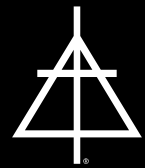


# MINISTRY REPORT

## TO CLASSES AND COUNCILS



Christian  
Reformed  
Church

SUMMER 2014

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## *Chaplaincy and Care Ministry*

We held a joint chaplains conference with the RCA May 29-31, 2014. The event was well attended (96 CRC and 50+ RCA chaplains, spouses, or committee members) and received very positive feedback. It was especially gratifying to see a growing number of younger faces in attendance.

At that event we reported that 11 chaplains had retired (or retired again) during the past year, while 8 new candidates were endorsed. This is a large number of retirees due to our aging demographics and a growing number of new chaplains. Current trends and statistics would appear to indicate that retirements have peaked and endorsements will continue to grow. The latter is based on:

- 38 individuals currently in some form of chaplaincy training (usually Clinical Pastoral Education)
- a number of others who have not begun CPE training or who have finished their training, and will be seeking endorsement
- conversations with students on seven Christian college/seminary campuses in the last year

In the past three months I was able to visit 10 of our more remotely located chaplains on site. I hope to continue this roughly three-year rotation of visiting all of our 120+ chaplains. I also attended three conferences related to chaplaincy/endorsement. With a training line in our budget (\$10,000) and a healthy Development Fund (approx. \$120,000) we were also able in the past year to award 11 training grants for a total of just under \$30,000.

We continue to reinforce the connection between the chaplains and

their calling churches by way of

- formulating Covenants of Joint Supervision (required at the time of endorsement and/or at five-year renewals of endorsement)
- letters encouraging churches to use the special training and gifts of chaplains, and
- encouraging recognition of chaplains on the second or third Sunday of November.

- Rev. Ron Klimp, Director

## *Disability Concerns*

Did you hear that Disability Concerns has a new mandate?

Here it is: The Office of Disability Concerns strives to promote and foster relationships, communities, and societies where everybody belongs and everybody serves by assisting churches, agencies, institutions, and leadership within the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and the Christian Reformed Church in North America

- to think and act in keeping with the biblical call regarding people with disabilities
- to break barriers of communication, architecture, and attitude
- to establish ministries with, for, and by people with disabilities and their families.

### **What's new:**

1. **Fostering relationships, communities, and societies** - Our old mandate focused only on the church. In addition to working within the church, we are now called to broaden that work, with a more narrow focus on one-on-one relationships and a broader focus on whole societies.

2. **Work with the RCA** - We entered into a partnership with the RCA's

Disability Concerns ministry in 2008. That vibrant partnership has been cemented into the mandate for our ministry. The RCA Disability Concerns Advisory Team has endorsed this mandate for their ministry as well.

**3. Biblical reflection** – Although our work has always been based on biblical principles, our mandate now calls us to assist churches and institutions to think through the implications of Bible stories and principles for ministry with people who have disabilities.

**4. Ministry with, for, and by** – Any ministry solely done “to” or “for” people will be one-sided; therefore, we are now mandated to help ministries also serve “with” people who have disabilities, and encourage these ministries to foster ministry work done “by” people who have disabilities.

## *Pastor-Church Relations*

In response to the request of Synod 2013 and the Board of Trustees, PCR has convened an initiative called “Better Together.” It is intended to enhance and strengthen denominational support for classis functionaries, such as church visitors, regional pastors, mentors, counselors for vacant churches and synodical deputies. The hope is that by equipping the persons in these supportive and advisory roles, congregations who are in the early stages of challenging situations will be blessed by wise counsel and thoughtful engagement with the broader Christian Reformed church family.

This initiative arises out of observing a growing number of pastor-congregation separations and the difficult dynamics that often contribute to these separations. The “Better Together” initiative involves a delivery team of staff from various offices as well as an advisory team that will help guide this work.

Delivery team members have begun a slate of interactions with current church visitors and regional pastors, inviting them to describe their experiences in these roles, and to identify values, concerns and hopes. The interactions are taking place both by personal

interviews and regional gatherings.

