



Photo by Jonathan Stoner

## Lessons flow from Sea to Sea

*Cyclists dip their front tires in the water at Liberty State Park in New Jersey, signifying the end of their summer ride.*

Many Sea to Sea cyclists exercised more than their legs during the recently completed Sea to Sea Bike Tour across the United States and part of Canada this summer.

More than 70 of the 200-plus participants also took time in libraries, schools, campsites and in other locations to write colorful and frequently in-depth blogs to keep their supporters up-to-date on their travels. Now that they have finished their journey that began on June 30 in Seattle, Wash., many have written a final blog, reflecting on lessons learned along the way.

The tour, sponsored by the Christian Reformed Church in North America in partnership with the Reformed Church in America, raised \$2.1 million to help fund poverty-reduction programs while also raising awareness about poverty-related issues.

Most riders agreed it was the trip of a lifetime that provided great satisfaction for their bodies as well as their souls. Some riders went the entire distance, while others participated for shorter stints.

In her blog, Margaret DeWeerd, of Waterdown, Ont., says that her six weeks on the road kept her focused on whatever events unfolded in her day. She was out of touch with what was happening in

the wider world.

“I lived one day at a time out of two laundry hampers that held everything I needed - the only decision I had to make each day was what cycling clothes to wear and how much depending on temperature. No blow dryer or curling iron for six weeks - how simple life can be lived if we let it.”

Bill Wybenga, of Brampton, Ont., asks in his blog: “What permanent changes will we make in our lives as a result of hearing about and discussing poverty issues for the past nine weeks? Will we continue to raise the topic in other discussions bringing out a new perspective on the issue?”

In his case, he says, he became more aware by visiting ministries along the route “of what our church is doing in the poor areas of the cities in the USA. I will continue to work for DRS (Disaster Response Services of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee) as I have prior to the tour but now I may look farther a field for projects that I

can help with.”

Jim Holwerda, of Grand Rapids, Mich., says the tour for him “provided a taste of redemption. The biking I so > Continued on p. 2

**Plans are being considered to produce a commemorative DVD and coffee-table book of this summer's adventure. More information to come: [www.SeatoSea.org](http://www.SeatoSea.org)**

## Now what?

The bike tour is over. Now what?

It's a question the cyclists have been asking themselves. The support staff too. And those of us who have worked on this project for 18 months or more.

It's a question I hope all of us are asking. The bicycles are put away. The decals on the trucks have been removed. The concentrated attention that this tour has drawn for the sake of the poor is over. So now what?

It's not about another bike tour or some new big event to draw our attention. I don't even think it's about sustaining the momentum of this tour. I believe it's now about checking in with ourselves and making a decision to live differently, or perhaps more differently—to live lives that exemplify Christ's compassion for the needy and his desire for righteousness. Let's search out,



each one for ourselves, how this plays out in our own circumstances.

Over the last few months, I've been hammering away at the same things: KNOW—become more aware of the plight of the poor in our neighborhoods, in a country across the world and/or in the global context; GIVE—become more generous out of our material blessings; ACT—become more willing to share our time, talent and heart to advocate with, for and on behalf of those in need.

All of these require the discernment graciously offered to us by the Holy Spirit through prayer and listening. Rather than ask ourselves what's next, let's lay it before our Father in heaven.

Now what, God?

David Raakman  
Communications Manager

**TOTAL FLATS: 819**      **TOTAL FALLS: 195**  
Final tally

More Tour Stats:

- 11: Number of full distance riders who did not have a flat tire
- 28: Highest number of flats for any one person: Eritia Smit
- 36: Highest number of flats on any one day: Sat., Aug. 30 (last day)
- 22: Number of trips to the hospital during the tour (6 for bones, 2 for sutures, 3 required surgery)
- 150: Approximate number of spaces for cyclists to volunteer their time and effort with agencies that serve the poor in communities along the route (most spaces were filled)
- 100,094: Number of visits to the Sea to Sea home page during the 9-week tour
- 1,009,291: Number of 'page views' within the Sea to Sea web site during the 9-week tour (more than half were on the Blogs page)
- 2,260,496: Number of dollars raised (so far) by the tour, the proceeds of which will fund programs to end the cycle of poverty.

## Lessons

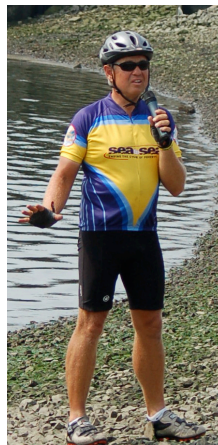
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enjoyed was made possible by Jesus' death and resurrection ... The tour also allowed me to participate in the work of redemption. Jesus died and rose so that the scourge of poverty and starvation could be ended. In raising money and awareness of poverty, and in facing my own greed, Jesus invited me to continue his work. That has been a glorious calling."

Eritia Smit, of Hamilton, Ont., says the tour reminded her of the joy and connection to God that can emerge from facing and overcoming obstacles such as searing desert heat, flat tires, sore hips and aching muscles. "God was there," she writes. "His grace carried us. I think of all the prayer support that this trip has had and I marvel. It's like we were covered by a blanket of prayer, of support from churches, friends and family, and God truly heard the prayers."

John VanderVeen, of Edmonton, Alberta, says the tour "forced me to think twice about many of my previous understandings or misunderstandings about the issue of poverty. This tour has no doubt changed me. I hope that this tour is only the beginning of me living a life of a servant. Like Jesus, we need to put others first and inherit the mentality of a servant. God was at work during the tour and He will continue to be at work now." —CRC Communications

## Faces, quotes and memories...



"... this is the part where you're supposed to laugh..."

—Len Riemersma, head chaplain



"Let's do something beautiful!"

—Johnny Pierce (center)



"I-p-p." (One piece of 'Waltermelon' per person)

—Walter Vink (right), SAG driver

"Tomorrow's weather forecast is..."

—Katrina Miller (with help from a daily phone call to her dad.)



If the bike tour has inspired you to get involved in ministry with and for the poor but you're not sure where to begin, click on the "Know-Give-Act" link at [www.SeatoSea.org](http://www.SeatoSea.org)