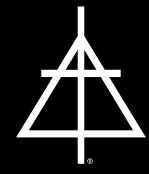


MINISTRY REPORT

TO CLASSES AND COUNCILS



Christian
Reformed
Church

FALL 2014

Congregational Support

- Chaplaincy and Care Ministry
- Disability Concerns
- Office of Social Justice
- Pastor-Church Relations
- Race Relations
- Safe Church Ministry
- Sustaining Congregational & Pastoral Excellence
- Centre for Public Dialogue and Canadian Aboriginal Ministries Committee (CAMC)
- Indian Metis Christian Fellowship
- ServiceLink

Educational Institutions

- Calvin College
- Calvin Theological Seminary

Mission Agencies

- Back to God Ministries International
- Home Missions
- World Missions
- World Renew

Partners in Ministry

- Partners Worldwide
- Dynamic Youth Ministries
 - Calvinist Cadet Corps
 - GEMS
 - Youth Unlimited

Chaplaincy and Care Ministry

Over the past three years, I have visited most of our chaplains at their work site or in the area where they are employed. Seeing chaplains at work in hospitals, on aircraft carriers, in hospices, prisons and the workplace has been informative and exciting. These chaplains touch literally hundreds of lives each day (as well as families) with the assurance that God has not abandoned them but is present and cares. Only eternity will show the full measure of this impact.

We continue to see growing interest in chaplaincy by way of:

- applications for endorsement;
- conversations with pastors who are considering a transition into chaplaincy;
- conversations with students on Christian college or seminary campuses

Despite a large number of retirements over the past few years (reflecting a wave of new chaplains in the early 80's) our numbers remain at around 120 total chaplains due to another wave of interest in chaplaincy – both military and civilian, in Canada and the United States.

Earlier this year, we convened nearly 100 chaplains and spouses at the Prince Conference Center for our annual conference. We were joined during several portions of that event by over 50 RCA chaplains/spouses who were meeting just down the road. This is the third time the two groups have met concurrently and enjoyed mutual fellowship.

We continue to reinforce the connection between chaplains and their calling churches by way of

- formulating Covenants of Joint Supervision (required at the time of

endorsement and/or at five-year renewals of endorsement)

- letters encouraging churches to use the special training and gifts of chaplains, and
- encouraging recognition of Chaplain Sunday in November (this year on Nov. 23).

Because of the generous gifts of individuals and churches to our Development Fund, we were able to award over \$30,000 in grants for specialized chaplaincy training in the past year. A warm thanks to all who contributed to enlarging this ministry to individuals in crisis through specially trained chaplains in institutional and organizational settings.

—Rev. Ron Klimp, Director

Disability Concerns

Baptized children and youth are members of the covenant. Therefore, all baptized children and youth need to be nurtured in faith by the church and engaged in the ministry of the church. In June, synod encouraged churches to work to include and engage children and youth who have disabilities in congregational ministry programs. Synod suggested several strategies to implement this recommendation:

- 1) Identify and prioritize the inclusion of adolescents with disabilities in youth programs and ministries.
- 2) Minister with children and youth who have disabilities and their families because families with teenagers who have disabilities face an often-challenging transition to adulthood.
- 3) Include peers with disabilities in their leadership, worship, youth gatherings, Bible studies, and event planning.
- 4) Build awareness and changing attitudes about physical, intellectual, behavioral, and other disabilities, and

about mental illnesses, throughout their youth programs and especially within their leadership structures.

It's easy for synod to pass a recommendation, but putting it into practice at your church requires creativity, care, persistence and know-how. Disability Concerns will help you in every way we can. We have hundreds of disability advocates across North America; your church may well have one already.

Find resources on our website (crcna.org/disability) and network site (network.crcna.org/disability). Check out our Inclusion Handbook available from faithaliveresources.org. Email us (disabilityconcerns@crcna.org), or give us a call (888-463-0272).

We want to help your church be the kind of Christian community in which everybody belongs and everybody serves.

