

# On a Mission

## Essential News from Christian Reformed Home Missions

Christian Reformed Home Missions serves the churches, ministries, and members of the Christian Reformed Church in North America through partnerships that work to fulfill Christ's mission.

### A Beacon of Hope in Nebraska



Northern Lighthouse, a Home Missions-funded ministry in Lincoln, Nebraska, worships with inmates and former inmates, recovered and struggling addicts, homeless men and women, and others. The following testimony is from "Bob," a new member of the church.

Bob, a resident of Lincoln, Nebraska, had hit rock bottom. "In January of this year I sat in a motel room alone," he says. "I'd been suspended from my job for drug abuse. I was a practicing alcoholic."

While in that room, Bob called out to Jesus. "I surrendered myself to God's will that morning and asked that he would show me what he wanted me to do. I believe that God was speaking to me through one of his followers, because a few days later, I was invited by a friend to a service at *The Northern Lighthouse*," he says.

*The Northern Lighthouse* is a new Home Missions-funded church that worships with inmates, recovered and struggling addicts, the homeless, and others.

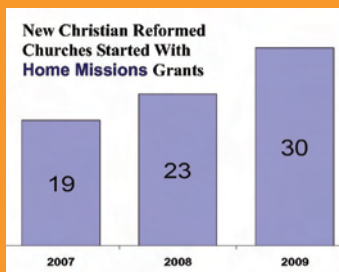
"I have since taken classes at *The Northern Lighthouse* to help me grow in my faith walk," Bob says. "I have shared my

witness and done service projects with other CRC members. Christ lives among us and that Spirit is what keeps me at *The Northern Lighthouse*."

This year, Home Missions hopes to fund **30 new Christian Reformed Churches** that seek to change lives in North America. We thank you for your prayers and support.

### A Record Number of Churches in 2009!

Did you know that right now 218 million North Americans don't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Christian Reformed Home Missions is



dedicated to changing that. Through more than two hundred ministries we support, we see the love of Christ transforming lives and communities across North America. The

chart below reflects the recent growth of new Home Missions-supported CRCs.

### About This Newsletter

You may have noticed that this *On A Mission*, unlike previous editions, is only four pages in length. Because of these challenging economic times, we have decided to cut costs wherever possible, including mailings such as this one. We hope you realize that, despite the scaled-down size, we're still able to bring you great stories about Christ working in the lives of his people through Home Missions ministries.

800-266-2175 www.crh.m.org



**Christian Reformed Home Missions**

Following Christ. In Mission Together.

# New Church Offers Miami Residents “New Life”



Caption



Caption

Growing up in Cuba, Juan Pablo Sanchez never saw the inside of a church . . . or the outside, for that matter. “Nobody I

knew went to church,” says Juan Pablo. “I didn’t even know where any churches were because they didn’t have signs. Officially, churches didn’t exist.”

But in 1980, Juan Pablo and his wife, Alicia, fled Cuba by boat and landed in Miami, where their lives changed forever. One Sunday, Juan Pablo went “reluctantly” with his mother-in-law to church and made an amazing discovery. “The church welcomed me like a long-lost brother,” he says. “I’d found a loving, caring home—something I hadn’t had as a child.” In time, Juan Pablo also discovered a faithful God who planted in his heart a deep desire to help build His kingdom. That desire led to service within the church and, eventually, to seminary.

One evening in 2000, Juan Pablo and Alicia hosted a Bible study in their living room. Four people showed up, and *Viva Nueva* (New Life) got its start. “Our vision was to build a *family* of supportive and service-oriented followers of Christ,” Juan Pablo reports. “So as our small groups evolved and multiplied,

they went naturally into the community to serve and witness.” They offered special festivals for kids, baby showers for low income couples, and Bible studies for all ages.

Today, *Viva Nueva* offers Sunday worship services (followed by lunch), a support ministry for couples, and The Restoration Center, where trained counselors provide guidance, emotional support, and help for those dealing with addictions. “We want people who come here to feel they’re part of a loving family,” says Juan Pablo. “That feeling will feed their ability and willingness to serve.”

His own family leads by example. Both sons contribute their talents to the music ministry, and Alicia works with the church’s six- to twelve-year-olds. “Our great hope for *Viva Nueva* is that as our numbers grow, so will our spiritual maturity,” Juan Pablo explains. “I want people to see daily reminders of how God’s tremendous power transforms lives. I’m probably one of the best examples of that.”

## Understanding Generosity from God’s Perspective

We serve a giving God. The most famous verse in the Bible, John 3:16, tells us that God loves us so much that he gave us what was most precious to him. Giving is at the very center of God’s heart. For our hearts to be in tune with God’s heart, we need to understand generosity from his perspective. Here are three biblical principles to help us do that:

### 1. Everything belongs to God.

The Apostle Paul asked the Corinthian church, “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). In other words, everything we have and everything we are comes *from* and belongs *to* God. We own nothing. But God does give us gifts to manage for him, such as our abilities, our time, our resources, and our relationships. Why does God entrust us with these gifts? Simply put, to help us love God and love people.

