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February 2013

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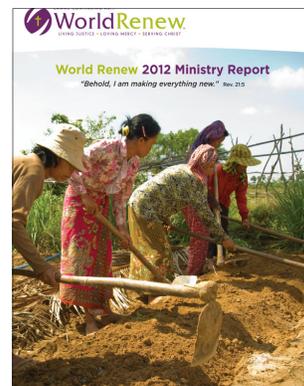
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What's New

Annual Report — In 2012, World Renew directly touched the lives of 1.86 million people who live in extreme poverty in 41 countries. This would not have been possible without your faithful support! Your church will soon be mailed a copy of our 2012 Ministry Report as well as postcards which connect people to the online version. Please share these resources with your congregation. You can also download the report online at www.worldrenew.net/annualreport.

Sea to Sea — There is still time to sign up for the Sea to Sea 2013 Bike Tour! This nine-week, 3,900-mile cycling trek across North America—hosted by the Reformed Church in America, Partners Worldwide, and World Renew—helps raise awareness and funds in support of those living in poverty around the world. You can sign up for this exciting fundraiser at www.seatosea.org. The registration deadline is March 1.



Witnessing the Blessing of Food Security in Kenya and Rwanda

By Renee Scobel

Recently I was privileged to take part in a Canadian Food Grains Bank (CFGB)



Food Study Tour along with 11 fellow CFGB member representatives. Our group—12 strangers from 7 provinces and representing 6 different denominations in the Christian Church—embarked on a life-changing journey of exploring partnerships in Kenya and Rwanda. We shared culture, exchanged personal stories, and experienced both the challenges and the joys of life in our global community. We gained a better understanding of the complexities of access to food—what World Renew calls “food security”—for people living in areas where disaster and poverty is prevalent. We also saw firsthand the impact of our partnership with these communities.

Food Security was defined by our group leader, James Kornelsen of CFGB, as: “When all people have regular, dignified access to

food.” During this trip, our group was able to witness World Renew staff and partners working together with communities in the midst of drought and extreme poverty to help people achieve this goal.

In the village of Ghazi in Kenya, for example, we were able to visit with families who were part of a “food for work” project—digging water pans and clearing access roads in exchange for food supplies. As they received assistance, these families were able to give back to their community and gain sustainable assets to help make them strong in the future. In these same communities, World Renew is also working through our community development partners to teach better agricultural practices and farming techniques.

Village elder Florence Lukila (64), expressed her thanks to the team on behalf of the women who had been given new health and hope through partnership with World



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Renew. “Women suffer a lot because we are more concerned about food for our household,” she explained, noting that this suffering had been lessened as a result of our programs.

Our group also met Mshai Mbogo (47)—a woman who has six children and three grandchildren in her care. Mshai normally grows maize, corn, and beans on a small plot of land, but droughts have prevented her from harvesting enough food in recent years. Before the food assistance, she would clean clothes or pick up other small jobs in order to earn an income, but did not make enough money for food and school tuition for the children. When asked what she would have done without the food assistance she said, “It would be very hard, and we are very grateful. If you had not come, I would just have to continue to work as hard as I can, to do whatever I can, because my children need to eat. And, I know that God will provide. We are so thankful for this support because it is helping us to work together and provide for our families.”

Two of the participants on the Food Study tour with me were John and Wendy Taekema of Leduc, Alberta. They manage a Growing Project that brings community members together to grow and sell crops on a designated piece of land. The revenue from these crops is given to CFGB where it is matched, on average four to one by CIDA, and then made available to World Renew for food assistance projects around the world. John and Wendy were able to meet people who were being helped through the support of the Leduc Growing



Project.

“This is what it’s all about, for us—this is why we do what we do with our growing project year after year,” they said.

Eleanor Sinclair, a nurse from Nanaimo, BC, agrees. She says that she “did not know what to expect [coming on the Food Study tour], but it was such a joy to see real community development and true participation, working together, cooperating with such a sense of pride and accomplishment. It is an encouraging message to take home.”

While not everyone is able to travel such a distance and visit the communities and families who are being impacted by their partnership in giving, those that have gone are now home again sharing their stories with their home churches and communities. I hope that these testimonies will serve to inspire and encourage the rest of your congregation. Your prayers and support really do make a difference around the world.

March 3 is Canadian Foodgrains Bank Sunday. Materials for this event have already been sent to congregations in Canada. Please encourage your congregation to make use of them and to hold a special offering for World Renew’s CFGB account. When you give to World Renew through our CFGB account, it enables us to multiply the impact of your gift to do even more ministry in times of disaster.