Office of Social Justice

The OSJ is collaborating with the Centre for Public Dialogue, the Office of Race Relations and Mark Charles to create a U.S. version of CPD's Blanket Exercise.

Our partnership with the Centre for Public Dialogue continues to bear fruit. This quarter, we partnered to hire an "Arts in Communications" summer intern, who is developing visual aids to help congregations in Canada engage with indigenous peoples in their local contexts. We are also working with a number of agencies in Canada to develop a workshop to help churches learn about and better serve our refugee neighbors.

There are several resources we are actively promoting for educating and equipping for immigration reform. Church Between Borders is our four-week curriculum and educational booklet. CBB will soon go into its second printing and continues to get rave reviews from congregations as a useful and eye-opening tool for learning about immigration in the United States. The curriculum has been used in pastor gatherings, classis meetings, Sunday schools, youth groups and many other settings. It is being updated to be more accessible on the web as well as in the Spanish language.

Second, many congregations have

screened the film "The Stranger", a 45-minute documentary from the Evangelical Immigration Table that gives a Christian perspective on immigration, profiling the stories of three families caught up in the broken system.

Third, *Stride* is an email newsletter put out by the OSJ that gives advocates the information and resources they need to raise their voices for justice.

Though immigration reform has stalled in Washington D.C., our staff continues to devote time to equip advocates and educate congregations. Our partnership with the Evangelical Immigration Table will continue, although the EIT funding for organizers has been suspended.

Pastor-Church Relations

The ministry of Pastor-Church Relations (P-CR) was approved by Synod 1982 to provide programs of "healing and prevention" for ministers, staff, consistories and congregations of the Christian Reformed Church.

In her role as Staff Ministry Specialist in the Office of Pastor-Church Relations, Jeanne Kallemeyn works with an advisory committee called The Staff Ministry Team (SMT). This is a group of six volunteers who have a passion for healthy congregations in the CRC and the well-being of the ministry staff who contribute in so many ways to their congregations.

In the past year the SMT completed a credentialing process whereby non-ordained church staff can be credentialing in their area of ministry.

Now we are pleased to introduce a new resource called *The Church Staff Handbook* written by Laura Keeley with Henry Kranenburg and Leonard VanderZee.

Here is a description of the book taken from the Faith Alive Christian Resources website:

Today's churches are busy places that strive to do ministry in a variety of ways in the community where they live. In many cases the pastor doesn't have the time or gifts to lead all the ministries of the church, so a congregation chooses other capable leaders to help.

This handbook will help church staff and those who hire and supervise them to build a better and more focused ministry together. In engaging chapters filled with real-life example, Keeley guides churches to hire according to ministry needs and to treat their staff with fairness and respect. She challenges staff to continue their lifelong learning and to look for opportunities for spiritual renewal.

Topics include writing vision statements and job descriptions, forming personnel committees, setting salaries, finding joy in ministry, and working with pastors and councils.

We encourage you to make use of this new resource. It can be ordered from Faith Alive Christian Resources at: <http://www.faithaliveresources.org/Products/151121/the-church-staff-handbook.aspx>

Race Relations

The Office of Race Relations has produced a new resource booklet titled *Latinos: The Next Wave*, written by Rev. Pedro Avilés, pastor of Ebenezer CRC in Berwyn, IL.

This booklet gives some insight into the Latino/Hispanic peoples and culture. As Avilés writes, "we'll help you (and us) get a whole lot better at outreach to Hispanics already there in your neighborhoods." For more information and purchase please go to Faith Alive Resources on the CRCNA web page.

Plans continue to be developed to conduct a Cultural Intelligence Workshop in the Dominican Republic in October of this year.

A new workshop called the Blanket Exercise has been created which focuses on the history of oppression of First Nations and Native American peoples. Training for facilitators in both Canada and the U.S. is being offered this fall. For more info please contact the [Office of Race Relations](#), [Office of Social Justice](#), or Centre for Public Dialogue.