An April gathering in Kitchener, Ontario, involved church visitors and regional pastors from four classes and a May gathering in Grand Rapids involved five classes. What was especially encouraging about these gatherings was the passionate engagement of the participants, and the expressed thankfulness for an opportunity to be heard. A total of about 100 leaders have given valuable input.

The Better Together team intends to use the input of these and other interactions as it plans for the kinds of resourcing which will be most necessary and most helpful to church visitors and regional pastors. It is a wonderful instance of already existing roles within the infrastructure of the CRC receiving needed attention and perhaps some innovative resourcing.

## *Race Relations*

The Office of Race Relations has been making headway with its new Community Connect initiative as a number of congregations are engaged in the process.

The goal of Community Connect is to build or increase a congregation’s capacity culturally intelligence and to be identified as a resource for other CRC leaders and congregations who wish to be culturally intelligent.

In a desire to expand this initiative beyond North America, Race Relations will conduct a Cultural Intelligence Workshop in the Dominican Republic in October.

This year’s All Nations Heritage bulletins featured artist Georgia Taylor “Accept One Another.” The artwork can be seen on our Race Relations web page and also on our Facebook page at [www.crcna.org/race](http://www.crcna.org/race). “Like” us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/racerelations) to increase our ministry’s visibility.

In addition, we have Georgia’s artwork available in full sized prints for \$12 (call toll free 877-864-3977 to order). You can read the artist’s statement at <http://www.crcna.org/race/all-nations-heritage-week-2013>.

## *Safe Church Ministry*

### **Connecting/Resourcing:**

About 200 interactions with churches and individuals were recorded by Safe

Church Ministry this quarter. 52-related to a situation of abuse; 51- safe church team; 37-awareness; 24-policy

Each month over 350 receive our newsletter, 15 prayer partners receive a prayer guide, and 3 blogs appear on the Network, [network.crcna.org/safe-church](http://network.crcna.org/safe-church).

### **Safe Church Ministry Highlights:**

**Safe Church Teams** – Team members provide input into new safe church resources: a position description for a classis safe church team member, a new protocol for handling objectionable behavior directed at a pastor, and revision of the training manual for the Advisory Panel Process. Team members were encouraged and given ideas to assist in reporting at spring classes meetings. The goal is to have an informational report from safe church at every classis meeting.

### **Conference Preparation** –

Preparation for the 2-day, bi-annual safe church conference included handling details from online registration to program planning. Co-occurring workshops were led by people representing 11 different organizations and covered topics such as: restorative circles, understanding the needs of those who have survived abuse, dynamics of sexual assault, self-care, sex trafficking, pornography, domestic violence, policy, Circle of Grace, etc.

### **Boundary Tending and Border**

**Crossing** – After a successful pilot project, materials for this day-long training event were revised and finalized by an ecumenical team, which included Safe Church and Pastor Church Relations. The project, funded by a grant from Sustaining Pastoral Excellence at St. Francis Retreat Center, helps church leaders explore healthy boundaries as a container for effective ministry.

**New Network** – Safe Church is moving resources from the Safe Church website to the Network to make them searchable and more accessible.

## *Sustaining Congregational & Pastoral Excellence*

### **Sustaining Pastoral Excellence**

SPE is in its 11th year. In 2003, when

the program began, the goal was to create a culture of pastoral excellence within the CRC. This was certainly ambitious. In the beginning, there was much encouraging participation by pastors and churches. Over the years programming adjustments were made however, the one consistent component has been pastor peer learning (PL) groups.

In 2007, an independent external evaluation noted that PL groups were seen as the flagship of SPE. "For many, the peer learning groups are single handedly changing the culture of CRCNA. Pastors gave testimony as to how the peer learning groups became a safe place to talk about personal and ministerial issues and struggles. A number of pastors were convinced that the peer learning groups were instrumental in saving some pastors from leaving the ministry. Many pastors described the peer learning groups as experiences that open the door for 'mutual accountability', 'transparency', 'humility', 'sincerity', and 'transparency'. For the first time, pastoral companionships emerged in a time, space and place outside of normal congregational routines. Repeatedly, pastors emphasized that peer learning groups were without question a 'transformational' moment in their lives."

