

Through the Dust

A MAGAZINE
FOR CHURCH
LEADERS



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We Don't Just Want Your Money

Dear Friends:

Welcome to a brand new issue of *Through the Dust!* Here you will find stories about the ministry that you and your church make possible—and you can discover how to get more involved with World Renew.

You see, a key piece of World Renew's work is helping members of communities discover the gifts that God has given them to help themselves out of poverty. We call our method "ABCD" (Asset Based Community Development). We believe that everyone is made in the image of God and has something to offer, including those who are considered "the least of these."

In North America we often think of gifts and stewardship in terms of money. World Renew is blessed to have many people who give financially: whether through estate gifts, pennies in a Peter Fish bank, or offerings big and small, together we raised more than \$39 million in 2014. Glory to God!

As Christians, however, we know that stewardship includes more than our "treasure." It also includes our time and talent. World Renew has great opportunities for you to develop these gifts as well! Disaster Response Services placed 2,916 volunteers, and added to our international volunteers, a total of 3,312 people volunteered overall with World Renew in 2014. And countless others helped to promote World Renew offerings in their churches, whether by organizing bake sales or hunger awareness dinners or participating in the Giving Tree Project at Christmas time.

When you read the stories in this magazine, we hope that you will ponder the skills and gifts God has given you and consider using them with World Renew. Perhaps you can help people get behind offering projects; perhaps you are a runner and would like to get involved in Team Free A Family; or perhaps you are being called to volunteer internationally. Whatever the case, we are here to help and support you as you develop the gifts and talents God has provided.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Peter Bulthuis

Associate Director, Church Relations



Wendy Hammond

Manager, Church Relations U.S.

We believe that everyone is made in the image of God and has something to offer, including those who are considered "the least of these."

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Save the Date!

Miss an offering?

Did you miss a World Renew offering date or action day this year that you'd still like to schedule? No problem! Our materials are not dated so you can use them at any time during the year. These materials are all available to order from worldrenew.net/order, or you can download them right now from worldrenew.net/church-resources.

- **NEW!** Maternal and Child Health Sunday*  
- Mother's Day, May 10, 2015
- **New!** Foods Resource Bank Sunday 
- Refugee Sunday 
- Disaster Response Services Sunday*  
- Canadian Foodgrains Bank 
- Canada Day 
- Thanksgiving  
- World Hunger Campaign*  
- Giving Tree Project  
- Christmas*  

*The Christian Reformed Church Synod recommends that CRCs take four offerings for World Renew each year because World Renew does not receive ministry shares from the denomination and depends instead on gifts from churches and individuals.

The Road to Redemption



The Road to Redemption is long and narrow, snaking in and out of the mountains and valleys of Guatemala. Recently, I had the opportunity to travel the world and experience Christian education and Reformed thought. In each context I got a glimpse of how “missions” is done by different organizations. My most recent adventure was to Guatemala in January 2015 on a World Renew Ambassador and Delegate Tour. This vision-trip gave World Renew representatives a better understanding of how World Renew works with local organizations to empower communities in their own development.

The trip consisted of visiting three different communities in different stages of development: a new community, a working community, and a graduated community. Each community was so remote that we were the first non-Hispanic or non-Maya people that they had encountered. But it was in these remote communities that I finally began to understand what a wholesome and healthy approach to missions looks like. It wasn't until the third day that I realized that I've been approaching missions completely wrong.

My old idea of missions was that we would go to an area, build something, teach VBS, give a little money, and leave. Now, I don't want to say that this approach is bad—rather I want to say that there are better ways to go about doing it. North American culture suggests that we need to “accomplish” something on trip...that we bring our

resources to help create something for the people there. Which, as I said earlier, isn't wrong. But in Guatemala I saw that a more wholesome approach to missions can really unite a community.

