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- Please include the hashtag #IntlSistersStudy and tag @GHRfoundation @trinitydc, @caracatholic

Thanks!

TRINITY WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY/ CARA STUDY: INTERNATIONAL SISTERS IN THE UNITED STATES

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

- First ever national study of international women religious
- Collaboration between CARA and Trinity Washington University
- Funding from GHR Foundation

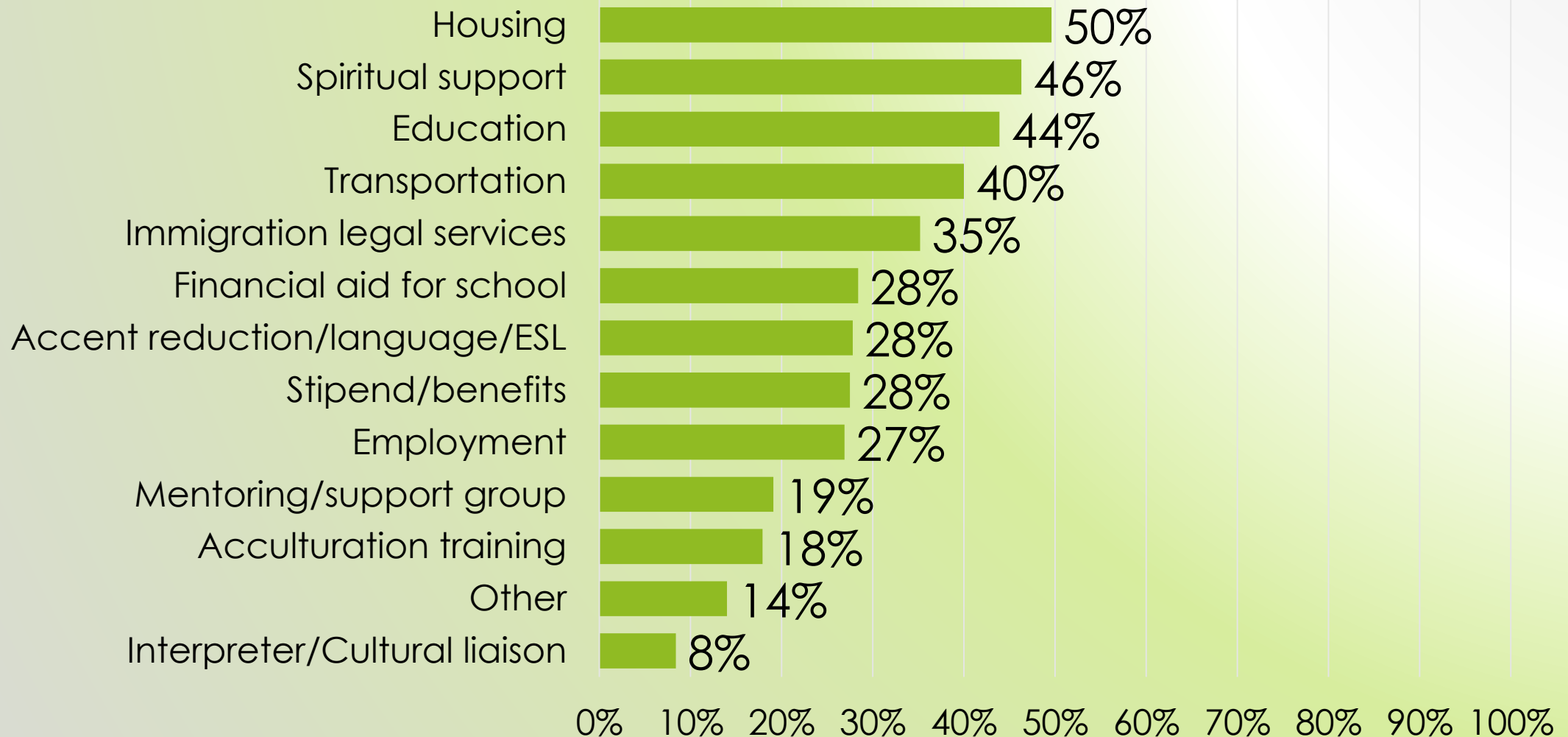
Definition:

“International sister” is a woman religious who was born outside the United States and is now living in the United States, in ministry or study or residence.

