

HOME MISSIONS ON A MISSION

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.

Uniting Ethnic Churches, Discovering New Leaders



A rich tapestry of Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Native American Christian Reformed congregations can be found today throughout the U.S. and Canada. It's all part of a growing movement of multi-ethnic churches in the CRC.

But many of these churches are not formally connected to one another. And that's something Rev. Bob Price hopes will change.

Price, Home Missions' Ethnic Leader for Black Ministries, is partnering with the other three Home Missions Ethnic Leaders to lead the newly-formed Home Missions Ethnic Ministry Council. "The four of us made a covenant to partner together," says Price, Chair of the Council. "We realized there are multi-ethnic churches scattered throughout all seven Home Missions regions in North America, and we want to help them connect with each other socially. We also want to help break down racial walls in this denomination."

The Ethnic Leaders serving alongside Price on the Ethnic Ministry Council are Rev. Stanley Jim, Native American Ministries; Javier Torres, Hispanic Ministries; and Rev. Tong Park, Korean Ministries. In their roles on the Council, the four will lead the way in championing the need to integrate ethnic ministries into the geographical regions and classes where they are located. The Council reflects Home Mis-

sions' intentionality to work inter-culturally with various groups of people, so that the whole gospel comes to all people in all contexts. "I see the Ethnic Ministry Council as an answer to prayer," says Javier Torres. "It moves us from ethnic islands to a place where multi-ethnicity is celebrated and together we can work with our partners in fanning the flames of multiculturalism."

The Ethnic Leaders have a lead voice in deploying new ethnic leaders, as well as authorizing funding for the start of new ethnic ministries. As their new roles on the Ethnic Council emerge, they eagerly look forward to having an influence and impact in the CRC regarding all ethnic groups. "The four of us want to explore how we can come together in a formal way to serve each other and learn from each other, as well as be a resource to the denomination," Price says.

The Ethnic Council will first work to identify where the multi-ethnic churches are in each region. The Council refers to "multi-ethnic" as churches made up of 20 percent of a particular ethnic group. "We want to celebrate with these churches as well as serve them," says Price. In addition, the Council will work with predominantly white churches that are transitioning into multi-ethnic congregations. "We want to walk alongside those churches," says Price.

The Council also hopes to connect disparate churches with one another, in order to help them network and learn together. "We would love to see a social network of churches, so a multi-ethnic church in Canada could connect with a similar church in Florida, for example," says Price. "We also hope to see new ideas surface as a result of this kind of synergy between different ethnic groups. Once those connections start taking place, it could become something much bigger than all of us, led by God."

The Council will also seek to help discover young multi-ethnic ministry leaders. "We want to identify new young

Continued on page 3

Echoing the Gospel Through Hip-Hop

Every Saturday night, hip hop music rumbles out of the windows of Holland, Michigan's *Imagine Fellowship Church*. Inside the sanctuary, young African-American men play video games, dance, eat, and listen to the gospel.

It might seem a bit out of place in this small, quiet community known for its Dutch-themed attractions. But this vibrant ministry, EK-HO, is bringing the gospel to young, unchurched men in an area where gang violence is on the rise.

Rev. Wayne Coleman, who planted *Imagine* several years ago, started EK-HO to reach young urban gang members who would otherwise be hanging out on the street. "In order to be reached, they need people to identify with them and their music," says Coleman. "If Jesus can be the Messiah for everyone, why couldn't

He be the Messiah to the post-modern Hip Hop culture?"

EK-HO, which means "echoing the gospel through hip-hop," was launched in October 2010. Already, 25 to 30 neighborhood youth from different cultures and economic backgrounds attend the Saturday night celebration.

Coleman sees EK-HO as an opportunity to befriend the youth, gain their trust, and eventually share the gospel with them. In time, these young people may even show up at Sunday worship or EK-HO itself may be the place where they find their 'church'. "We want to share life skills with the youth and talk with them," he says, adding that some of the youth may not have positive role models at home. The church then can be a positive role model and environment for them.

So how does Coleman keep the EK-HO ministry safe, given that gang members are in attendance? "We make sure people understand the rules and understand what lyrics are permissible," he says. "The kids know this is a church and they respect that and respond accordingly."

So far, EK-HO is having an impact. Jonathan and Alicia (not their real names) are a brother and sister who have been attending EK-HO since opening day. Their mother is an atheist. However, since attending EK-HO, both mother and children are becoming more curious about church and have recently accepted Jesus as their Savior. Additionally, *Imagine* has witnessed several gang members volunteering to become a part of the planning team.

New Campus Ministry Hopes to Connect Students with Church



Sam and Darcie Gutierrez

As pastor of *The Well*, a Home Missions-supported church plant located in Kelowna, British Columbia, Ron VandenBrink sees his share of students. In fact, there are 30,000 of them attending the nearby University of British Columbia Okanagan, so it's not uncommon to see a few at Sunday worship.