Upon arrival at each of the villages that ADIP, a World Renew Guatemalan partner, was working in, we attended a town meeting. The communities presented to us their past, their present, and their plans for the future. Rather than having Westerners sponsor building projects in these villages, the residents petitioned their government for funding to work on projects they proposed themselves.

Something as simple as where money comes from made a world of difference in each of these communities. For example, the medical center in Canguacha is held in high regard in the area because it is 100-percent Guatemalan. It belongs to the people. They earned this resource through their hard work. And, rather than feeling indebted to the Western world for it, they are taking pride in their own accomplishment.

Better access to health care isn't the only aspect of community life that has improved. Farming techniques were refined, women learned the value of backyard gardens and good nutrition, and, as previously stated, residents organized themselves to work with their own governments to improve their community. World Renew and ADIP are, in very concrete ways, helping to restore people's self-respect: rather than providing people with improvements, they are helping communities access the opportunities they need using resources that are already in place.

I haven't figured out everything there is to know about community development...the Road to Redemption starts for all of us with a first step. What I do know is that any organization that can restore pride to a village community located five miles from nowhere must be doing something right.

To God be the glory!

—Tyler Couperus, *World Renew Youth Delegate,*
Dordt College

Are you interested in finding out more about World Renew's Ambassador program? A World Renew ambassador is a volunteer that uses their time skills and gifts to connect their home church with the communities where World Renew works. Find out more at worldrenew.net/ambassador/

Word and Seed in Uganda

When Rev. Anthony and Sara Sytsma responded to God's specific call on their lives in February 2014, they took a first step: they spent a year in agricultural training in Waco, Texas. In their time there, their mission became clearer and they knew that God was leading them to empower others to allow Jesus to impact every area of their lives. In February 2015, the Sytsmas began their international journey of faith by accepting a position with World Renew in Soroti, Uganda.

Now Sara and Anthony are working with World Renew's Ugandan partners—Anthony is bringing the “Word” using materials and techniques from Timothy Leadership Training to mentor and train local church leaders in the Church of Uganda. Sara is bringing the “seed” by using her training in Texas to provide World Renew's Ugandan partner staff with agricultural education and consultation to help them with their agriculture work in the community.

In a community near Anyara, Sara and a volunteer named Emmanuel trained community members in conservation agriculture techniques to help improve food production and availability. During the three-day workshop, Sara told the village farmers about the importance of building up the soil and using low-till practices. She also talked about rotating crops and keeping seeds covered after they are sown.



With Sara's guidance, the attendees created a demonstration garden next to the church. The garden was strategically located so that the community could easily see the results. One local farmer, eager to share what he already knew about organic pesticides, also joined the training. He told the group about indigenous plants that could be used as an organic pesticide and then showed them how to produce it without additional cost for chemicals or supplies.

“Subsistence farmers in Uganda often feel inferior,” Sara says. “Society tells them and they believe that farming is a lowly occupation. It is important to remind people that they, and their work, have value and worth in God's eyes. They are His imagebearers, and God was the first farmer.”

Please continue to pray with Anthony and Sara as they carry out God's calling in their own lives and continue to build the “Word and seed” into more Ugandan communities like Anyara.

Are your congregation's high school and college youth interested in volunteering globally but not sure how to get there? We can help! Check out World Renew's Global Volunteer Program at worldrenew.net/globalvolunteerprogram.



World Hunger Campaign 2015 A Preview of *Fish for Change*

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, He gave thanks and broke them. Then He gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. They all ate and were satisfied.
—Luke 9:16-17a

Join World Renew for the World Hunger Campaign in 2015! The annual all-church project focuses on addressing global poverty and hunger among those who live on less than \$2 US a day. While the materials suggest that churches participate in the days leading up to November 1, 2015, they can be used at any time during the year.

The 2015 World Hunger theme is *Fish for Change*, based on the miracle of the loaves and fishes. In Luke 9, God takes the seemingly impossible and creates a miracle. The story is an example for us in providing for the poor and needy in our world. The sheer scope of global hunger can overwhelm us: we wonder what we as individuals or congregations can do to make a lasting difference. But God provides in amazing ways when we act in faith.