### 2. Much has been given to us.

Have you paused recently to count your many blessings? God has truly lavished his love on us. In fact, we are heirs of God’s kingdom (Romans 8:17). Yet from Scripture we also know that

“from everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded” (Luke 12:48). This means that God holds us responsible for how we use the blessings he has given to us. God blesses us in order for us to be a blessing and to “enlarge the harvest of [our] righteousness” (2 Corinthians 9:10). Giving in this manner is a delight, not a duty. In fact, God intends for giving to be a source of great joy in our lives (2 Corinthians 9:7).

### 3. Money is a big deal to God.

You may have heard that God talked about money and possessions over two thousand times in Scripture. *Treasure Principle* author Randy Alcorn points out that Jesus talked about money more than heaven and hell combined. Why? Because our hearts follow our money (Matthew 6:21), and God wants our hearts. If our hearts belong to God, we will care about the things God cares about. When that happens, our money becomes a kingdom-advancing tool to honor God and to provide for the spiritual and physical needs of others.

For a FREE copy of “Applying Biblical Wisdom to Financial Planning” write ‘Wisdom’ on the enclosed reply card or contact Home Missions at (800) 266-2175 or [advancement@crcna.org](mailto:advancement@crcna.org).

# Conference Challenges Ontario Churches to Become “Missional”

A January conference presented by the Home Missions Central and Eastern Canada Ministry Team challenged more than two hundred people to focus on the communities outside their congregations’ walls.

“Missional Living: Touching Lives . . . Impacting Communities,” which was held at Georgetown Christian Reformed Church in Georgetown, Ontario, attracted ministry leaders from churches all across Ontario. They came to hear speakers like Dwayne Cline, pastor of Hughson St. Baptist Church in urban Hamilton, Ontario, who spoke on the theme, “From Maintenance to Missions.”

In his address, Cline explored how churches can go from maintaining the status quo to becoming missional forces for God’s kingdom through deliberate outreach programs. During this session, a member of First Hamilton CRC spoke about how that church has successfully moved from maintenance to missional through community outreach. “Duane challenged all of us to be incarnational in our communities, to care for the poor, and get involved in local schools and other institutions,” observes Hilda VanderKlippe, ministry developer for evangelism for the Central and Eastern Canada Ministry Team.

“He showed us how we can bless the cities we’re in, and he inspired us all to live outside our comfort zones by being more evangelistic.”

The conference also featured fourteen workshops, including sessions led by Home Missions staff members. Workshops covered topics such as prayer, evangelism, youth, church planting, neighborhood outreach, and small groups.

The Home Missions Central and Eastern Canada Ministry Team serves CRCs in Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland.

## Ontario CRC Finds New Venue for Community Outreach



Since its formation in 2005, *The Journey*, a growing Christian Reformed congregation in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, has achieved a certain level of “success.” Now at 170 members, the church still enjoys a steady stream of newcomers most Sunday mornings.

But being a thriving church isn’t enough for Rev. Adrian Van Giessen, senior pastor of *The Journey*, which was started with assistance from Christian Reformed Home Missions. That’s why *The Journey* recently opened their new Ministry Centre in downtown Kitchener. The facility, purchased by the church and renovated with the help of local community members, is “a place for us to work and reach out to a city in need,” Van Giessen explains.

In fact, Kitchener-Waterloo is home to an increasing number of refugees and immigrants, a community *The Journey* has deliberately been reaching out to for the past two years. For instance, the church holds a weekly English Language Conversation Circle, where people taking English as a Second Language classes can come and practice their English skills with members of *The Journey*.

With the new Ministry Centre, the church now has more space and more opportunity to expand Conversation Circle as well as other community ministry programs. “Previously, we were averaging about ten new immigrants a week at the Circle, but it’s grown to around twenty now, just since we moved here,” Van Giessen says. Part of that is because the Ministry Centre is located on a high-traffic corner with a lot of visibility. “It’s on a major bus route and gives us more exposure,” he adds. “At least five times a week, people walking by stop in and ask for directions, so we invite them to have coffee with us, and we tell them about our church. It’s a nice, low-key way of ministering to people in the community.”

## Home Missions Appoints Development Officer to Lead Chicago Office

Home Missions has hired former church planter Marc V. Zumhagen to work as a development officer out of the agency’s brand new Chicago-area office.

Zumhagen, 26, is a native of Chicago’s near southwest suburbs. He attended Calvin Theological Seminary and is currently working toward an M. Div. degree from Liberty University.

As a development officer, Zumhagen will help spread the message of Home Missions throughout Chicagoland, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota.