Safe Church Ministry

Safe Church Ministry: Equipping churches in abuse awareness, prevention and response

Connecting/Resourcing:
About 150 interactions with churches

and individuals were recorded by Safe Church Ministry this quarter. 34 related to a situation of abuse; 33 to safe church team, 27 to awareness and 27 to policy

Each month about 380 people receive our newsletter, 15 prayer partners receive a prayer guide, and three blogs are posted on the Network <http://network.crcna.org/content/safe-church>

Ministry highlights include:

Safe Church Conference – About 60 safe church team members from 28 different classes gathered in Grand Rapids for two days of workshops and plenary sessions to be better equipped for their safe church work. One evening presentation was held at Calvin Chapel and was open to the public.

Justice Retreat – Safe Church staff helped in planning and facilitating a retreat designed to increase collaboration among CRC agencies and ministries around themes of justice, mercy, inclusion, and advocacy. We believe our ministry is enhanced as we work together.

Synod 2014 – Safe Church Ministry reports annually to an assigned committee of delegates to synod. This year the committee requested additional time to ask questions and dialogue about Safe Church Ministry. The committee brought several recommendations to the floor of synod that were designed to support and strengthen Safe Church Ministry. The recommendations were approved and can be found in the minutes of the Acts of Synod 2014, p. 560

Summer Intern – Robin Rhodes, a student at Calvin Seminary, is working eight hours/week this summer to help with follow-up and promotion of Circle of Grace, a safe environment program for children and youth. The program is available at a subsidized cost for CRC and now also for RCA churches. Over 50 churches have ordered the program so far. More information about Circle of Grace can be found at www.crcna.org/SafeChurch/education-best-prevention

Sustaining Pastoral Excellence

Recently there have been ongoing discussions regarding assessment in the CRCNA. This is not referring to assessing the CRC; rather, it is about assisting future and current leaders as they work through their calling, are in times of transition, and/or wonder about ministry fit.

The CRC Ministry Assessment and Career Guidance Committee, with members from Calvin Seminary, World Missions, Pastor-Church Relations, Sustaining Pastoral Excellence, Home Missions, and Candidacy, has just completed a one-year pilot project. The purpose was to explore the impact an assessment, focusing on ministry fit, would have on pastors.

The results were most encouraging. The participants indicated they had improved significantly in 13 of the 14 outcomes that were tracked. These included things such as how satisfied they were with their level of vocation clarity, the level of their career decision-making confidence, and their career adaptability. All were very appreciative of the experience and the majority had a clearer sense of their place in ministry.

Here are examples of how the assessment impacted participants. One pastor:

- is seriously considering changing his pastoral role based on the assessment and discussion with the counselor.
- said, "I rediscovered God's call in my life. It reaffirmed my calling. I know that this is exactly where God wants me to be—a pastor. This comes with a divine assurance. This is critically important for me at this time."

A second pilot will begin soon to explore a variety of new variables. The goal is to have fewer challenging situations between pastors and congregations. Additionally, a plan is being considered on how assessments could become part of the way in which the denomination walks alongside churches, pastors, ministry leaders, missionaries, chaplains and those considering ministry that are looking for answers regarding ministry fit.

Centre for Public Dialogue and Canadian Aboriginal Ministries Committee

The Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee (CAMC) celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Indigenous Family Centre (IFC), the CRC's first urban aboriginal ministry centre, by dedicating this year's Aboriginal Sunday (June 15 or June 22) to marking the IFC's 40 years of faithfulness. CAMC is also seeking "Champions" in each church to help get people talking about reconciliation.

We are partnering with the Office of Social Justice (OSJ) and Mark Charles, a Navajo leader, to develop and pilot a U.S. version of the Blanket Exercise. We are excited that the successes of this interactive exercise in Canada can now be shared with U.S. churches as we deepen our journey of reconciliation.

The Centre for Public Dialogue partnered with the OSJ to hire an Arts in Communications summer intern, Grace Vanberkel. In response to interest from churches, Grace's work will provide tools and visual aids to help congregations understand the indigenous history of the land on which they live and worship. We hope this is another doorway into learning our history alongside indigenous peoples.

