

## Spring 2015 Report to Classis – Canada

*Submitted by Peter Bulthuis, Associate Director of Church Relations*

The spring session of classis meets when churches are not only winding down from their activities, but also beginning to plan for the next year of service. This report highlights updates in our ministry as well as ways that your church can be involved in the Kingdom of God as it finds expression in World Renew.

### A. National Baby Shower Program Update

World Renew received a grant in 2011 from the Government of Canada through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) to support child and maternal health development in Malawi and Bangladesh for three and a half years. The total budget of the grant was \$918,508. DFATD agreed to fund 75 percent of the costs; however, the funding was conditional on World Renew raising the other 25 percent of the budget from churches and individuals in Canada by April 30, 2015. World Renew instated the National Baby Shower program requesting churches to hold baby showers all over Canada to raise the required amount which was \$230,000.

Last fall, there was still \$50,000 remaining until our goal was met and so a volunteer position was created to recruit churches to participate in the program. A volunteer emerged, who connected with every CRC in Canada inviting them to join the baby shower program. The volunteer called and emailed churches from her own home to spread the word about this program, dedicating 65 hours of her time. Thanks to the hard work of this volunteer and the commitment of churches across Canada, the \$50,000 still needed was raised and we have met our goal for this program. Praise be to God!

### B. Staff Changes

- **Ken Kim** has accepted the offer to join the team as the **Director of Disaster Response and Rehabilitation** replacing Wayne DeJong effective April 1.
- The search for a **US Director** to replace Andy Ryskamp is currently in the interview stages.
- We are actively searching for an **Advocacy Manager** who will assist the churches in encouraging our federal government to help small farmers in developing countries.

### C. Important Dates and Publications

Here is a list of the Synodically designated offerings, various publications, and other important events for the remainder of 2015. For more information and resources, please visit [worldrenew.net/churchresources](http://worldrenew.net/churchresources).

- **May 10: Maternal and Child Health Sunday (Mother's Day)** – Offering for World Renew's Maternal and Child Health Programs. New materials including bulletin inserts/covers, leader's guide, and a DVD containing three videos are available for download or order.
- **July 1: Canada Day** – Bulletin inserts will be sent to each church to thank Canadians and the Canadian government for their support of our ministry.
- **June – August: Sea to Sea East and West** – The Sea to Sea East tour will run from June 29 to July 4 beginning and ending at Redeemer University College. The Sea to Sea West tour will go from July 29 to August 8 beginning in Jasper, Alberta and ending in Glacier National Park, Montana. World Renew is a tour partner for these events. To learn more and register, visit [seatosea.org](http://seatosea.org).

- **October 11 or 12: Thanksgiving** – Offering for World Renew’s Free A Family® program. Bulletin inserts will be sent to churches. The Free A Family® program is an alternative to sponsorship based on community development.
- **October 18 to November 1: World Hunger Campaign** – A two week campaign culminating in an offering for World Hunger on November 1. Resources will be sent to churches which include a family devotional, adult devotional, bulletin inserts/covers, and a leader’s guide containing a drama script, song suggestions, children’s message, sermon and more.
- **November/December: Gift Catalog Campaign** – Gift catalogs will be distributed as well as resources to set-up a giving tree campaign in your church.
- **December 25: Christmas Day** – Offering for World Renew, which could be a culmination of the church’s Gift Catalog campaign. Bulletin inserts/covers are available for order.

## D. Community Development: Stories of Transformation

There are many communities experiencing God’s love, grace and abundance through the work of World Renew. In northern Kenya, for example, in an area of semi-desert, World Renew is working with groups of people living in camps, having been displaced by tribal clashes. “It is possible,” the participants say. “God has provided us World Renew to help bring us out of poverty and dependency. We can use our hands and feed our families!” “God sent you here for us to discover the resources we already have in this land,” says Nyadeng, mother of six. “We can grow food to eat and feed our families from this dry dirt. The soil is rich. All we needed was to know how to take care of it.”

## E. Disaster Response: North America and International

**High River, Alberta:** World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS) has been active in the flood response in High River since the water receded. Currently, a major part of the work is advocating for flood survivors. Since January 2014, volunteer reconstruction teams have also been in the area working on repairing and restoring homes.

**Ebola Crisis, West Africa:** With a roughly \$800,000 budget, World Renew is providing a range of preventative, educational and health/medical response initiatives to the Ebola crisis in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In Guinea and Sierra Leone, World Renew worked with Christian Reformed World Missions and local Christian partners to help educate people about Ebola, how it could be prevented, how to properly care for those who were sick, and how to bury those who had died. World Renew and its partners have also provided food assistance and necessary supplies to people leaving Ebola treatment centers.

## F. Refugee Settlement Activities

A new 90 minute interactive workshop was launched on Saturday, March 28, in the First CRC, Toronto. It contains Scriptural foundations, stories and songs, worship resources, planning templates and more resources to assist congregations and other groups (including a facilitator’s guide). For more information, contact Rebecca Walker at 800-730-3490 ext. 4232 or [rwalker@worldrenew.net](mailto:rwalker@worldrenew.net) or visit [www.worldrenew.net/refugeesponsorship](http://www.worldrenew.net/refugeesponsorship).

**To learn more about World Renew’s ministry, please visit [worldrenew.net](http://worldrenew.net) and sign up for our e-newsletter.**