When we give from what we have—our time, our prayers, our talents, and our financial gifts—God blesses and multiplies our efforts. The resulting miracle is one where not just the poor—but the whole world—is able to eat and be satisfied!

These new World Hunger Campaign materials will be available for order from Faith Alive Christian Resources (faithaliveresources.org) and download from worldrenew.net/worldhunger. You'll find daily adult and family devotions, activities, Peter Fish Banks, children's resources, youth activities, worship suggestions, and much more. Sample packets will be sent to Christian Reformed churches in the U.S. and Canada in August 2015!

Peter Fish is going mobile!



For World Renew's World Hunger Campaign this year, check out the **Feed Your Fish App** for Android and iOS devices!

Anyone with a smartphone can help end global hunger as a part of everyday life—and participate in *Fish for Change* in 2015. **Download the FREE app and check it out at worldrenew.net/feedyourfish.**

Videos



Free A Family®

East Africa: *Meet the Onchenge Family.* An introduction to the Onchenges from Banita Gichagi, Kenya, as they begin to improve their lives through World Renew's development programs in their community.

Latin America: *A Morning in the Life of the Mejia Avila Family.* The day starts early in the Mejia Avila family. This video provides a visual introduction to daily life in communities of poverty such as El Burillo, Honduras.



Land Rights

Prosperity in Time for Samwel and His Family. Gaining legal title to land is a challenge in poor communities around the world. Meet Samwel Manyama in Itagumba, Kenya, and follow his journey to becoming the first deeded land owner in his community.

To order materials, use the contact information to the right. Note that some items are shipped to Canadian Christian Reformed churches automatically.



Maternal and Child Health

An introduction to three women who live in hope and are improving their lives and families through better health, hygiene, nutrition, and education.

- *Hope in Time for Phelis and Jemima and Their Families*
- *Hope in Time for Gertrude and Her Family*
- *Hope in Time for Eline and Her Family*



Peace-Building in Disaster Response

Peace in Time for Jamarose and Her Family. World Renew’s disaster response programs include not only natural but also human disasters: ethnic and religious violence, war,

and militant attacks that displace people from their land and homes. Follow Jamarose and her family as they begin a new life with help from World Renew’s peace-building, reconciliation, and trauma counseling programs.

Study Materials for Adults



Climate Conversation: Kenya

This series of four 5-minute videos and trailer introduces viewers to subsistence farmers in Kenya for whom climate change is not simply a political debate; adaptation to the new realities can mean the difference between life and death. This series gets viewers past the statistics and arguments to present an invitation to conversation.



Live Justly Curriculum

This nine-week course for churches, campus and small groups, and individuals is from World Renew and the Micah Challenge U.S. It begins by asking, “What is biblical justice?” and concludes with tips for developing a personal action plan and a group direction for church engagement in biblical justice. Focuses on foundational concepts and practical engagement in living justly in six life areas: advocacy, prayer, consumption, generosity, creation care, and relationships.

Order Resources at 800-333-8300 or worldrenew.net/order.

Shining Christ's Light in Communities Affected by Ebola

Last summer, the world's attention focused on West Africa as men, women, and children began to suffer and die from the dangerous virus known as Ebola. With inadequate medical infrastructure, faulty information, and lack of understanding about prevention, the virus quickly spread—infecting more than 23,500 people at the time this article was written. In fact, the Center for Disease Control in the United States has declared that the 2014 Ebola epidemic was the largest Ebola outbreak in history.

World Renew was blessed to receive generous support from individuals and churches across North America as Ebola spread. Through these prayers and financial gifts, World Renew partnered with churches and health organizations in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea to make an impact in the crisis.