Two workshops are going through final edits to be ready for rollout in the fall. A 90-minute interactive refugee workshop will help congregations imagine walking a mile in the shoes of our refugee neighbors and give them the context they need to serve and advocate with refugees in our current political climate. "Living the Eighth Fire," a series of workshops that aim to bring congregations into relationships of mutual learning with indigenous peoples, will also launch in the fall.

The Centre for Public Dialogue sent a letter to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Minister Valcourt and met with opposition MPs to encourage ongoing commitment to reconciliation in education, despite the stalling of Bill C-33. Mike Hogeterp also met with MP Charlie Angus to share the CRC's position on palliative care.

Indian Metis Christian Fellowship (Regina)

Sharing food and faith is a relationship building exercise demonstrated by Christ himself (Luke 24: 13-32). Indian Metis Christian Fellowship in Regina, Saskatchewan builds community through sharing meals and devotions.

Each Wednesday noon, community members share a soup and bannock meal prepared by volunteers and ministry staff. Each Saturday morning, parents and children share a family breakfast prepared by volunteers from local churches working with IMCF volunteers and staff. Participation in these meals ranges from 40 to 90 people.

On most afternoons, the participants in the ministry's Chimatawa Family Youth program share a meal prepared by youth, volunteers and staff in a family like atmosphere. Each meal is preceded by community announcements, a Bible reading, a brief meditation and a prayer in Christ's name.

The people sharing meals at IMCF are young and old, male and female, employed and unemployed and come from the First Nations, Metis and non-Aboriginal backgrounds. Through sharing meals they come to recognize each other as fellow members of the diverse community that is the city of Regina. Sharing physical and spiritual food encourages people to see themselves as children of the Creator with a shared need for the Creator's healing and forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Combining food and faith transforms the simple sharing of food into a relationship-building exercise that contributes to the development of a Christian Aboriginal community.

Support from the Christian Reformed Church provides the space, staff and resources that make the preparation and hosting of these meals possible. Thank you!

ServiceLink

ServiceLink has a new website. Yes we do! Most of the information is generally the same as it was on the old website, but there are a few new features we would like to highlight.

On the ENGAGE page, one can find information about VOLUNTEERISM. Posted under the title "Volunteer Engagement Series" are brief articles about the elements of engaging volunteers in ministry, along with discussion questions that will help you explore effective methods for working with a team of volunteers. Topics include "Creating Meaningful Job Descriptions", "Recruitment", "Orientation and Training", and "Motivation and Recognition."

Something new we have posted on this page are templates for the role of Elder and Deacon and video webinars for those new to either one of these positions within a local church. Templates for other ministry positions will soon be added to this page, along with a sample template to use for any position. Additionally we will be posting various articles related to Volunteer Ministry Development including ideas on how to support your volunteers, how to end a volunteer relationship, the importance of having job/position descriptions etc.

Something else that is new to our website is how one can locate opportunities to serve.

Posted under the OPPORTUNITIES link, you can now search by country, age, dates available or even the amount of funds you may have saved for an assignment.

With these new features, we hope to serve our constituents more effectively and with an increased scope of service.

Calvin College

Summer 2014 finds Calvin College in the countdown to the arrival of students. As part of our preparations, the faculty and staff have been praying for the safe arrival of new students and we look forward to meeting them. Fall enrollment looks very good, with more than 1,000 new students on campus and a total of more than 4,000 students.

Calvin College promotes the life of the mind among Christian scholars and lay people, including our students. In late July we held an open house where visitors could tour research labs and talk to student researchers about their projects.

This summer there are 81 students

working on 44 projects with 40 professors from eight departments in the science division. Calvin also has active summer research programs in the humanities and social sciences which help sharpen our faculty's teaching and engage a broad range of our students.

Calvin College seeks to identify, establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships locally, nationally and globally.