Since 2007 there has been additional evidence that SPE is creating a culture of pastoral excellence. Some search committees are asking potential pastors if they plan to join a peer group. Many seminary graduates see PL groups as the norm since they have been participating in one since the beginning of their seminary career.

Interest remains strong. Of the 71 group members that started a new group in May, 31% were new to SPE PL groups. To date, 77% of CRC pastors have been in a PL group. One pastor recently shared, "I can't imagine doing ministry without the support of such a group."

## ***Centre for Public Dialogue and Canadian Aboriginal Ministries Committee***

We believe that we live in a moment of opportunity and deep spiritual significance. The resilience of

indigenous peoples and their remarkable ability to forgive the rest of Canada for the wounds of residential schools has been on display at Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) gatherings for the past five years, and churches are beginning to understand the cost and legacy of the residential school experience. This time is pregnant with possibility and responsibility, and the Centre for Public Dialogue and Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee (CAMC) are working to follow Creator's call to be reconciled with our indigenous brothers and sisters.

To communicate about how churches are engaging with the TRC, we made a [short video](#) for use in churches showing a debriefing session with area CRCs after the Vancouver TRC event. This video was especially used to help prepare Edmonton-area churches for the Edmonton TRC event, which was attended by Centre for Public Dialogue and CAMC staff, along with the Doctrine of Discovery task force and the two winners of our Truth and Reconciliation writing contest: [Grace Vanberkel](#) of Western University (ON) and [Audrey Hughey](#) of Calvin College (MI).

The Blanket Exercise continues to be a powerful tool for reconciliation dialogue. We conducted a Blanket Exercise Facilitator Training course in Winnipeg in March, with plans for more courses in the fall.

CAMC has been hard at work on an [online toolkit](#) to provide resources for churches to learn about and act on indigenous justice and restoration.

It has been a busy quarter for the Centre for Public Dialogue on the indigenous education reform file, with plenty of political developments to keep us hopping. Mike Hogeterp is helping to organize a national ecumenical campaign for [Indigenous education reform](#).

Do Justice, our blog in partnership with the Office of Social Justice, continues to gain an audience. Two popular blog articles this quarter focused on the [Boko Haram kidnappings in Nigeria](#) and [conscious consumption](#).

Our Living the Eighth Fire workshop series will be ready for church use shortly, as well as a Refugee Justice workshop, a collaborative project with Diaconal Ministries Canada, Race

Relations, the Office of Social Justice, and World Renew.

Finally, we are excited to announce that we have hired Grace Vanberkel, one of the winners of the writing contest, as a part-time intern for this summer. Grace is working on creative communications projects related to Indigenous justice and reconciliation.

## ***Edmonton Native Healing Centre***

*Tan'si* Family of God!

Our staff and board at the Edmonton Native Healing Centre send greetings of grace, mercy and peace. Our present staffing model sees Michelle Nieviadomy in her role of assistant director/ women's and youth programming. She is a Cree woman who has worked for us for close to 10 years and we hope she can take over as director someday.

Michelle is a certified fitness instructor and she runs community gym events from our fitness studio and gives instruction in the greater Edmonton area to various Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups. Michelle is also our kid's camp director and leads a young women's mentorship group called "Kamamak" which means butterfly in Cree.

Another full time staff member is Beverly Cardinal who is filling in as drop-in supervisor and general community support. She will grow her position to that of "community navigator." A navigator is a person who helps the clients navigate appointments and the completion of forms, and is an advocate for them in regards to housing or court issues.

This new position will work well with our long term goal of having a public clinic upstairs in our building. This clinic will provide nurses and eventually a nurse practitioner to provide an entry level of health care for our community. This type of service will mean ENHC can provide total holistic coverage for those in our community. From baby care to funeral and spiritual help, to emotional support our programs will help the community grow stronger.