METHODOLOGY – STAGE ONE

- Contacted 560 U.S. based institutes of women religious with a brief survey and a request for the names of any international sisters
 - 336 survey responses from religious institutes(60 percent response)
 - Identified 1,678 international sisters, either in the congregation or the area
 - One in five institutes (19 percent) report no international sisters
- Contacted 194 Vicars for Religious in U.S. Dioceses (61 percent response)
 - Identified 1,866 non-duplicated international sisters
 - Only 18 Dioceses report no international sisters
- Eventually, through these and other contacts, identified more than 4,000 international sisters who were invited to participate in survey

TYPICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO INTERNATIONAL SISTERS



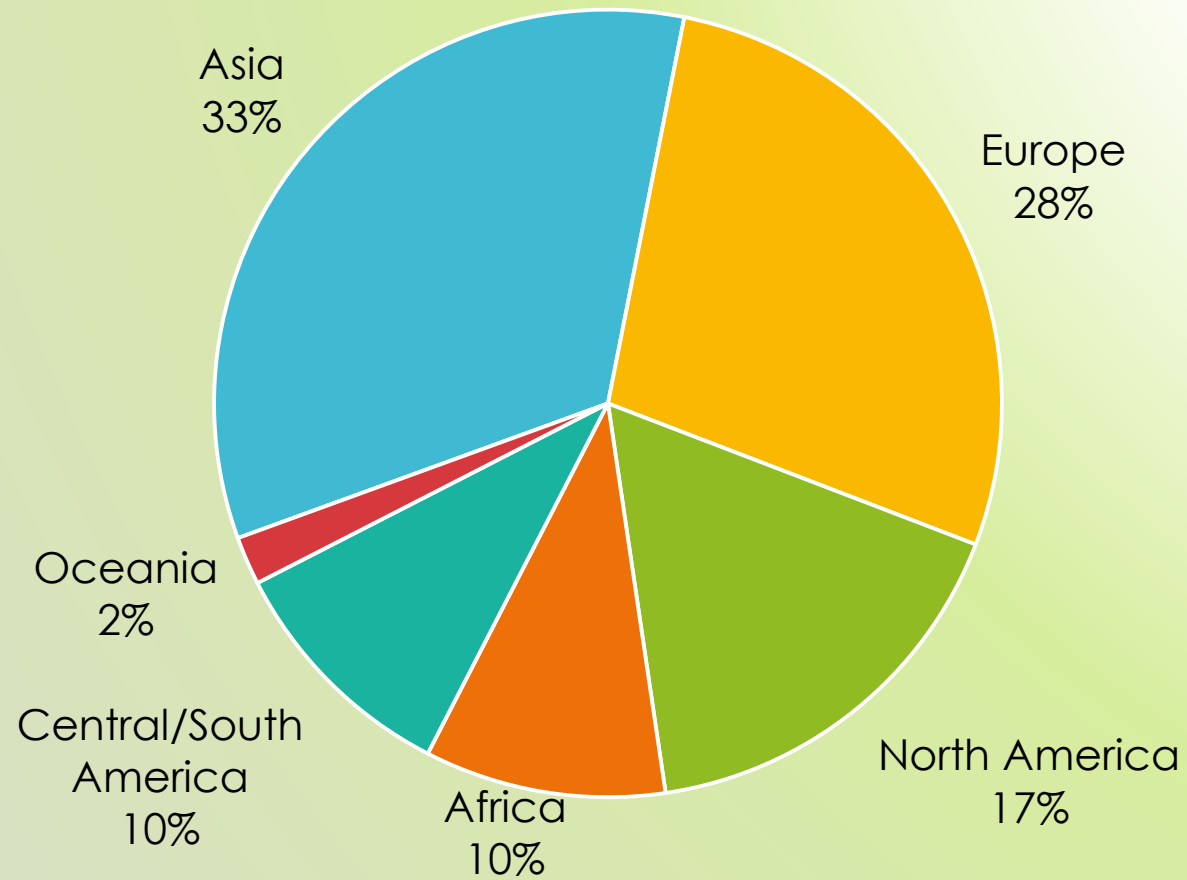
METHODOLOGY – STAGE TWO

- Mailed survey to 3,544 international sisters identified by religious institutes and diocesan vicars for religious
 - Survey available in English, Spanish, French and Vietnamese
 - Distributed ~500 additional surveys (snowball sample) at public presentations and through other organizations with access to international sisters
 - Received 1,143 surveys from international sisters in 257 different religious institutes
- Total of 26 focus groups and individual interviews with at least 75 international sisters around the country, centered around four basic questions:
 - The experience of arriving in the United States
 - Challenges faced by international sisters in living and working in the U.S.
 - Contributions they make to religious life and ministry in the United States