In mid-July the Calvin Center for Innovation in Business hosted its third annual Young Women's Business Institute, a pre-college program to introduce high school students to business theories and practices. By the end of the summer our Seminars at Calvin program will have hosted 83 visiting scholars and seminar participants plus many of their family members.

At the end of July we received news that Vice President for Student Life Shirley Hoogstra has been tapped to serve as the new president of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities in Washington D.C. Shirley has served the college faithfully for 15 years in the student life division and we will miss her considerable talents. Our loss is a wonderful gain for Christian higher education.

Calvin College equips students to think deeply, to act justly and to live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world. The new Wellness Floor community will provide 18 students a place to live and learn alongside others committed to exploring and improving personal wellness. Through educational programs on topics such as sleep, nutrition, exercise, stress management and the biblical idea of sabbath, those living on the Wellness Floor will have the opportunity to develop critical habits to sustain a healthy lifestyle beginning in the fall 2014 semester.

We are pursuing an environment of inclusive excellence, cultural competency and global awareness. The Michigan Department of Education approved a program that will give Calvin students the option to major or minor in Chinese language education. Calvin is one of only a few Christian undergraduate colleges in the U.S. to offer a Chinese language major and will be one of the only schools in

Michigan to offer a Chinese education program.

In July, the office of pre-college programs welcomed 72 high school students to campus for the 24th annual Entrada Scholars Program. Entrada introduces highly motivated, highly gifted, under-represented minority high school juniors and seniors to college life. The Entrada program is just one way that Calvin is working to extend our reach into new audiences, to expand campus culture and to become a more diverse community. In 2013, the number of racial and ethnic minority students on campus rose to an all-time high of 523 or 13 percent of our student body.

Thanks to the generosity of the Calvin community, the college had the second-best fundraising year in its history with \$37.3 million in pledges. That includes the tremendous outpouring of support for debt relief (\$25.1 million in pledges at last count) toward reducing the college's long-term debt. We are making progress in buying down some of that debt.

Please keep Calvin in your prayers as we uphold its mission, and work together to bring God's good purpose for the college to fruition.

Calvin Theological Seminary

Welcoming New and Returning Students:

August 18 marked the beginning of International Student Orientation at Calvin Seminary when we welcomed 21 new international students to our community that draws from about 20 different countries. This is a key time for us and them as forge new relationships of understanding, fellowship, and instruction. We invite your prayers for the travel, immigration status and welcome to these students who give up so much for the opportunity to study at Calvin Seminary.

Gateway is the additional week of welcome and orientation for all incoming students, including those who will begin their distance education program. We anticipate that twelve new students will be welcomed this fall who can continue to live, work and minister where they live while gaining a Calvin Seminary education through our distance format.

Convocation is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 2. This chapel service marks the beginning of academic year 2014/2015 and will be posted on our website at www.calvinseminary.edu. In September, we plan to launch a redesigned website with a brand new look and feel.

Welcoming Professors and Staff:

Professors Amanda Benckhuysen (Old Testament), Sarah Schreiber (Old Testament) and Danjuma Gibson (Pastoral Care) will begin their teaching ministry at Calvin Seminary this fall. They have already joined faculty colleagues in developing their courses and preparing for the start of a new academic year.

In addition to these professors, Mr. Aaron Einfeld has begun his work as Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management. The addition of the phrase "Enrollment Management" to his title indicates that our service to seminary students goes beyond admissions. We are vitally interested in the education and experience of students throughout the course of their studies so that their continued learning at Calvin Seminary allows them to achieve their educational goals for ministry preparation.

Welcoming High School Students:

Two key summer activities that connect the seminary to the church are the service of Calvin Seminary faculty as advisers to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church and the Facing Your Future ministry immersion for junior and senior high school students.

These two activities converged this past year when Prof. Sarah Steen Schreiber was interviewed at synod. Sarah had been a student at the very beginning of the Facing Your Future program. Her exposure to ministry in that setting confirmed a calling for her to the teaching ministry of the church. Her interview, marked by passion for God's Word and a winsome love for his church was considered a high point of Synod 2014.