Along with the new excitement around these projects we will continue to provide the programs we have in place and listen to the community for other

opportunities to come our way.

We are proud of our commitment to hospitality and educating the church and un-church on how we can best walk together for the Glory of our Creator Jesus Christ.

## *Calvin College*

Spring 2014 was busy at Calvin College, marked by early May Board meetings and a May 24 graduation.

The Board worked through a full agenda during its May 8-10 meetings, but took time to attend the Faculty Awards Tribute Dinner on May 9, in which Dr. Julie Walton, Kinesiology, was presented Calvin's Presidential Award for Exemplary Teaching, the college's highest honor for its professors. Four additional awards presented were: Neil Carlson, director of the Center for Social Research, received the Student-Faculty Research Award; Roland Hoksbergen, professor of economics, received the Advising and Mentoring Award; Deanna van Dijk, professor of geography, took home the Innovative Teaching Award and Joel Navarro, professor of music, received the From Every Nation Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Key actions by the Board in plenary were to approve faculty appointment and reappointment recommendations of the Academic Affairs Committee and a revised process for nominating and appointing Board officers. The board also:

- approved the 2014-15 budget.
- endorsed the appointment of Cheryl K. Brandsen as the college's provost effective July 1, 2014.
- held key discussions surrounding the use of analytical tools to help in budget forecasting and Board oversight.
- noted the four retiring Board members—Dale Andringa, Richard Vanden Berg, Jack Van Der Slik, and Michelle Van Dyke—and thanked them for their dedicated service to the college and the Board.

The Board was also the first group to hear the good news that Calvin has raised \$25 million to reduce our long-term debt, thanks to the many friends and supporters who stepped forward. This means that we will be able to keep our price lower, and it allows us

to preserve a quality experience for our students. Thanks be to God, and to all who have made this possible.

May 24, 2014 was a beautiful day, particularly for the almost 900 students graduating from Calvin. Even as stories questioning the value of higher education abound, Calvin remains a great value. According to our most recent annual survey, 96 percent of Calvin College graduates are professionally employed or in graduate school within nine months of graduation.

Spring is also a time of transition for our enrollment management division. While staff continue to work with some international and transfer students, the majority of students coming to Calvin for the first time this fall have made their commitments and are scheduling their orientation activities.

We expect to have a good enrollment, but many student families still are weighing their options for the fall. Please pray for all those who are planning to come to Calvin this fall and for those students who are not yet sure about their plans after high school. Calvin is constantly innovating and updating its enrollment strategies to meet the challenges of an increasingly diverse pool of potential students. We welcome the engagement of alumni and friends like you to help keep Calvin in demand. Calvin's "heart and mind" education is a remarkable gift to students and to communities of faith around the world. Please consider how you can help promote Calvin College!

## *Calvin Theological Seminary*

### **Looking Back and Looking Ahead!**

#### **Commencement:**

Calvin Theological Seminary awarded 78 advanced degrees to 76 students on May 24, 2014. These graduates, representing nine of the 20 different countries in the Seminary's student body, were encouraged by President Jul Medenblik to be "Centered on Christ" as John the Baptist testified (John 3:22-30).

Calvin Seminary also recognized the class of 1964 who celebrated their 50th graduation and conferred the 2014 Distinguished Alumni Award on both Rev. Dr. Roger Greenway and Rev. Donald Postema.

### **Last Lectures Mark Retirements:**

In April, retiring professors Ron Nydam (Pastoral Care) and Carl Bosma (Old Testament) gave last lectures to colleagues, students, family, and friends. Recordings of both lectures can be found on the Calvin Seminary web site. At the May Board of Trustees meeting, both were awarded emeriti status in recognition of their contributions to the lives of students during their many years of teaching ministry. Dr. Nydam has been teaching at Calvin Seminary since 1998 and Professor Carl Bosma has been teaching at Calvin Seminary since 1990.

