project Implementation Team has eight members and meets nine times a year:
  - Michael Bruinooge, Director of Ministries Planning, CRCNA
  - Duane Kelderman, Vice President for Administration, Calvin Theological Seminary
  - David Koll, Pastor, Anaheim, California
  - Al Mulder, Regional Church Planting Specialist, CRCNA
  - Kathy Smith, Director of Continuing Education, Calvin Theological Seminary
  - Duane Visser, Director of Pastor-Church Relations, CRCNA
  - Lis Van Harten, SPE Project Administrator
  - Harold Winter, Pastor, St. Catharines, Ontario \*

This team has a guiding role with regard to the project. They also make decisions regarding proposals under our internal grants program. Ms. Van Harten facilitates the team's meetings.

\* Jerry was an implementation team member until he was appointed as executive director. Harold has filled the vacancy left by Jerry.

- The Advisory Board meets annually. Its fourth meeting was held in November, 2006. As its name implies, this group gives advice to the implementation team and other leadership concerning the overall direction of the project. Its members have pastoral experience and represent diverse perspectives. They are:
  - Manny Bersach, Pastor, Miami, Florida
  - George Hunsberger, Director of SPE Project, Western Theological Seminary
  - Moon Bae Kim, Pastor, Grand Rapids, Michigan
  - Jake Kuipers, Pastor, Trenton, Ontario
  - Thea Leunk, Pastor, Grand Rapids, Michigan
  - Lynn Likkel, Pastor, Grand Rapids, Michigan
  - Esteban Lugo, Director of Race Relations, CRCNA
  - Tom Niehof, Pastor, Ames, Iowa
  - Reggie Smith, Pastor, Grand Rapids, Michigan
  - John D. Witvliet, Director, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship
  - Carl Zylstra, President, Dordt College

## Appendix I

	2006 - New	Total to Date
<b>A. Peer Learning Groups</b>		
Number of groups begun by our project	23	92
Number of pastoral participants in all groups	147	477
Number of lay participants in all groups	23	64
Number of congregations represented in all groups	157	426

	2006- New	Totals to Date
<b>B. Other Learning/Training Events *</b>		
Number of events conducted by our project	40	114
Number of pastoral participants in all events	432 **	1,623 **
Number of lay participants in all events	684	1,741
Number of congregations represented in all events	332	1,755

\* The numbers here represent the continuing education events that are hosted through grants awarded by the SPE project as well as events that our project itself has hosted. Note that some pastors/lay participants have attended more than one event. This results in both the participant and the congregation being counted each time an event is attended.

\*\* Includes those linked by computer distance learning.

### **C. Other Statistics**

#### Sustainability of Peer Learning Groups

Seventy-two per cent of the peer learning groups that received funding have indicated that they plan to continue to meet past their grant period. This is significant to us because it is our hope that pastors who participate in the SPE project will sustain their activities as they pursue pastoral excellence.

## Appendix II

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
Monday June 4 – Friday June 8, 2007	<u><i>The Theology and Practice of Pastoral Ministry</i></u> - The SPE/CTS course	Calvin Theological Seminary 3233 Burton Street SE Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Wednesday November 14, 2007	<u>Peer Learning Group Coordinators' Meeting</u> - Coordinators from the November 2006 and May 2007 grants will gather for a day of learning and sharing	Prince Conference Center Calvin College 3201 Burton Street SE Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Thursday November 15, 2007	<u>SPE Advisory Board Meeting</u> - Our final board meeting will include: 1. a report on the external evaluation of the SPE project by Sue Weber 2. the results of the denomination-wide survey assessing the impact of the SPE project on the CRCNA and how successful it's been in creating a culture of pastoral excellence	Prince Conference Center Calvin College 3201 Burton Street SE Grand Rapids, MI 49546

### Appendix III

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PUBLISHED GRANT PRODUCTS February 1, 2006 – January 31, 2007

- March - article in *Ministry Report to Classes and Councils* - "Survey Report" - Lis Van Harten
- March - article in *The Banner* "Pastors' Spouses Network for Support" – Lis Van Harten and David Raakman
- April - article in *Christian Courier* – "When Pastors Retire" – Lou Tamminga
- May - article in *Ministry Report to Classes and Councils* – "Healthy Congregations Need Healthy Pastors" – Lis Van Harten
- June - article in the *Christian Courier* – "Caring for Pastors" – Bob Zomermaand
- July - article in *The Banner* – "Peer Learning Impact Goes Webwide" – Rachel Boehm Van Harmelen
- August - article in the *Christian Courier* – "Leadership in the Church – The Rest of the Story" – James Dekker
- August - article in *The Banner* – "Asian Christian Reformed Churches Create Website" – Ruth Donker
- August - book published *Speaking of Pastors: Parishioners Tell Their Stories* – editor James Schaap
- August - Retirement training tool produced: *Closing Well – Continuing Strong*
- September - article in *Ministry Report to Classes and Councils* – "Transformation Happens One Step at a Time" – Lis Van Harten
- October - article in the *Christian Courier* – "Excellence is How We Do Things" – Bob Zomermaand
- December - article in the *Christian Courier* – "The SUV Pastor" – Ron Klok
- December - article in *The Banner* - "Spending Time with Eugene Peterson" – Elizabeth Gonzalez
- January - article in *The Banner* - "Help, I'm Married to the Pastor!" – Sophie Vandenberg
- January - posted on website - *Heading to Healthy Congregations* – Jim Dekker