Year 16 of Facing Your Future drew together nearly thirty young people (including leaders) for 20 days of experiential learning. Ten days of teaching and training on campus were followed by ten days of "immersion excursions" to Christian Reformed

churches in Austin, Texas; Salt Lake City, Utah and Chicago (Roseland), Illinois.

We are grateful that about one out of every three Facing Your Future students have or will enter seminaries in order to pursue vocational ministry. And we celebrate that all FYF students are challenged to understand and embrace their unique kingdom callings through the depth and breadth of these formative experiences.

Thank you for your prayers for Calvin Theological Seminary.

Back to God Ministries International

Join Back to God Ministries International in celebrating 75 years of God's faithfulness in using media to tell his story, share his love, and serve his kingdom.

In 1939 the CRC entered the world of media ministry with one radio program on one station in one North American city. 75 years later our mission remains the same—to proclaim the gospel, disciple those who want to follow Christ, and strengthen the church.

But so much has changed. As new opportunities and new media channels became available, by God's grace, we expanded into 10 languages, using video, print, Internet, and social media—sharing the good news of redemption through Christ with people in nearly every country of the world.

BTGMI now produces:

- 45 audio programs in 10 languages broadcast worldwide on more than 2800 radio outlets, Internet, and smart phone.
- 19 weekly video programs on more than 200 stations and delivered through DVD, YouTube and, in Latin America, on Netflix.
- 35 websites and more than 55 social media sites.
- Nearly 3 million print devotional booklets produced annually, plus daily devotionals delivered by email, social media and smart phone apps to more than 280,000 people.

We don't know what the next 75 years will look like, but Back to God Ministries envisions harnessing media innovations and opportunities to continue sharing the gospel with people everywhere. We are grateful for

faithful support from CRC and its members.

Synod has designated Sunday, Nov. 16, 2014 as a suggested day to schedule a special offering for Back to God Ministries International in celebration of 75 years of ministry. Each congregation will receive a 3-minute video and bulletin inserts to help acknowledge the anniversary. If you need additional information, contact info@BackToGod.net.

Home Missions

Home Missions is approaching its work with renewed energy and focus, prayerfully joining the mission of God alongside God's missionary people.

As cultures and generations shift, we have found Home Missions must shift with them, finding new ways to work in our changed and changing reality.

Home Missions is engaging these changes as opportunities to reach North Americans. Our ministry partners pursue the kingdom faithfully and in diverse and creative ways, and God has blessed their efforts.

- The Source Church of Pembroke Pines, Florida, partnered with the city's annual Easter egg hunt to provide prizes and volunteers. At the event, The Source members connected with 4,000 kids and their families, inviting them to participate in the church's Easter worship. God provided a venue for the service in the form of a local movie theater, and 64 people celebrated the Resurrection.
- York University's Christian Reformed campus ministry club, Leadership, Culture and Christianity, marked the World Day of Prayer alongside York's Coptic Christian Student Association. Together, the two groups prayed through a liturgy focusing on Egypt, and particularly on the concerns of women in a nation with high rates of corruption and sexual harassment.
- River City Church of Cambridge, Ontario, celebrated summer with barbeque and baptisms. The June 22 service at Shade's Mills Conservation Area welcomed nine new believers to the church family.

As we partner with new ministries and build relationships among and from

CRC-RCA networks, we covet your prayers for God's overwhelming presence in one of the world's largest mission fields—North America.

World Missions

Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) staff is encouraged to see how God has renewed the growth of the CRC's work in global missions. For the first time in more than a decade, CRWM's new funding model has opened the way for them to appoint missionaries into four new positions. CRWM is also recruiting for four more open positions right now.

In July, these new appointees joined other new missionaries in a week-long orientation. Together, they prepared to enter mission fields in Nigeria, Haiti, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Asia, and the Philippines. Pray that these new missionaries will have meaningful, deep, relationships in their communities. Pray that they will be effective in their ministries as they transition into new cultures.