### **Faculty Openings Declared:**

Also at its May Board meeting, the trustees adopted the recommendations of the faculty to declare openings for both Professor of Missiology, appointment to begin July 1, 2015, as well as Professor of Moral Theology (or Moral Theology and Philosophical Theology), appointment to begin July 1, 2016.

The first declaration is related to Prof. Michael Goheen concentrating his work for the Missional Training Centre in Phoenix and the second declaration is related to the two-year retirement notice of Dr. Calvin Van Reken.

### **New Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management:**

Matt Cooke has served well as Director of Admissions at Calvin Seminary for the past three years. He recently gave notice of his decision to leave Calvin Seminary in order to become the third-generation leader of a family business in the Detroit area. We are pleased to announce that Cooke's successor is Aaron Einfeld. Einfeld comes from Calvin College's Enrollment Management Division and begins with the Seminary on June 2, 2014.

**Prayer Note:** We invite your prayers for new retirees, students seeking ministry positions and the faculty search processes that begin in the Fall.

## *Back to God Ministries International*

Join Back to God Ministries International in celebrating 75 years of God's faithfulness in using media to tell his story, share his love, and serve his kingdom.

In 1939 the CRCNA entered the world of media ministry with one radio program on one station in one North American city. 75 years later our mission remains the same—to proclaim the gospel, disciple those who want to follow Christ, and strengthen the church.

But so much has changed! As new opportunities and new media channels became available, by God's grace, we expanded into 10 languages, using video, print, Internet, and social media—sharing the good news of redemption through Christ with people in nearly every country of the world.

BTGMI now produces:

- 45 audio programs in 10 languages broadcast worldwide on more than 2,800 radio outlets, Internet, and smart phone.
- 19 weekly video programs on more than 200 stations and delivered through DVD, YouTube and, in Latin America, on Netflix.
- 35 websites and more than 55 social media sites.
- Nearly 3 million print devotional booklets produced annually, plus daily devotionals delivered by email, social media and smart phone apps to more than 280,000 people.

We don't know what the next 75 years of ministry will look like, but Back to God Ministries envisions harnessing media innovations and opportunities to continue sharing the gospel with people everywhere. We are grateful for faithful support from CRCNA and its members.

Sunday, Nov. 16, 2014, is a suggested day to schedule a special offering for Back to God Ministries International in celebration of 75 years of ministry. Each congregation will receive a three-minute video and bulletin inserts to help acknowledge the anniversary. If you need additional information, contact [info@BackToGod.net](mailto:info@BackToGod.net).

## Home Missions

- Home Missions calls, catalyzes, and collaborates with God's missionary people to start and strengthen churches and campus ministries that transform lives and communities. Together with you, we join God in mission, focusing on three key areas:

- Starting and strengthening churches
- Developing disciples, leaders, and campus ministries
- Engaging with classes, clusters, and communities

Home Missions seeks to be a leading contributor in the 21st century gospel movement in North America and is grateful to churches and individuals across the denomination who make it possible for us to work in the following ways:

**Learning communities:** As part of Home Missions' effort to face the adaptive challenges they have named they are adopting an action-learning approach. This involves the development of a series of adaptive pilot initiatives and the formation of learning communities with congregations and classes. The goal of both the pilot initiatives and the learning communities is to engage in shared learning in order to help congregations in their own discernment journey and missional transformation.

- **Starting new ministries:** This remains the core of Home Missions' work. New churches and campus ministries are being started continually, including 7 churches and 1 campus ministry started in the first half of 2014.
- **Equipping and training leaders:** Hundreds of people have attended events cosponsored by Home Missions. In Grand Rapids, Mich., church planters and pastors meet regularly at RAVAH to be encouraged and strengthened in their work.

## World Missions

While traveling to Nigeria's capital, Abuja, two Christian Reformed World Missions missionaries came across a soldier at a security checkpoint. After telling him they were from Jos, the soldier responded in sorrow, "Oh, pray for Jos. There is so much trouble there. Please, we need prayer for Nigeria."

