



Who We Are and What We Do

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The Christian Reformed Church in North America includes just over 1,000 congregations across the United States and Canada—1,015 worshipping communities, to be exact. This includes a small church of about 60 members that has been part of Truro, N.S., since 1954; a church of 110 Spanish-speaking people in the border town of McAllen, Texas; an established congregation that has been a fixture of Zeeland, Mich., since 1862; a Korean-speaking church in Lake View Terrace, Calif., that has around 3,000 attendees each week; a multicampus, multiethnic congregation of about 1,000 in Richmond, B.C.; and everything in between.

Almost 200,000 people belong to the CRCNA. We speak and worship in dozens of languages. We are rural, urban, and suburban. We include children, youth, young adults, middle-aged adults, and seniors. Some of us are single; some are married. Some have children, and some even have great-great-grandchildren.

Though 200,000 people may not seem like a large number when you consider the populations of the United States and Canada, by God's grace we have been able to accomplish a lot by working together.

Over our nearly 170-year history as a denomination, we've started several ministries to help us follow God's call and serve as God's ambassadors in the world. For those who want to know more—and those who sometimes forget which ministry does what—here is a helpful guide.

The CRCNA supports four agencies:

1. ReFrame Ministries

Relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, ReFrame Ministries (formerly known as Back to God Ministries International) creates contextual media resources that proclaim the gospel, disciple believers, and strengthen the church throughout the world in 10 major languages.

Take Japanese, for example. Japan's tech-savvy society offers a unique opportunity to expand the reach of the gospel. Partnering with the Reformed Church in Japan, ReFrame plans to tap into this high-tech environment to help build God's kingdom. Together, they plan to launch a mobile-friendly website and a dedicated smartphone app similar to the CRC's Bridge app that many congregations across Canada use.

Founded: ReFrame Ministries was founded by synod in 1939. Although the CRC was excited about the possibility of denominational radio ministry after a few pilot projects in 1928, they had to halt further progress until 1939 due to the cost burden of a new media ministry during the Great Depression. In 1938, the CRC appointed a Radio Committee to begin a media ministry, and in 1939, The Back to God Hour broadcast its first radio message from Chicago.

Vision: ReFrame's vision is that the lives and worldviews of all people around the globe will be transformed by God's gospel message.

Program summary: ReFrame produces daily devotionals (*Today*), podcasts, videos, and other media ministry in 10 of our world's major languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

Something you might not know: Although The Back to God Hour officially changed its name to ReFrame in 2020, more than half a million people—most of whom are outside of the CRC—already knew them by that name. ReFrame has been the name of our English language ministry since 2008.

2. Resonate Global Mission

Compelled by God's mission to save the lost and renew all things, Resonate Global Mission exists to engage more and more people in the Spirit's call to live out this mission in their neighborhoods and in the world.

With support from CRC churches and classes, Resonate was able to send more than 30 new missionaries to the field in the past two years. This includes staff members who came through traditional avenues, such as long-time family ties to the CRC, but also new missionaries who came through



collaboration and partnerships with staff on the ground. As a result, Resonate missionaries spread the gospel in more than 40 countries throughout the world.

Founded: On June 18, 1888, synod appointed a five-member committee to lead the denomination in cross-cultural missions. For a Dutch-speaking church that was barely thirty years old, with just 10,000 members, this was a big step. God blessed the work of this new movement, known then as Christian Reformed World Missions. The CRC went on to build a reputation of passion for mission around the world. For much of this time, the domestic and international work was divided between two different agencies: Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions. In 2017, these two agencies joined to form Resonate Global Mission, a single agency with a global focus.

Vision: Resonate wants to see communities of disciples joining in God's mission as they faithfully proclaim and live out the good news of Jesus in their neighborhoods and around the world.

Program Summary: Resonate Global Mission is an extension of your own church. It exists to walk with you on mission in your own community and around the world. In more than 40 countries, Resonate supports missionaries, church planters, campus chaplains, and other ministry leaders—all of them trained, supported, and sent by you.