 - Advice for future arrivals and those who would welcome them

Surveys from more than 1,100 international sisters, in more than 250 religious institutes, from more than 83 countries on six continents around the world...

WHO ARE THE INTERNATIONAL SISTERS?

CONTINENT OF ORIGIN OF RESPONDING INTERNATIONAL SISTERS



PATHWAYS TO THE UNITED STATES

	%
I entered religious life in this congregation outside the United States, then was sent to the United States for ministry	39
I came to the United States prior to entering religious life	28
I entered religious life in this congregation outside the United States, then was sent to the United States for study	13
I entered religious life in this congregation outside the United States, then was sent to the United States for part of my religious formation	10
I transferred to a U.S. province of my congregation from another province outside the United States	6
I transferred to my congregation in the United States from another congregation outside the United States	2
I came to the United States to enter religious life in the United States	2

REASON/PURPOSE FOR COMING TO THE UNITED STATES

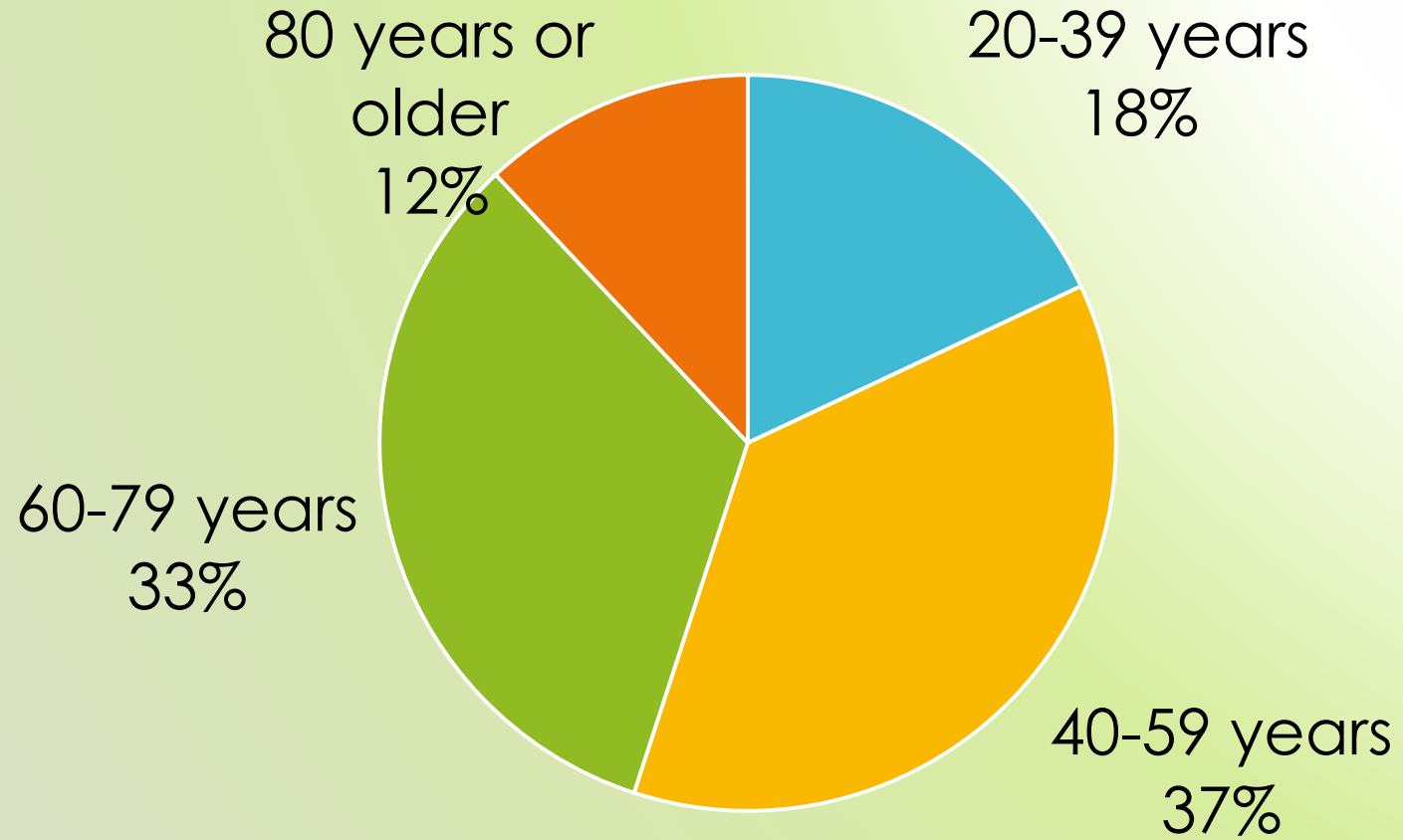
	%
My superior sent me here for a particular ministry	35
A priest/bishop from the United States requested sisters from my congregation for ministry	15
My superior sent me here to study	13
My superior sent me here for part of my religious formation	9
I came to the United States with my family	9
A friend or family member invited me to come	8
I came to the United States to enter religious life in the United States	7
Other reasons	5

CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNATIONAL SISTERS

- Average age is 58
- Nine in ten are active
- On average, entered religious life at age 23 and entered the U.S. at age 30

Length of Time in United States	
15 years or fewer	41%
16–30 years	20%
31–50 years	18%
51 years or longer	21%
Average years	27
Median years	22

AGE DISTRIBUTION

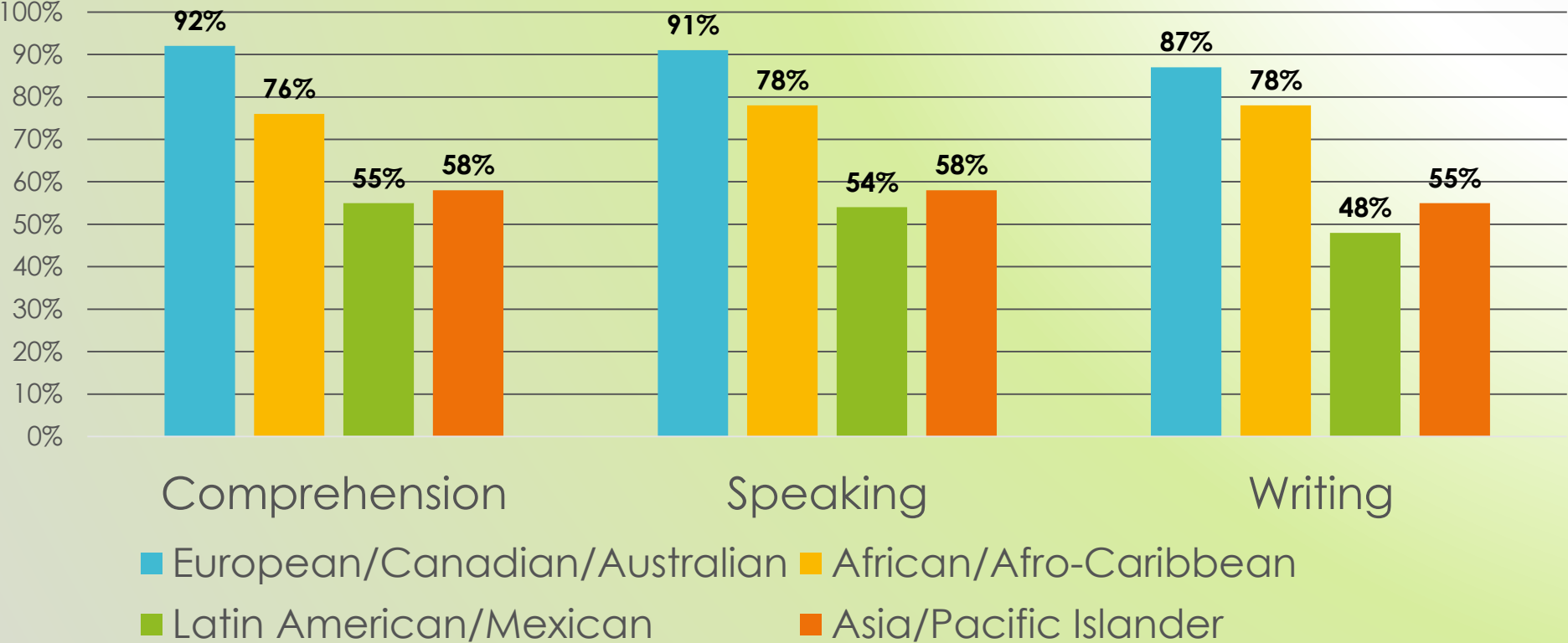


ETHNIC AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

What best describes your primary ethnicity/cultural background?	
	%
Asian/Pacific Islander	35
European/Canadian/Australian	33
Latin American/Mexican	21
African/Afro-Caribbean	11

PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

Proficiency in English Language, by Ethnicity
Percentage responding "fluently"



LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	%
Graduate or professional degree	53
College or university undergraduate degree	20
Some college, but not a bachelor's degree	14
High school/Secondary school or less	11
Trade or technical school	2

CURRENT MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

(Among respondents who are active in ministry)	%
Parish/diocesan/ethnic group ministry	21
Hospital/healthcare ministry	20
Education/teaching	15
Student at a U.S. college/school of theology	14
Congregational/formation/vocation ministry	13
Social services ministry	9
Contemplatives	5
Campus ministry	1
Some other response	3

SINCE COMING TO THE UNITED STATES, HOW MUCH OF A CONCERN IS...?

	Somewhat or Very Much	Very Much only
Ability to participate in the life of my congregation	59%	39%
Sense of belonging	54	31
Tiredness	45	10
Overwork	37	11
Anxiety/stress	31	7
Chronic illness	20	6