This request from the soldier illustrates one of CRWMs' major concerns over the past months. With several bombings along with the kidnappings of more than 200 schoolgirls, the people of Nigeria need our prayers.

Praise God that, World Missions and other CRCNA staff members have been unharmed throughout these attacks. But their hearts cry out for the people of a nation that they love.

Pray for no further violence; for the release of the kidnapped girls; for an end to the Boko Haram insurgence; and for God's peace and comfort to the many people in Jos and throughout Nigeria traumatized by recent crises in the country.

## World Renew

In the spring, we reported on some World Renew's statistics for 2013-2014: \$36 million in programs, 3,000 volunteers, 3,700 communities involved in development projects, and 1.2 million individuals being helped. Here are a few examples of what those numbers mean.

### Community Development:

In Nicaragua, an agricultural training has enabled farmer Aureliano say, "We live differently than we did before. My hope is that the work I am investing in will have a greater impact on my children". In Cambodia, Kathleen Lauder reports on a farmer who has learned how to expand crop choices and increase his family's health and income. In Uganda, Edward Okiror reports on women benefitting from belonging to the "Village Savings and Loan Association".

### Disaster Response:

In the Philippines, individuals, churches and agencies gave over \$6 million to help thousands of families affected by Typhoon Haiyan. As a result, World Renew is responding both to immediate and long-term needs. In Ocean City, New Jersey, the work of rebuilding homes destroyed by Hurricane Sandy continues. In High River, Alberta, volunteers are helping flood victims in work that is funded in part by a \$1.4 million grant from the Canadian Red Cross.

### Justice and Advocacy:

Our relations with faith-based partners give us the opportunity to stimulate dialogue about injustice, faith, and culture and find ways to make improvements in our target communities. In Bangladesh, 50 groups of young people are raising awareness on human trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and early marriage through street theatre. In Senegal, young

women are being taught how to form healthy relationships, increase their self-esteem, and become mentors to girls in their own neighborhoods.

You can read these and other great stories about what God is doing through you and World Renew by visiting [www.worldrenew.net](http://www.worldrenew.net). While there, sign up for our monthly e-newsletter.

## Partners Worldwide

A recent study by the Barna Group found that 68 percent of adults surveyed say they do not believe it's possible to end extreme global poverty within the next 25 years. While the numbers are a little better for practicing Christians, the same study shows that over one-third to one-half of you reading this don't believe it's possible.

But we believe that it's possible, because we've seen it happen—over 51,000 jobs created and sustained last year! If it was up to US to end poverty for THEM, it wouldn't work. But when you provide tools, resources and support to the global poor through locally owned and led organizations that understand and address their communities' issues head-on, job creators are catalyzed and communities have the potential to flourish.

For example, Carl Jean Louis is a proud owner of a screen printing and embroidery shop in Cap Haitien, Haiti. Paired with a mentor and provided access to business training and capital by our local partner, his business is thriving. His 30 employees are overwhelmed with work, and he will soon be adding 20 more jobs to meet increased demand.

In a country where corruption and government bureaucracy are constant challenges, Carl has the support he needs to do business ethically. The words "With God I can do all things" are painted on the door of his business, and he states "As a believer and Christian, everything you are doing needs to be for the Glory of the Lord; without him we cannot do anything," he said.

When others give up on communities where there is overwhelming poverty and violence, we see opportunity and hope. We aspire to end poverty, so that all may have life and have it abundantly.

We are grateful to God and to our global Christian network of partners for the support and encouragement around our vision and we pray that you too will join us in believing that it is possible.

If you would like to hear more and connect with those around the world doing this work, please join us at our global conference on October 30-31, 2014. Held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, our local partners, representative businesses, mentors and leaders in our work will be coming together to celebrate business as a calling to do God's work. For more information: <http://partnersworldwide.org/events/> or [MarketplaceRevolution.org](http://MarketplaceRevolution.org).