With about \$800,000 available for programming, World Renew began a range of preventative, educational, and health initiatives in the three highly-affected countries. In Guinea and Sierra Leone, World Renew worked with local Christian partners to help educate people about the disease, how it can be prevented, how to properly care for those who are sick, and how to safely bury those who die.

To those who survived the virus and were released from treatment centers in Guinea and Sierra Leone, World

Renew and its partners provided transitional supplies and food assistance. In Liberia, World Renew provided essential medicines, personal protective equipment, and established triage units in existing health centers. The triage units help clinic staff quickly identify and quarantine Ebola patients, making the facilities safer for those who are suffering from malaria or other non-Ebola ailments.

“In many hard-to-reach communities, especially those in the southeast part of Liberia, very little was known about Ebola,” said World Renew International Relief Manager Annie Bergshoeff. “A team from World Renew’s partner, the Christian Health Association of Liberia, was eagerly welcomed by these communities. The health workers were intensely engaged at every training session we gave. When word got out that the classes were available, people came from some distance to learn.”

Providing this assistance was not without risk: staff from World Renew’s partners faced difficult driving conditions as well as the real threat of being infected with Ebola themselves.

“What a tremendous sacrifice these men and women made to stay true to their mission, first risking their safety on dangerous roads and then experiencing great anxiety and fear as they put their physical health and lives on the line. They have earned the gratitude of the communities they serve for the lives they have saved, and they deserve the deepest respect from us all,” said Bergshoeff.

World Renew plans to wrap up its Ebola response by June 2015. This includes completing a food assistance and recovery project, building additional triage units in Liberia, and distributing food, clothing, and kitchen items to 200 families in Sierra Leone to help them begin to rebuild their lives in post-Ebola communities.

Find out more about the selfless, courageous work World Renew’s partners have been doing in response to Ebola in West Africa at worldrenew.net/ebola.

Volunteer Reflections



In June 2014, John DeKam, a World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS) volunteer and Reformed Church pastor from Holland, Michigan, spent two and a half weeks restoring flood-damaged homes in Rock Valley, Iowa. This is his personal reflection about his experiences there.

“The damage to the homes in Rock Valley was deceptive: the exterior of the houses looked fine, but the unseen interiors were damaged so badly that the homes were unlivable. Residents were able to restore their homes to pre-flood condition fairly quickly if they had the skills, financial resources, and time to do the work. But if they were lacking just one of these assets, they remained active victims of the flood six or more months after it happened.

“I was involved with the reconstruction of two homes. The owners of the homes and their families had both been living in cramped temporary quarters since the flood happened. One family included an adult child with special needs who had been sleeping the dining room for six months, and the other family was enduring similar upheaval in their living arrangements.

“One homeowner named Andre * went to work at 6 am and returned home at 4 pm to help us with the work on

his home. At 6 pm, Andre left for his second job. When I asked him about his rigorous schedule, Andre said that he was earning extra income to pay his daughter’s tuition at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. He was working hard to be self-sustaining, and it was impressive that he was so dedicated to helping his daughter complete her college degree.

“Joshua*, the other homeowner, also had full-time work, and each evening he also went out and purchased the supplies that would be needed on our work site the next day. Neither homeowner had the skills or resources to do all the work themselves, but they both engaged themselves in the reconstruction process as they had means.

“Working in Rock Valley was one of the most rewarding World Renew DRS trips I have taken. The local on-site leadership and the construction manager were well organized, totally committed to the reconstruction process, and always appreciative of the volunteers. I also appreciated building friendships with other World Renew volunteers who made this time special.

“People’s gratitude and graciousness were beyond my expectations, and it was personally satisfying to give to the people in this particular community: they are people who have been excellent supporters of both the Reformed and Christian Reformed denominations and have given in many ways to others throughout the years. It was a truly meaningful experience to be part the reconstruction work with World Renew in Rock Valley.”