Eleanor Sinclair and a Kenyan woman

Champions in Action: Celebrating 50 Years with Food and Fellowship in Alberta

By Adele Konyndyk

Events celebrating CRWRC-World Renew’s 50 years of ministry were a highlight of 2012. One such event was a special international cuisine dinner held in Edmonton, Alberta in November.

The celebration, held at Covenant Christian Reformed Church, was organized by a dedicated and creative group of local volunteers who met as a planning committee throughout the year.

World Renew theological advisor Roy Berkenbosch, who also served on the planning committee, described the event as a “non-stop celebration of God’s faithfulness to and through World Renew.”

The festivities began at 5:30 p.m., with a feast of ethnic dishes from various countries where World Renew has worked, which were provided by World Renew enthusiasts from 17 different churches and partner groups in Classis Alberta North. More

than 500 people were in attendance. Some were dressed in the green polo shirts worn by Disaster Response Services volunteers, while others wore aprons designed for the celebration.

The event segued from feast to formal program with a flash mob performance of the South African hymn “Siyahamba.” As attendees ate their way through samosas, tortillas and curries, they enjoyed a variety of special presentations paying tribute to the generous individuals involved in World Renew’s five decades of ministry. Music was provided by the Joyful Noise children’s choir, The King’s University College community chorus, and singer song-writer Justine Vandergrift, who composed a song specifically for the occasion.

World Renew Co-Director Ida Mutoigo delivered what Berkenbosch called “an energetic and positively punchy

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greeting.” Fred Schuld, a former World Renew staff member in the Philippines, prepared an inspiring slideshow that highlighted the contributions of the Canadian church members to the work of World Renew as staff, volunteers, DRS, board members and more. Edmonton’s Mayor, Stephen Mandel, brought his greetings.

Kohima Daring, a country consultant for World Renew in Bangladesh and India, also provided salutations and thanks on behalf of World Renew’s partners around the world.

A cookbook of all of the recipes served during the event was available for purchase. Its title—*From Boerenkoel to Chibwabwa*—is symbolic. Boerenkoel is a Dutch dish of kale and mashed potatoes, while chibwabwa is an African dish of pumpkin leaves mixed with tomatoes, onions and ground nuts. Louisa Bruinsma, another organizer of the event, explains its significance by saying, “We came from narrow Dutch roots and have expanded to become globally enriched.”

All in all the evening was a moving and joy-filled way to honour World Renew’s legacy and to look to the future with excitement and hope.

“The lively, celebrative spirit that was so pronounced throughout the evening spoke volumes about the special place that World Renew has in the hearts of the CRC in Northern Alberta,” says Berkenbosch. “I can hardly wait for the 100th!”



Volunteers—from left: Quentin Nanninga, Louisa Bruinsma, Jim Joosse, Sarah Nicolai-deKoning, Roy Berkenbosch, Anna Feddes, Gerda Kits and Henry Bosch.

World Renew Assists Syrian Refugees

By Adele Konyndyk

For months now, thousands of Syrian refugee families have been flooding into Lebanon to find safety from violence. These families are living from day to day, uncertain about how they will cope and survive.

Yussef Hawas* family is but one of many such families. In Syria, his family had owned their own house and Yussef had worked as a guard at a school. Then the Syrian conflict erupted. The school where Yussef worked was destroyed by shelling and the ongoing violence put the family members’ lives at risk. At four o’clock one morning, 11 members of the extended family—ranging from a baby to an elderly grandfather—set out for the safety of Lebanon. They took a small selection of belongings including some cooking utensils and bedding. The trip cost them three-quarters of their savings.

The shelter the family finally found in Lebanon is in a farming area out in a valley. They cleaned out a large, open concrete structure that used to be a dump for garbage. A plastic sheet separates the cooking and sleeping areas. It is sufficient for now, but winter is coming soon—and the valley has already become very cold at night.

Yussef’s family faces a host of other problems. They have a small supply of bread and potatoes, but this food will not last long. The children cannot go to school, and there is no access to medical care. They have no income at all.

This family and the others fleeing Syria need your help. World Renew is working with the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development to provide food and other essential items to families in need. It is but one way we are demonstrating the love and mercy of Christ. We hope you and your congregation will join us through your support and prayers.

Gifts marked “Syria Conflict 2012” can be given online at www.worldrenew.net/syriaconflict or mail to our address listed on the left column on Page 1.



**Names have been changed for the protection of the refugees*

