

Ending the Cycle of Poverty One Rider at a Time

by Tobi Ann Dummett Leget

"My family thinks I am going thru some kind of mid-life crisis. The kids think that I am too old and that I will have a heart attack along the side of the road or that I will get hit by a passing car." Pastor Greg Dyk smiles as he continues, "I just know this is the right path for me. That is what faith is all about, being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we cannot see. Sure of what we are doing because it is something that will serve the Lord."

June 28, 2008, Sanborn's Christian Reformed Church Pastor, Greg Dyk, will join 206 other riders on the Sea to Sea Bike Tour. Ending the Cycle of Poverty, presented by the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA) in partnership with the Reformed Church of America (RCA). The ride will start in Seattle, WA on June 30 and end nine weeks and 3,750 miles later on Aug. 30 in Jersey City, NJ at Liberty Park. Some riders will be participating in the entire trek. Others, such as Pastor Greg, will pedal a portion of it. Pastor Greg's intentions are to ride from Seattle, WA to Sioux Center, IA a total of 1,597 miles.



Pastor Greg Dyk

Pastor Greg Dyk and his wife, Kay are originally from Minnesota. Pastor Dyk was raised near Edgerton, Kay in Chandler. The couple has four children: their oldest son, Justin and his wife, Julie live in Zeeland, MI. Jordan, their second oldest son, is a junior at Dordt College in Sioux Center; their daughter Jaleesa is a senior at Western and plans on attending Dordt upon her graduation. Jaxon, their youngest son, is four and is their recently adopted child. "Kay and I made the decision to adopt because we love kids and we know there are many kids who need good parents." Pastor Greg continues, "We knew we were perfectly capable and able to be parents because this was what God was calling us to do. We became licensed as foster parents to adopt. The call came about Jaxon when he was two. The

adoption became final November 22, 2007."

Making the decision to accept the call to the Sanborn Christian Reformed Church, Pastor Greg's first church, was an easy decision. "I have been in Sanborn four going on five years. There have been five times in my life in which I knew beyond a doubt that the path laid before me was what God wanted me to do. The first was marrying Kay, the second was having my children, the third was going to Calvin Seminary, the fourth was accepting the call in Sanborn, and the fifth was joining the Sea to Sea Bike Tour. I can't explain it. It isn't like God has a hidden microphone in my office telling me what he wants me to do, I know through listening and prayer that this is what I am meant to do. It is a step of faith."

Pastor Greg spent nine years farming before he realized that it was not his calling. After leaving farming he and Kay made the decision to purchase a grocery store in Chandler, MN. "We ran the grocery store for five years. What Kay and I enjoyed the most about the grocery store was the ministry we did at the store." Continuing Pastor Greg articulates, "People would come in four to five times a day just to talk. The store was a safe place where people could share their burdens, hurts, pains, and joys. We were the first to hear if someone had a new grandbaby — somebody had a plan, but it wasn't our plan yet. While farming I felt it was the wrong time to return to school. We had three small children and I had tried school before and had stepped away after two years."

God wasn't giving up though, Pastor Greg explains. "While at the grocery store I found myself still searching for something. I went on a trip to learn about missionary work in Africa thinking that mission work would be the right path for me. Mission work required less schooling. In Africa, I witnessed poverty first hand. This was poverty like I had never seen before. Now 15 years later because of the opportunity afforded to me by the Sea to Sea Bike Tour I can do something about it."

Upon realizing mission work was not the right path, what with now having three school age children including a teenager; Pastor Greg understood that Seminary was the path God intended for him. Smiling he states. "The kids thought I had lost it — going back to school at 37? I returned to school with some apprehension, but found that overall I loved it. This is what God intended me to do."

Chuckling Pastor Greg states. "I think that my family is beginning to get used to the fact that Kay and I don't follow the norm. With going back to school at 37, adopting Jaxon at 45, and a cross country bike tour at 46 — we have all grown and have been blessed."

Billed as the largest bike tour of its

kind to ever cross North America, Sea to Sea organizers hope to raise money to fund projects that reduce poverty, such as an HIV/AIDS program in Nigeria, Christian libraries in Russia, and loans for people in low-income communities to invest in small business to generate income. Pastor Greg explains, "A portion of the funds will also be available to meet local needs. We are not just meeting the needs of the poor far way. Each rider is asked to raise \$10,000. The ride is to raise awareness of poverty and to address the issues of how we can better meet the needs of the poor." Continuing he states, "We need to ask ourselves, 'How can we be better stewards of what we do have?' Raising awareness — reaching out and being aware of our gifts and what we do with them."

When asked if he were nervous about the trek Pastor Greg replied, "I was a long distance runner in high school so the distance doesn't bother me. I just know I need to get into a little bit better shape and train for the trip." Of the 206 riders, 140 are male and 66 are females. Canadians make up the largest portion of the population of riders, 104, due to the fact that the journey is being modeled after a trip taken across Canada in 2005 with the same purpose — raising awareness of poverty and to address the issues of how better to meet the needs of the poor. Americans represent 101 riders and there is one International Rider from Haiti. Explaining his view on the trip Pastor Greg confides. "I feel strongly that we need to raise awareness of the terrible poverty faced by others in our world. The bike trek will not only help raise awareness of the poverty but with the funds that we raise we will be able to do something about it. I also see the ride as being something that will broaden my views of the church as I ride with 200 plus people from the church."

August 5 a Midwest Rally is planned to take place at Dordt College and this will mark the end of Pastor Greg's expedition. Pastor Greg will be gone for a total of five weeks and two days; returning in time to perform a couple of weddings he has been asked to officiate.

In his absence fellow Pastors from neighboring Christian Reformed churches have agreed to fill the pulpit on Sunday.

In talking with Pastor Greg about his upcoming journey, I couldn't help but laugh as he described the reactions of his family to the paths he has chosen in life thus far. Smile as he expressed his thankfulness for the support he has felt from the members of the church and his family. And say my own little prayer of thanks that Sanborn has been blessed with his presence.

The fund-raising target for cyclists is at least \$10,000 per rider. If you would like more information about the Sea to Sea Bike Tour 2008 — Ending the Cycle of Poverty or wish to contribute to Pastor Dyk's fund-raising effort please visit their website at www.seatosea.org or call Pastor Dyk at 729-5132 or 729-5141.