**Names changed to protect privacy.*

**Interested in becoming a DRS volunteer?
World Renew DRS is offering free, 1-day
volunteer information workshops. Find locations
and registration are at worldrenew.net/drs-volunteer-workshop.**

Hope for a New Future



In Cambodia, almost 40 percent of the population is defined as “near poor.” This means that these families could not suffer an income loss of just 30 US cents per day without falling into “absolute” poverty. World Renew and our Cambodian partners are helping rural communities in this situation address some of their challenges through savings groups.

Savings group members invest \$1 to \$5 (US) each month in a savings pool. Each group sets up a committee to lead and manage the fund’s bookkeeping. The villagers learn to trust each other while building a network of community resources and relationships. Their new financial security empowers them to make improvements in their lives they wouldn’t have risked on their own in the past.

Kim Sovann is the elected leader of the Takeo savings group. Although she has just a 4th grade education, Sovann is considered the most trustworthy person in her village. To equip her for her role, Sovann took classes in

bookkeeping and leadership. “It gives me a real sense of fulfillment to continue my education,” Sovann says, “and I have hope for a new future.”

In their groups, members grow their shared capital over time. The more they save, the more money they have to loan to each other. By taking turns receiving and repaying loans, they can expand their businesses and better manage their expenses. “Savings groups help community members avoid borrowing money from micro-finance institutions or banks,” Sovann says. “Those companies charge high interest rates, have less flexible terms, and charge late fees.”

Flexibility is important in agricultural communities where subsistence workers are paid seasonally and often have difficulty meeting formal banking terms. Many families get

bogged down in debt and eventually have to pull their children out of school. Others lose their land and homes, leaving them without resources and in absolute poverty.

To adapt to the community’s context, the Takeo savings group is structured to be flexible. They and other savings groups among World Renew’s partners must follow a few basic guidelines, but each village makes its own rules for monthly payments, late payments, and interest rates.

There are several advantages to establishing self-funded savings groups in poor communities. First, the interest from repaid loans grows the group’s capital. Second, the group’s increased capital stays within the community. Third, community members build trust through transparency. This provides communities with hope for a new future in more than one way.

“Everyone in Takeo associates savings groups with the church,” says Lao, a community organizer at Phal Dambong Church. “Most of the members of the savings group also attend the church and are involved in its activities. Not only are they an example of the good the church can do in the community, the church also realizes that savings groups can play an important role in the community’s development.”

Subscribe to World Renew’s quarterly Cambodia newsletter online or by postal service by sending an email to info@worldrenew.net. Find out more about World Renew’s Ministry Partner Program at worldrenew.net/mpp.

Hope Takes Root

Togopala is a small community that, with a 2-kilometer footprint, sits on a relatively large piece of land in a mountainous area of Honduras. Despite its size, Togopala has little productive ground that is suitable for farming: the land is too sloped for crops to take root.

Togopala has often endured the hardships of poverty but despite the challenges, transformation is taking root there. Thank God! Through the actions of local Christians and community leaders, Togopala is being renewed.

Harvest, a World Renew partner in Honduras, has been present in Togopala for a year. Harvest works to follow Jesus' example in Luke 2:52—to help poor communities grow socially, spiritually, physically, and in wisdom. With this in mind, Harvest has been training leaders and pastors all over Honduras in wholistic ministry. Together with support from World Renew, Harvest has helped communities start credit unions, improve child health, learn about family nutrition, and improve farming practices.

Harvest began in Togopala by training 16 members of a small church. The leaders became enthusiastic about drawing their whole community into renewal and change. At first they didn't know where to start. But they prayed that God would open their eyes to the needs among them and guide them in involving other community members in this exciting work. God



answered their prayers by leading them to a widow whose house was in very poor condition. The church members set out to make the repairs, and the project became a powerful example of the church extending inclusive generosity to a neighbor in need.

“This project had a lot of impact on relationships in the community,” said Ramiro Carbajal, a Harvest staffperson. “People realize that the church stepped up to support this widow even though she was not a Christian.”