## Dynamic Youth Ministries

### Calvinist Cadet Corps

There are several ways to measure the passing of the seasons. The most obvious is to follow weather changes, especially in climates where summer and winter differ significantly. Another way to measure seasonal change is to watch what children are doing. Are they going to school? Are they going to Cadet meetings? Those things indicate that it's not yet summer.

But summer is here, and Cadets are busy with special outings and events, not with weekly club meetings. And since this is the year of the international camporee ... which comes but once in three years ... the late spring and early summer were filled with men and boys everywhere taking camporee certification training to become eligible to participate. More than 1,100 men and boys have signed up. They've been separated into 96 cadres, or small groups. As always, each person is a stranger to the others in his cadre until he arrives at camp. Then a group becomes a unit, working together to build a shelter, cook meals, and live together for a week.

The camporee is planned to be held in Lacombe, Alberta, and more information is available at the Cadet website — [www.CalvinistCadets.org](http://www.CalvinistCadets.org). Everyone is invited to join the campers for a worship service at 10:00 AM on Sunday, July 27. If you come, you're invited to stay for lunch and see the camp, but please let the people in the Cadet office know you're coming. No one wants to run out of food.

The best part of all this is, of course, that every time one of these events takes place, God is glorified. Men and boys grow closer to each other and to God. And they bring home memories that they will fondly hold on to forever.

### GEMS Girls' Clubs

GEMS exists to help bring girls into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ, and with the intentional expansion of GEMS Girls' Clubs International we are finding new avenues to accomplish our mission by reaching more and more developing countries. Curriculum can currently be downloaded through our online store.

GEMS' mission focus continues to be *The Esther School* ([estherschool.org](http://estherschool.org)) in Zambia, Africa. Through the efforts of girls, GEMS Clubs, and generous individuals around the US and Canada, the first three grades are thriving, and an additional classroom will be added each year until the school is complete.

And even though most local clubs have wrapped up for the summer, our leadership training program is in full swing.

We serve girls everywhere by equipping women everywhere, and this July the GEMS Leadership Conference will be held at Calvin College.

Over 600 women will gather to worship and grow together. They will receive training on GEMS materials, have personal and spiritual growth opportunities, and learn about the annual theme for the 2014-15 season: *Bring the Message*.

Based on Isaiah 6:8, women and girls will be challenged to echo Isaiah and say, "Send me!" when God asks them to share His good news with their families, communities, and around the world.

GEMS will also be hosting *Get Connected!* camp this summer for 170 girls. This camp for early teen girls is always an amazing time to connect. Over the course of the week girls connect with each other, their counselors, and—most importantly—with God.

### Youth Unlimited

Faith formation experiences like *Serve and Live It*, created by Youth Unlimited can be such a powerful tool to teach, train and point a student to the love of Jesus Christ and the joy found in living

for him! This is why Youth Unlimited gives our all to creating experiences that will assist your church in discipling middle and high school age students.

We are about to start a summer full of 25 Serve experiences but also while we are in full swing preparing for 2015. This summer (2014), Youth Unlimited has partnered with World Renew and Live 58 to create its theme and devotional material, which comes from Isaiah 58 and focuses on justice and missional living.

In 2015, our Serve theme will be titled, "THE OTHER 51", focusing on what it means to live for Jesus after returning home. John 20:21-22 will be our focus, where it says, "Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'".

The Live It experience also returns in 2015. This event was formally Youth Unlimited's Convention. The high school students who attend will learn about their value in Christ while exploring how to use their talents to spread God's love to their friends, community and world through specific areas like: athletics, arts, service and leadership. It will be hosted at Trinity Christian College, near Chicago, Illinois. Just like Serve, Live It will use the THE OTHER 51 theme and devotional material.

As your church ministers to students, know that we are faithfully praying for you while working hard to create those life changing faith-forming experiences. If we can assist you in any way, please ask!

We're eager and thankful to partner with you in student ministry!