Something you might not know: Resonate believes that young adults are not only the leaders of the future, but leaders today. While there's evidence that young adults are leaving the church, Resonate has found that many are still passionate about following Jesus and sharing their faith. In many places where Resonate works, they are getting young adults involved in innovative, mission-focused ministry, including church planting, missionary ministry, congregational ministry, and more.



3. Thrive

The mandate Synod 2023 gave Thrive was “to provide expertise, wisdom, and compassionate support to congregations while remaining attentive to a wide range of opportunities and challenges facing the church today.”

Rev. Dave Den Haan is one of Thrive’s many consultants. His special focus is on pastors; however, his years of experience make him tuned in to the overall needs of a congregation.

“The work of supporting pastors and churches in times of challenge, transition, and growth is one of the many ways that Thrive serves the congregations of the CRC,” Den Haan said. “We also bring expertise in conflict management, transitional ministry, and leadership development as well as faith formation, worship, justice, and mercy—all so that our pastors and congregations flourish.”

Founded: Thrive was launched as an official agency of the CRCNA in July 2023. It comprises nine smaller ministries that had been started by synods over the previous decades. Previously classified as “Congregational Ministries,” these nine agencies were united as a single agency under the Thrive name to better encourage and equip the churches of the CRCNA. The consolidation allows the ministries to be more accessible, more integrated, and more responsive in their engagement with Christian Reformed congregations and ministry leaders.

Program Summary: Thrive provides resources and advises churches in the areas of faith formation, abuse prevention, disability inclusion, racial reconciliation and diversity, pastors and church support, chaplaincy, justice, and worship.

Something you might not know: Thrive desires to build relationships and walk alongside local congregations in any

and all circumstances they may be encountering. Working from the “Thrive Hive,” the staff want their interactions and general posture with churches to be one of curious listening.

4. World Renew

Compelled by God’s deep passion for justice and mercy, World Renew joins communities around the world to renew hope, reconcile lives, and restore creation.

For more than 60 years, years, World Renew has fulfilled this mandate, reaching out in Christ’s name to support vulnerable people around the world. In its essence and existence, World Renew works to respond to God’s call to live justly and love mercy as the global community faces extreme poverty, hunger, displacement, and disaster. Because we serve a God whose heart is most concerned with those who are oppressed, we seek to help renew hope where there is despair, contributing to a world where every one of God’s people can flourish.

Founded: Twelve years after synod was formally asked to “consider the advisability of appointing a Synodical Diaconal Committee” (*Acts of Synod*, 1950, p. 63), Synod 1962 approved the formation of the denomination’s diaconal agency, then known as the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.



Its mandate was “to minister in the name of our Lord to those distressed by reason of the violence of nature, the carnage of war, or other calamities of life, and to relieve the suffering of the needy in the world.” CRWRC changed its name to World Renew in 2012.

Vision: World Renew envisions a world where people experience and extend Christ’s compassion and live together in hope as God’s community.

Program Summary: In 2022, World Renew had the great joy of celebrating its 60-year anniversary with supporting communities across the United States and Canada. Looking back at the faithfulness God has shown, World Renew was also able to look forward as they imagine what God may have in store. To continue fulfilling its mandate, World Renew believes that working with communities in the areas of food security, economic opportunity, disaster response, community health, and peace and justice is the key to opening doors for the Spirit to change lives in amazing ways.

In the last year, through community development programs in 1,200 communities, 221,652 participants were reached in the key areas of food security, economic opportunity, community health, and peace and justice. They were able to build new health, agriculture, livelihood, and leadership skills that improved their lives for the long term.

Additionally, 256,852 survivors of violence, drought, flooding, and storms benefited from World Renew’s disaster response programs in 2023.

Something you might not know: World Renew hosts the *Do Justice* podcast, and 2023’s theme was reconciliation. Listen in to hear some familiar names, get to know some new ones, and think about how God works to fully reconcile lives.

In addition to these four agencies, the CRCNA also supports two educational institutions (Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary) and several Canada-specific justice ministries (the Centre for Public Dialogue, Canadian Indigenous Ministries, and the Decolonization and Anti-Racism Collective). Stories about what God is doing with and through the Christian Reformed Church as a result of these shared ministries will be told throughout the year in this section of *The Banner*. Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support. 