The project also helped repair relationships among families in the community. While working together on the widow's house, two families who were fighting were reconciled and forgave each other.

Today, the repairs on the widow's house are complete—but the transformation



and flourishing in Togopala is just beginning! The church members who supported the initial project are eager to support more projects that help strengthen families and change their community for the better.

Please pray that World Renew's work in Honduras will continue to engage leaders in holistic ministry that equips them to “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow” (Isaiah 1:17).

Want to do more? A nutrition kit for a Honduran child (\$17) provides an infant or toddler with the good nutrition they need for ongoing brain development and physical health throughout their life. Find out more at worldrenewgifts.net!

Sunflowers of Blessing



In Tanzania, two of the biggest challenges that subsistence farmers face are irregular rainfall and poor soil. In recent years, these two hindrances have created a serious result: decreased crop production that contributes to hunger and poverty.

In the past, Tanzanian farmers could depend on two or more rainy seasons at regular intervals each year. They could tell, with little risk of losing their crops, when to plant and when to harvest. Now, farmers do not know when the rains will come or how long they will continue once they have started: this makes knowing when to plant very difficult. In addition, many farmers grow one staple food crop year after year, mostly maize or cassava. This depletes the nutrients in the soil and makes it susceptible to disease and pests, further reducing food production.

These problems are particularly prevalent in northern Tanzania where World Renew and partner organization Sengerema Informal Sector Association (SISA) are implementing a land rights and food security project with funds



from the Foods Resource Bank (FRB). SISA has introduced new, drought-tolerant crops there and encouraged the farmers to practice crop rotation. Those who received sunflower seeds and training in how to grow them quickly embraced the new crop, and they are beginning to see great potential for improving their food security because of it.

Antimini Masalu from Tabaruka village is growing sunflowers on his two-acre farm. He is married and has six children—two sons and four daughters. The family is very excited about the developing results.

“I grew cotton as a cash crop for many years, but it’s problematic because the seeds are expensive, it is vulnerable to pests, and the cotton market is very unstable,” Antimini says. “When SISA encouraged me to grow sunflowers in addition to cotton, I decided to take a chance. Sunflowers have many benefits, including a strong market for the oil that can be produced from the seeds.”

Now as Antimini stands beside his tall sunflower plants and waits for harvest day to arrive, he is excited about the

future and what the sunflower crop means for him.

“My plan is to grow even more sunflowers in the next few years since I am seeing that it is such a good crop,” he says. “I am very happy with how it has produced. I expect that growing sunflowers will bring many benefits to the lives of everyone in my family this year and in the years ahead.

“The training we received from World Renew really built up the farming skills in our community. It has helped us recognize that God is indeed the provider of all things here on earth, especially in agriculture,” Antimini said. “I thank God for His blessings, and I also thank SISA, FRB, and World Renew.”

The environment affects subsistence farmers in developing countries like Tanzania. Learn more through *Climate Conversation: Kenya*, a video-based study series from World Renew. Visit www.climate-conversation.org for details.

Healing the Brokenhearted

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of His splendor” (Isaiah 61:1-3).

As the world desperately seeks answers to serious global and national insecurity (like in Nigeria), abject poverty, natural disasters, food insecurity, corruption, unemployment, injustice, and instability, the Good News comes with a gentle whisper to the brokenhearted, the captives, and those who mourn and grieve. Jesus Christ promises to bestow on His people a crown of beauty, the oil of gladness, and the garment of praise—whether in this life or in the one to come. World Renew’s mandate aligns well with God’s plan for His creation that is “groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” including “ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit” (Romans 8:22-23).