This summer, many missionaries in Central America hosted several missions teams and individuals from North America. The teams not only helped serve alongside the missionaries there but also learned about the long-term role of the gospel in these countries.

During turbulent times this summer, CRWM's Hope Equals team was able to witness peacemaking efforts of individuals and organizations in the Holy Land. The team is back now, but continues to pray for peace in the Middle East.

Along with Israel and Palestine, CRWM asks for prayers for peace in Ukraine and Nigeria. Missionaries continue in life and ministry. Still, they see the effects of violence in their adopted country every day, which includes many people being displaced from their homes.

Finally, CRWM asks that people pray that the ebola outbreak in West Africa will end. Staff in Sierra Leone had their schedules put on hold because of the virus's spread. Pray for comfort for all people who have been affected by the virus in West Africa.

World Renew

Thank you for your continued partnership with World Renew. We invite you to participate in the following opportunities this fall. World Renew does not receive ministry shares, but relies on special offerings from churches like yours.

- **World Hunger Sunday**, Nov. 2. This year's theme is Farm to Table, based on Psalm 34:8. www.worldrenew.net/worldhunger
- **Thanksgiving Day**. In Canada, consider designating your offering to Free A Family www.worldrenew.net/faf and in the U.S., consider distributing the Gift Catalogs
- **Gift Catalog**. This Advent season, encourage your congregation to choose gifts that help people in need and arrange a Christmas Day offering. www.worldrenewgifts.net

The story of 43-year-old Irena (name changed to protect privacy) in Guatemala is just one example of the difference your offerings make.

When Irena was 15-years-old, her parents arranged for her to be married. Her husband's father gave the new couple a plot of land, but its condition was too poor for it to produce a good crop. In order to make a living they had to travel to a farm in Peten every year and work in hard conditions.

In 2013, rain postponed the couple's trip to Peten. They were then visited by a health promoter working for ADIP, a World Renew partner, who told them about agricultural trainings to help them use their own land to make a living. Through these trainings, Irena learned how to cultivate a backyard garden. Her crop was so good that they did not have to travel to Peten anymore!

"I now have evidence that a backyard garden can make a difference to a poor family," she said, "I thank the Lord and I have learned that I am capable of accomplishing my goals. I encourage you to keep supporting this ministry. May God bless you."

Partners Worldwide

We are grateful to God and to our global Christian network of Partners for the support and encouragement around our vision to end poverty so

that all may have life and have it abundantly.

Our global conference is coming soon. If you would like connect with those around the world that are celebrating business as a calling to do God's work, please join us at our global conference on Oct. 30-31, 2014. Held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, our local partners, representative businesses, mentors and leaders in our work will be coming together to network, learn and strengthen partnerships. For more information visit: PartnersWorldwide.org/events or MarketplaceRevolution.org.

One of the people impacted by our work is Carlos from Honduras. Carlos his business partner, Dante, and their employees manufacture cartons and boxes, invigorating their lives with provision, purpose, and dignity.

Carlos' desire is to restore people's whole lives through employment—including their relationships with their families. "We see this business as a ministry: through the jobs we provide we can share about God, and give our employees a preparation for life and a spiritual incentive to grow in their faith," says Carlos.

Carlos receives encouragement, mentoring, and support from our local partner, Global de Empresarios en Pacto (Entrepreneurs in Global Covenant) as well as a US-based mentoring partner, Entrust. Together with our local staff, this partnership serves to remove obstacles and build up permanent local capacity designed to catalyze entrepreneurs and job creators just like Carlos.

Currently, the demand from clients is pushing him to grow his business, and he's looking for a bigger facility where he can put more machinery to meet this demand. Carlos is grateful to this partnership for helping him make smart choices so that he can contribute to the flourishing in his community through employment.

Dynamic Youth Ministries

Calvinist Cadet Corps

The last report to classes from Cadets announced the rapidly approaching international camporee in Lacombe, Alberta. That event has now become a part of the history of cadeting and —

as usual — God had much more in store for us than we had planned.

