



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More than 200 cyclists ride for the poor

May 1, 2008—The Christian Reformed Church (CRC) is taking its message of hope to the streets by staging the **largest bike tour to ever** cross North America.

More than 200 cyclists are registered to ride in the “Sea to Sea 2008 Bike Tour” that begins next month in Seattle. The tour is a nine-week trek across the United States and part of Canada beginning June 30 in Seattle, Wash., and finishing in Jersey City, N.J. on Aug. 30.

More than 125 of the participants are set to bike the entire 3,881-mile distance while another 90 are participating for at least a two-week portion of the route.

Cycling to end poverty

The tour provides a way to raise awareness and funds for people living in poverty in North America and around the world. Organizers have set a goal of **raising \$1.5 million to eradicate poverty** by partnering with the Reformed Church in America and agencies like the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Christian Reformed World Missions, and Partners Worldwide funding programs in job creation, education and health services.

“Poverty is a big issue and it takes something big like this tour to draw attention to it,” says Rev. Len Riemersma, a tour organizer from Willard, Ohio. “We serve a big God who is calling us to offer His hope to people in what often seems like hopeless situations.”

A cycling enthusiast, Riemersma is one of three chaplains riding along with the group this summer providing pastoral care while enjoying a challenging adventure.

Also cycling the full distance is Claire Elgersma, who kick-started the planning of the “Sea to Sea 2008 Bike Tour.” She participated in a similar tour hosted by the CRC in 2005 that stretched almost 6,000 miles across Canada over 10 weeks.

“Biking across Canada was an amazing experience for the church and also very life-changing for me,” Elgersma says. “For 71 days, we were exposed to the elements and were totally dependent on God for his protection.”

About this tour, she says: “An event like this is big enough and crazy enough to generate enormous enthusiasm around a cause. This tour is merely a vehicle to challenge groups and individuals to engage in serving the poor all over the world in some way.”

Sea to Sea cyclists have committed to raising \$10,000 each, (other cyclists are raising \$4,000 each per stage). Donations to individual cyclists or to the tour in general can be made online at www.SeatoSea.org or by calling 1-888-CRC-BIKE.

Two countries

Most of the participants are members of the Christian Reformed Church, a protestant, evangelical denomination with about 275,000 members in 1,000 churches in the United States and Canada. The church’s

bi-nationality prompted organizers to design a route that would include traveling through a part of Canada, passing through cities that were not including in the 2005 tour.

The CRC was established in 1857 in Holland, Michigan and celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2007. “Sea to Sea 2008 Bike Tour” builds on the celebrations of the past while continuing to look for opportunities to make a positive impact in the world for generations to come.

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MEDIA NOTES:

More information on the tour, including a special Media Relations section, is available at www.SeatoSea.org. Press Kit is also available. Please call 1-888-CRC-BIKE.

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