In the last four months, World Renew began reaching out to those who are desperately searching for answers to serious questions like these on a daily basis through a trauma-healing initiative in northern Nigeria. Trained facilitators meet with people from different religious, economic, social, and political backgrounds in their communities to facilitate life- and community-transforming discussions. When carefully handled, a traumatized individual’s cognitive, emotional, and physical behavior can be aligned with God’s will and intent in creation. The result has a positive impact on families and communities that also reduces mistrust, revenge, reprisal, and human rights violations.

Through Beacon of Hope Initiative (BHI), World Renew is also helping to reduce the trauma caused by the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Nigeria. It is estimated that 3.1 million people are living with HIV and AIDS in Nigeria. World Renew is providing opportunities for people to get pastoral counseling before and after HIV screening. This ministry is impacting lives and bringing true hope to many people.

World Renew trains Peace Advocates who work in Nigerian communities where there is ethnic and religious violence. The training includes mediation, relationship-building, and trauma-healing techniques. You can find out more and support this program at worldrenewgifts.net.



In some rural communities, people have to walk 30 km or more to be tested for HIV, and some are not able or willing to travel that distance. However, people need to know their status so that they can learn the attitudes and behaviors they need to prevent them from contracting HIV or help them live positively with it. To address this need, World Renew and BHI organize conferences for teens and young adults to provide them with opportunities to access testing services in their area.

In difficult circumstances like these, World Renew is bringing the gentle whisper of the Good News of hope and healing to those who are brokenhearted.

Communities First: New Vision, New Direction

Communities First Association (CFA) is approaching the one-year mark with the leadership of its new executive director, Mrs. Reesheda Washington. In the past year, the board of directors, staff, and community advancement coaches who are former CFA members have collaborated extensively to re-vision the organization. This includes developing new branding and revising the structure of the organization.

In this time, CFA has continued to be stretched in new and exciting ways. These include healthy and productive conversations around racial, gender, and class inequality and their context as it pertains to asset-based community development (ABCD). It also includes conversations around reconciliation, which has been critical to the health and continued development of CFA as an organization.

Spending the past year building relationships and getting a better sense of the organization's strengths and weaknesses, CFA and its affiliates have explored the depth and breadth of possibilities offered by the organization. As such, the logo and the website (www.cfapartners.org) have been enhanced to reflect these recent innovations and growth.

Organizationally, it was unanimously determined that CFA will operate as a non-profit moving forward, as opposed to the use of the “association model” organization that has been used in years past. Making this seemingly small change creates a more agile and nimble organization that can move forward with innovations both collaboratively and efficiently. The move to a non-profit model of operations also eliminates association dues, which creates a more equitable entry into the organization.

CFA will soon offer a redeveloped Vetting and Certification Cohort to people and organizations that are interested in ABCD and certification in coaching and training. It is a four-month intensive that exposes participants to ABCD theory and practice. It provides a great opportunity to become an expert practitioner in ABCD while expanding the participant's professional network.



CFA's community advancement coaches (CACs) will be independently contracted to implement ABCD in the churches, schools, and civic organizations that CFA partners with in their respective cities—in addition to the amazing work they do in their respective local contexts. CFA will also its affiliates with professional development opportunities throughout the year and at its semi-annual gathering. Going forward, CFA will concentrate its efforts on neighborhood-level implementation of ABCD in neighborhoods with an emphasis on education.

CFA remains committed to the spirit of shalom and the process of discerning what God is already up to across the country as a vessel for God to pour into, that we might simply come alongside His great and remarkable work in the world. We believe that after much prayer and discernment, our efforts must start here, with solidifying the organizational identity and foundation, making the vision clear.

Last year World Renew supported CFA's work in 279 low-income communities in North America through asset-based community development programs that were implemented by 59 CRCs and other congregations. Find out more at www.communitiesfirstassociation.org.

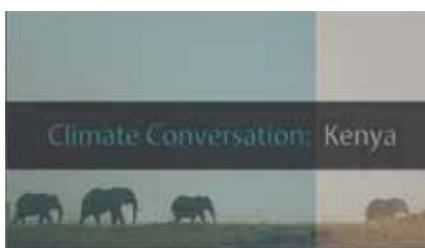
Can We Talk about Climate?