For the fourth camporee in a row, weather played a significant role in the shaping of the camporee, changing the original plans. In recent camporees, we've had intense heat and humidity, flooding rains that caused us to evacuate, and a storm that washed away roads surrounding the campsite.

This year we had rain again, but it was the wind that was the major factor. Camp was in a forest of tall birch trees, and strong winds had blown down three dozen trees just weeks before we arrived.

On the second day of the camporee, the winds returned, and trees swayed alarmingly. The leaders first made a windbreak of semi-trailers and busses, but it wasn't enough. Camp was evacuated and more than a thousand were bussed to swimming pools in Red Deer for the day.

In the evening they were taken to Woodynook CRC in Lacombe where they were fed dinner and spent the night. No pajamas. No sleeping bags. Just more than a thousand men and boys sleeping on the pews, chairs, and floors of the church.

The next day was calm. Busses took the campers back to Kamp Lone Pine, and camp resumed its routine. But the Cadets will have memories to tell their friends and children for years to come. God was indeed acknowledged, praised, and glorified at camp this year.

GEMS Girls Clubs

Leadership Training is an integral part of the GEMS ministry. Based on Titus 2, we believe that older women are to teach younger women *what is good*. To help women do that well, GEMS equips leaders through monthly newsletters, training materials, and large-group events. This past July, over 650 women gathered at Calvin College for our annual conference. Through worship, workshops, keynote speakers, and share times women were not only trained on curriculum and best-practices for mentoring, they were refreshed for their work with girls and introduced to the new annual theme for 2014-15: *Bring the Message*, based on Isaiah 6:8.

In addition to this international event, this fall over 30 local training

opportunities will be available to women around North America as they gear up for a new GEMS season. Regional leaders are trained to lead these events that help connect women and build a network of resources and ideas for local clubs.

In early August, GEMS will also be hosting Get Connected! camp for 170 early teen girls from the U.S. and Canada in Rodney, Michigan. Prayers are coveted for this experience as girls learn what it means to connect with God.

The Esther School in Zambia, Africa will be opening again soon for its third school year. New staff and teachers will be heading to (or returning to) Zambia in the coming weeks to warmly welcome students back from summer break. Construction on the third grade building will begin soon.

Youth Unlimited

We have been hearing lots of "amazing", "awesome", "powerful", "fun" and "loved it so much" around here since my daughters returned from Serve on Saturday night! They both had glowing things to say about all aspects of this trip. They met some wonderful new friends, stretched themselves in new situations, got to know the people in whose homes they served, really enjoyed the powerful worship and appreciated all the thoughtful touches.

As parents back home, we really appreciated the frequent updates and photos on Facebook, so we could get a sense of what they were experiencing. We were very impressed with the number and quality of your volunteers—including people staying up in shifts throughout the night! Please know how much we appreciate all the time and effort your church community put into this life-changing opportunity for so many! Well done!

-Parents of Serve 2014 Students

I cannot totally put into words the past week; it was such a joy to be with such awesome people, it's amazing how close you can get to people in such a short time. It was great to cry, laugh, sing, serve, listen and learn with all of you!!! Praise God for all of you!! There are so many people to thank that I cannot mention all of them. The week of Serve is always one of the best

weeks of the year. I think it is a little bit like heaven will be.

-Youth Leader at a 2014 Serve

We feel so blessed to have had such a great group this year! Thanks to everyone who helped make it happen. Thank you to each leader and student who gave up a week of his or her summer to serve in our city. Our prayer is that you will take what you learned this week and live it out back home. Let's change the world together! Our God is a great God!

-Serve 2014 Church Host Team

Youth Unlimited is thankful and humbled to have served alongside 20 plus CRC churches that hosted and the more than 150 CRC churches that sent youth on Serve this summer. It is our prayer you see all those who participated return impacted by Jesus Christ and seeking to make a difference for Him in your church and community. To learn more about what God did through Youth Unlimited and Serve visit us at www.youthunlimited.org or find us on Facebook.