But it's rare that these students actually get plugged in and stay at *The Well*. College only lasts a few years and then students leave. "Many do not connect with a local church and

new Christians do not know where to go," says VandenBrink. "We want to introduce them to the church experience."

That's why *The Well* recently launched a new campus ministry at UBCO that will be tightly connected to the church. Leading the new campus ministry are Sam and Darcie Gutierrez, who both recently completed internships at the Home Missions-supported campus ministry at the University of Calgary in Calgary, Alberta. The challenge for the Gutierrez family will be to locate a group of UBCO students who are willing to be a part of the new campus ministry and take initiative as leaders.

It's a challenge, though, that Sam Gutierrez is more than willing to tackle. "While serving as an intern, I learned that there are many ways to impact a campus as large as this one," he says. "There is a lot of room to be creative here in campus ministry. I also was made aware again of how much campus ministry is needed. Students are at a crucial time in their lives and making decisions that will impact them for many years to come. What a wonderful opportunity to impact students at this important stage of their lives."

Community Renewal, One Block at a Time

The Frankford neighborhood of Northeast Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is a tough community where drug dealers congregate on corners and graffiti covers run-down buildings.

But God's Spirit is alive here, working through church plant *By Grace Alone* to renew this community, one block and one person at a time. "God wanted us in this neighborhood," says pastor Gabriel Wang-Hererra, who helped start *By Grace Alone* in late 2005. "We're committed to bringing Christ into this community."

The ministry strives to be a place where people feel accepted and then are sent out transformed and equipped to share the life changing Gospel of Jesus Christ. "Accept, Transform, and Equip is our motto," says Wang-Hererra. "When people come here, we want them to feel accepted by the love of Jesus Christ, and transformed by the gospel. We also seek to equip them to go out and accept others and share the Word."

A Puerto Rican who grew up in New York City, Wang-Hererra moved to Philadelphia in 1998 to attend seminary in the city. He was formerly a member of *Spirit and Truth Fellowship*, a Home Missions-supported urban Philadelphia church plant that has helped "birth" seven new churches in the area. Wang-Hererra and his wife, Pearl, were leading a Spirit and Truth small group in 2005 that engaged local youth. "Another person involved with the small group felt we needed to make it more official and plant a church," he says. "We all felt the need to reach out to young people who didn't feel comfortable going to church, but felt comfortable meeting at someone's house on Friday nights."

Unsure if he was ready to start his own church, Wang-Hererra attended a Home Missions Assessment Center for prospective church planters in late 2005. "All the assessors and coaches there were really affirming, and the whole process showed my wife and myself that we did have leadership gifts," Wang-Hererra says. "While we were there, I caught the vision of us engaging our local community and making an impact for Christ." In November 2005, Wang-Hererra and his wife, along with several others, officially launched *By Grace Alone*. He was ordained as a CRC Ministry Associate in 2009.

Today, *By Grace Alone* has grown and become more diverse in age and race. "We have a consistent group of regu-



lars here, including Latino, Africa-American, white, Asian, and Puerto-Rican people," he says.

Gabriel and Pearl live near the church because they want to immerse themselves in the neighborhood, problems and all. "There is a lot of drug activity around the area, and a lot of halfway houses. So it's a very transient community, and many people come and go from the church," he says.

To work at renewing the community, Gabriel and Pearl and others from *By Grace Alone* are active in beautifying the area through involvement in a community garden and regular work projects. They are also working to attract neighbors to their doorstep — literally. Last August, Gabriel and Pearl gathered outside on their porch on Sunday nights and prayed for peace on the block. Neighbors began noticing and started sharing their personal prayer needs with the Wang-Hererras. This prayer initiative also sparked the organization of a block clean-up project and a group of people who then attended local civic meetings about neighborhood violence.

And the focus on young people remains strong. *By Grace Alone* hosts a summer business boot camp for youth ages 10 to 14 that focuses on how God should be the center of everything, including career pursuits. The church also hosts a Friday night youth group, and is closely involved with a local flag football league. "The flag football team we're working with challenges kids with Bible study as well as the games," says Wang-Hererra. "We've worked with kids for the last few years who have now become assistant coaches on fire for God!"

Continued from first page

leaders, and also get their input and ideas on ministry growth," says Price.

The four Ethnic Leaders are enthused about the future and the opportunities the Council will have to empower and direct the multicultural culture within the denom-

ination. Already, there are plans for an ethnic pastors' orientation, a young ethnic leadership summit, a multi-ethnic church celebration, and plans to discuss the Belhar Confession at the April 28-30 Black and Reformed Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Honoring Lives and Legacies through Gifts to Home Missions

Memorial donations to Christian Reformed Home Missions through February 28, 2011. Those memorialized or honored are listed in bold, with respective donors indicated below each name.