Home Missions’ new office is located in Palos Heights, Illinois, directly across the street from Back to God Ministries International and Trinity Christian College. The region is also home to a dozen Home Missions churches, three Home Missions-funded Leadership Development Networks, three CRC classes, and the Home Missions Chicagoland Ministry Team.

# Honoring Lives and Legacies through Gifts to Home Missions

Memorial donations to Christian Reformed Home Missions through January 27, 2009. Those memorialized or honored are listed in bold, with respective donors indicated below each name.

## In Memoriam:

### **In Memory of Loraine Apol**

Henry W. Apol

### **In Memory of Julius and Sylvia**

**Becksvoort**

Rev. Benjamin J. and Beverly A.

Becksvoort

Thomas D. and Sheryl J. Klaasen

### **In Memory of Jack Billings**

Henrietta Billings

### **In Memory of Edward Boeve**

Harold and Jeanette Barber

Clarence W. and Donna J. Boeve

James A. and Laurel J. Boeve

Jim Dykema and Cora Hoffmeyer Dykema

Richard and Jill Siegers

### **In Memory of Grace Kennedy Busscher**

Jack A. and Luanne Busscher

### **In Memory of Rev. Edward Cooke**

Annette Cooke

### **In Memory of Rev. Bernard Den Ouden**

Rev. Benjamin J. and Beverly A. Becksvoort

David Den Ouden

### **In Memory of Harold DeVries**

Carolyn DeVries

### **In Memory of Peter Doot**

Rick L. and Barbara S. Stanley

### **In Memory of Ellerd Folkerts**

Theresa Folkerts

### **In Memory of Ina Goedhart**

Peter J. Goedhart

### **In Memory of Dick and Audrey Hoolsema**

Daniel J. and Gloria Hoolsema

### **In Memory of Marvin Hop**

Hermina Hop

### **In Memory of Cleo Huizenga**

Genevieve Huizenga

### **In Memory of Carolyn Kass**

Walter G. Kass

### **In Memory of Charles and Viola Koopmans**

Larry and Rosemary Koopmans

### **In Memory of John and Julie LaGrande**

Genevieve M. Franz

### **In Memory of Rev. Raymond Opperwall**

Helen B. Opperwall

### **In Memory of Roger Allen Pearson**

Shirley J. Pearson

### **In Memory of Alfred Rodrigues**

Betty A. Rodrigues

### **In Memory of Mary Schmidt**

Claire E. Kimm

### **In Memory of Lawrence Schols**

Henry and Marideen Holtrop

### **In Memory of William Spoelhof**

Melvin S. Boonstra

### **In Memory of Don Van Beek**

Helen E. Van Beek

### **In Memory of Trenton Van Diest**

Grace D. Van Diest

### **In Memory of John VanDrie**

Susan Van Drie

### **In Memory of Andy VanSlot**

Rev. Robert A. and Susan J. Lyzenga

### **In Memory of Carnelia Vis**

Carl E. and Annette A. Hulford

## In Honor:

### **In Honor of Dorothy Den Ouden**

David E. Den Ouden

### **In Honor of Rev. and Mrs. Herman Hoekstra**

Rev. Paul R. and Ellen F. Hoekstra

### **In Honor of God's faithfulness to Maranatha-Farmington**

Rev. James L. and Alyce Vande Lune

### **In Honor of Gertrude Roede (90<sup>th</sup> Birthday)**

Agnes M. De Groot

### **In Honor of Rev. John A. Rozeboom's Retirement**

Marlyn and Marcia Allspach

Rev. David H. Kromminga and Mary E.

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David J. and Marla J. Koetje

Silas Krabbe

Alice S. Lewis

Rev. Cornelius and Kathleen L. Pool

Rev. Paul H. and Beth R. Vander Klay

### **In Honor of Sea to Sea**

Calvin De Vries

## Home Missions Ministry Prayer Requests

**Ministry:** *Grace Unlimited Ministries*

**Prayer request:** *Grace Unlimited Ministries* is a congregation that ministers to single, unwed parents and troubled teens in south-central Los Angeles, California. Ask the Lord to use this ministry to reach these people, who need Jesus in their lives.

**Leadership:** Through the work of thirteen Leadership Development Networks (LDNs), Home Missions provides hands-on training for future evangelists and new church developers. Please pray for the new ministry leaders that go through these programs.

**Ministry:** *Pathway Church*

**Prayer request:** *Pathway Church* seeks to reach the nearly eighty thousand unchurched and under-churched people

who live within a six-mile radius of the ministry. Please pray that Pastor Rob Knol and his congregation can reach these people for Christ.

**Ministry:** *Rehoboth Christian School* and *Zuni Christian Mission School*

**Prayer request:** Home Missions directly assists *Rehoboth Christian School* and *Zuni Christian Mission School* in New Mexico. Please pray that the Lord will work through these schools to bring the gospel to Native Americans.