Weight issues	20	7
Loneliness/isolation	14	4
Depression	12	4
Alcohol or drug use	2	1

Focus groups and interviews with at least 75 international women religious...

IN THE WORDS OF THE SISTERS

“CAN I EVER REALLY BELONG HERE?”

CHALLENGES IN SOCIAL CONNECTION

- Language Difficulties
- Cultural Expectations
 - In ministry
 - In community living
- Maintain congregational involvement

CULTURE SHOCK OR HOMECOMING?

A VARIETY OF WELCOMES AWAIT INTERNATIONAL SISTERS

- Surprises
 - Welcoming
 - Non-Welcoming

- Coming as an individual or as a group?

“MOST OF US ARE (USUALLY) HAPPY HERE”

MYTHS AND REALITIES

Support

- Ministry
- Spiritual Life
- They want to build and sustain relationships
 - With sisters in the U.S.
 - With their institute at home

“GIFTS GIVEN AND RECEIVED”

THE BLESSING OF INTERNATIONAL SISTERS

- Diversity in Prayer and Worship
- Intercultural Understanding
 - For those they serve
 - For the sending and receiving communities

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOURCES FOR THE FUTURE

Responding to the needs of the most vulnerable

Language

Education

Mentoring

Acculturation--sending and receiving groups

ADDITIONAL NEEDED RESOURCES

Policy formulation

Housing and community life

Building solidarity

Inter-cultural training, e.g., in society

Intra-cultural training, e.g., in the
Church

SOME FINAL IMAGES

THESE INTERNATIONAL SISTERS ARE HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT.

THEIRS IS NOT ONE STORY, BUT MANY.

THROUGH THE WITNESS OF THEIR LIVES AND MINISTRIES,
THEY ARE BUILDING BRIDGES AND TEARING DOWN
WALLS, ALL ACROSS THE GREAT EXPANSE OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.