For millions of subsistence farmers in Kenya climate change is not a political debate: it is a reality in which adaptation can mean the difference between a good harvest and hunger. This is the focus of a new four-part documentary called *Climate Conversation: Kenya*.

It is hard not to notice the political debate about global warming. But with the causes of global warming so intimately connected with economic prosperity, it's difficult to know what to do. Although it is a contentious topic, Christians can no longer ignore the issue. The effects of global warming are intensifying, and we have a moral responsibility to ensure that current, as well as future generations, don't suffer because of our choices.

As the average North American, we may not personally see the subtle effects of global warming; however, they are evident in many places around the globe, and they are most dangerous in communities that are already facing extreme poverty. Those who live in such a vulnerable position are also the ones who depend most directly on normal, repeating weather patterns for their food and who typically don't have crop insurance or technology to adapt rapidly with new hybrids or irrigation strategies.

In the spring of 2013, a group from the Christian Reformed Church traveled to Kenya to learn how changing weather patterns are



affecting Kenyan's daily lives. One of the young men who traveled with this group, Kyle Meynard-Schaap, says that one of the most important things he learned from Kenyan farmers is that "For Kenyans, climate change isn't simply a debate—it is a reality that they are living with every day. Its effects are not some far-off prediction, but their 'new normal.' They do not have the same privilege of skepticism that our wealth and ability to adapt to change affords us in North America."

Although "Climate change is a threat, it is also an opportunity to build relationships and to problem-solve

in deeply creative and exciting ways," Meynard-Schaap says. "I think one of the most hopeful parts of this whole discussion is that, when we do take steps to live more lightly on the earth, we find joy and contentedness because we are living in ways that we were created to live."

This spring, World Renew is releasing *Climate Conversation: Kenya*, a set of online videos, along with discussion resources for congregational and small group use. With it, groups and church members can ask questions and explore answers that orient us toward hope and positive change. Questions like, what is our responsibility as a global church, and how we can help those living in poverty beyond providing financial assistance and food aid? You can watch the films and find small group discussion resources at climate-conversation.org.

Maternal and Child Health Sunday

May 10, 2015

Help bring better health to mothers and children who live in poverty!

Join us on Mother's Day, May 10, 2015, for **Maternal and Child Health Sunday**, a recommended offering for World Renew in Christian Reformed and other churches.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of women die during pregnancy and childbirth, and nearly nine million children die of hunger and its complications before they reach the age of five. World Renew is helping improve health for children and mothers through community-based health promotion, education, and nutrition programs in 1,654 communities of poverty around the world.

Will you give moms and babies a better chance for survival through World Renew on Mother's Day? **These FREE materials are new this spring and available to order at worldrenew.net/order.** They include

- a leader's guide with facts and activities.
- DVDs about maternal and child health in Kenya.
- bulletin inserts and covers.

Your **Maternal and Child Health Sunday** observance in 2015 can include an offertory video introducing a woman who lives in hope and is improving her life and family through better health, hygiene, nutrition, and education. **These three, new, 4-5 min. videos now available.** They highlight the lives of courageous women who are making a difference in supporting and caring for their families.

- *Hope in Time for Phelis and Jemima and Their Families*
- *Hope in Time for Gertrude and Her Family*
- *Hope in Time for Eline and Her Family*



Change the lives of women and children who live in poverty around the world by supporting World Renew's Maternal and Child Health Sunday on May 10, 2015 or any other day of the year. **To learn more about World Renew's ministry of improving child and maternal health, visit worldrenew.net/mother-child.**



Find out more about what World Renew is doing to help improve health in poor communities at worldrenew.net/mother-child, and then order your resources for Maternal and Child Health Sunday in 2015. **You can order at worldrenew.net/order now!**