In Memoriam:

In Memory of Mae Ruth Bandstra

Dr. Andrew J. Bandstra

In Memory of Jack F. Billings

Henrietta Billings

In Memory of James Harry Blystra

Cornelia Arens

In Memory of Gerrit Bos

Henny A. Bos

In Memory of Geneva Bosscher

Arthur L. Bosscher

In Memory of Mildred Bouman

Christina C. Wielenga

In Memory of Sue Breems

David R. Breems

In Memory of Lawrence Bultema

John H. and Barbara K. Verdouw

In Memory of Rev. Edward Cooke

Rev. Ralph W. Bronkema and Annette Cooke

In Memory of Rev. Manuel Cortina

Dr. Elsa Cortina

In Memory of Ruth Deems

Ralph F. Deems Jr.

In Memory of Jo DeKoekoek

Jerald and Tina Streutker

In Memory of Jeanette and Julius DenBleyker

Jasper and Marcella Vink

In Memory of Rev. Bernard Den Ouden

David E. Den Ouden

In Memory of Barbara DeVries

Calvin DeVries

In Memory of Glenn DeVries

Doris J. DeVries

In Memory of Diana Dickinson

Margaret Vander Plaats

In Memory of Peter Doot

Rick L. and Barbara S. Stanley

In Memory of Duane B. Du Mez

Yvonne Du Mez

In Memory of Randy Godeke

Janice D. Godeke

In Memory of Jantina Groenwold

Ella D. Aasen

In Memory of Dora Hofstra

Jacob and Lorraine J. Stoub

In Memory of Phillip Jordan Hoogenboom

Gregory A. and Charlotte A. Hoogenboom

In Memory of Wilmer Hop

Eunice H. Hop

In Memory of Cleo Huizenga

Genevieve Huizenga

In Memory of Carl Hulford

Annette A. Hulford

In Memory of Margaretha Jansma

Jan Jansma

In Memory of Janet Johnson

Benjamin A. Johnson

In Memory of Viola Koopmans

Larry and Rosemary Koopmans

In Memory of Gerard Meyers

Marilyn Meyers

In Memory of Danielle Moesker

John and Rita Schoute

In Memory of Harris Nieuwsma

Gladys L. Nieuwsma

In Memory of Harry and Marilyn Offringa

Kenneth A. Offringa

In Memory of Elmer Pohler

Catherine Pohler

In Memory of Bill Rozeboom

Rev. John A. and Linda G. Rozeboom

In Memory of George Rozeboom

Gerard and Elisabeth Rozeboom

In Memory of Betty J. Schut

Lambert J. Schut

In Memory of Julius Slager

Evelyn M. Slager

In Memory of Alice Spoolstra

Nicholas A. Spoolstra

In Memory of Bernard Sterenberg/Elizabeth Sterenberg

Howard M. Sterenberg

In Memory of Edwin Sweetman

Emma M. Sweetman

In Memory of Mr. and Mrs. John Togtman

Clara Togtman

In Memory of Fred Tubergen

David T. and Sheryl G. Wondergem

In Memory of Emily Vandenbos

John R. Vandenbos

In Memory of Trenton Van Diest

Grace D. Van Diest

In Memory of John Van Drie

Susan Van Drie

In Memory of Earl Van Netten

Wayne and Beverly Zoerhof

In Memory of Frank and Helen Veldhuizen

Charles and Marsha Veldhuizen

Loren J. and Nelly Veldhuizen

In Memory of Helen Veldhuizen

Lee and Nancy Veldhuizen

In Memory of Janet VerHoef

Albert VerHoef

In Memory of Orville J. Whip

Virginia Whip

In Memory of Jack Zuiderveen

John and Ann Kramer

In Memory of Sigbert and Margene

Fannie Haverhals

In Honor:

In Honor of Ben Becksvoort

Kenneth D. and Jane L. Genzink

In Honor of Dick De Waard

George R. and Burdena Pasenelli

In Honor of Rev. Herman and Dorothy Hoekstra

Rev. Paul R. and Ellen F. Hoekstra

In Honor of Nina Holman's 70th birthday

Rev. Earl C. and Lenore A. Marlink

In Honor of Fredith Klamer's birthday

Richard C. and Fredith Klamer

In Honor of Allen Likkel's retirement

Rev. David H. Kromminga and Mary E. Buteyn

In Honor of Edward and Sylvia Rudenga's 60th anniversary

Roger W. and Nellie J. Van Dellen

In Honor of Leslie VanderHoff

Thomas J. and Marcia Ann Nobel Jr.

In Honor of Jack Stulp

Norman and Joy L. Witte