

MINISTRY REPORT



Christian
Reformed
Church

Just as a body, though one,
has many parts, but all
its many parts form one body,
so it is with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12 NIV

together on a faithful journey

2014

God is at work

It is estimated that between 40 and 50 percent of the world's seven billion people haven't heard of Jesus. In Southeast Asia alone there are almost 600 languages without the Scripture.

But not all of these people live in distant lands. Close to home, we can't assume that our neighbors feel the need to step into a church. In every corner of the world there are those who need to hear the good news of salvation.

We in the Christian Reformed Church have always taken seriously the mandate Christ gave us in the Great Commission. During this past year, our ministries have been active in hospitals and prisons; have shared the good news in person, across the airwaves and via the web; have been at work in mission fields nearby and far away, all through the power of the Spirit.

For thousands of people living in North America and around the globe, our churches and ministries are the tangible body of Christ. God's kingdom is revealed daily in our workplaces as well as our places of worship, and in the ways in which we volunteer in response to disasters and human need.

We celebrate the growing diversity of ethnicities represented in our congregations and in the growing inclusion of people with disabilities in the lives of our churches. Truly, God is at work in and through us, achieving great things through this denomination that is small according to most standards.

When I'm asked how the Christian Reformed Church is able to extend its mission so deeply and broadly, my answer is three-fold.

First, we offer our ministry efforts out of our profound gratitude to God for our salvation, and God continues to bless our efforts.

Second, each of our churches, whether big or small, thriving or struggling, understands that God's Word must be proclaimed from its own pulpit and across the world. It's not the task of any one church alone, but the shared responsibility of congregations working together.

Third, our Reformed theology provides a worldview that declares God's sovereignty over all things, thereby calling us to do God's work in countless areas of endeavor.

The faithful giving of our members through Ministry Shares and offerings, together with additional gifts from individuals, foundations and other sources, allow us to minister both in our local churches and around the world.

As we approach a new year of ministry, the challenges we face are many. Yet, our gratitude to God and our shared obligation to each other mean that we will continue to respond, seeking to be faithful.

Sometimes, our ministries will follow familiar patterns of long standing. At other times, we will need to learn ways of adapting to new situations. Either way, we will seek to follow God's call. Like Peter, we respond, confessing that Christ is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

The result? We become the rock upon which God builds his church, in us and through us.

Thanks be to God!



Dr. Steven Timmermans
is the executive director
of the Christian Reformed
Church in North America

TOGETHER DOING MORE

Discipleship & Faith Formation: 'For Such a Time as This'

A university student once told me that during her final year of high school, she and her peers realized how deeply their congregation loved them, so they hosted a thank you dinner for the congregation.

A father once told me that one evening he asked his 16-year-old daughter what she considered to be the safest place in the world. She replied (after some thought), "Standing in a circle, holding hands, and singing 'Bind us Together' at the annual congregational retreat last month."

Middle school students visited a group of seniors and, in groups of three or four, asked them to identify their favorite Bible passages and hymns, and to describe why these were their favorites. They were treated to an hour of richly moving testimonies that they would never forget.

Stories like these point to a strong discipleship culture in local congregations, places where fellow sons and daughters of the Lord strengthen each other in their walk with him.

Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries (DFFM) is a ministry of the Christian Reformed Church in North America whose mandate is to build on the recognition that our congregations practice cradle-to-the-grave discipleship in many sturdy ways, and to develop channels for sharing and enhancing these best practices.

The work of Faith Alive wrapped up last year, endowing the denomination with the wealth of resources that Faith Alive has contributed over the years. DFFM is using those resources as we build a ministry that seeks to discern the discipleship gifts and needs of local congregations and explore the best ways to support them, whether that involves resources from within the denomination or beyond it.

We're too new to provide many details about these "best ways," but here's what we're beginning to do:

- Hosting regional Faith Formation Strategizing Workshops throughout the denomination.



- Developing a "Profession of Faith" toolkit that can be adapted in many different ways.
- Updating the much loved *God Loves Me* storybook series for 2 and 3 year olds and making it affordable and available for families.
- Compiling a toolkit for Intergenerational Faith Formation.
- Developing stronger communication systems between local congregations and DFFM to help us discern their needs and help us to bless leaders to be a blessing.
- Working with Home Missions to refresh Coffee Break through a pilot project that includes updated resources and an e-newsletter.
- Preparing a small group study guide for those participating in mission trips.
- Cultivating shared vocabulary and assumptions about Discipleship and Faith Formation so that we can encourage and support each other more readily across the denomination.
- Exploring partnerships with the Reformed Church of America (and others).

We're excited about the possibilities and opportunities before us, and we are confident that the Lord is shaping us to serve "for such a time as this."

—Syd Hielema is the team leader for
Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries

CRC and RCA: Working Together in Ministry

A historic meeting of the synods of the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America this summer highlighted many ways in which the two denominations are already working together in ministry and signaled the intention to collaborate even more closely in coming years.

The joint resolution, which called for the two denominations to work together in ministry whenever and wherever possible, opened a door to the future, says Dr. Steven Timmermans, the executive director of the CRC.

“When they passed the resolution, it showed that the pathway of collaboration has been identified... and that it is the time to go forward.” Although no one knows exactly what the future holds, Timmermans said, the CRC and RCA will continue to seek ways in which they can work together more effectively.

“We will always be asking the question of ‘Can we do this better?’”

Just prior to their historic vote, Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, general secretary emeritus of the RCA, told the assembled delegates that the resolution comes at an important time in the development of the global church and reflects a need for a wider ecumenical movement.

“It is a sinful and shameful state of affairs when we see that the Christian church is divided up today into 43,000 denominations,” Granberg-Michaelson said.

Rev. Joel R. Boot, the former executive director who now is serving as director of ministries and administration for the CRC, said earlier this year that the resolution should not be seen as a step toward merging the two denominations, but rather that the denominations are coming together to do mission.

“We are focusing on the ‘m’ word,” Boot said, “but that word is ‘mission.’”

In addition to passing the resolution, the CRC and RCA synods had the chance to learn about some of more than 70 areas in which the denominations are already working together.

Joint initiatives of what is called the Reformed Collaborative include church-planting, health-care insurance, publishing, ministry efforts in the area of disability concerns, and collaborating in disaster relief and development.

One area of collaboration that has been underway very successfully for several years is the Church Multiplication Initiative. Focused on planting churches, the initiative recently received funds for a three-year expansion.

“The collaborative work continues to pick up momentum,” says Paul Boice, the RCA’s assistant general secretary and chief operating officer.

“There is a desire to serve God and radically follow Christ in mission...and this has nothing to do with a CRC or RCA name badge. It has everything to do with a unified vision.”

—by Chris Meehan, CRC Communications

Your Ministry Shares: Where the Money Goes

The money you give to Ministry Shares gifts provides about \$25 million each year to fund programs that enable your church to send missionaries around the world, start new churches, train pastors and leaders, use media to spread the gospel, and much more.

Your Ministry Shares gifts provide vital support for almost all our ministries. About 85 cents of every dollar raised goes directly into ministry programs. Ministry Shares gifts provide about 40 percent of the budgets for CRC mission agencies and Calvin Theological Seminary, and between 60 percent and 90 percent of the budgets for CRC Specialized Ministries.

To learn more about how God is using your Ministry Shares gifts to transform lives and communities, visit www.crcna.org/MinistryShares.

We Chat, God Connects



Cathy, a young mother and sales manager for a retailer in Shenzhen, China, was a victim of domestic abuse that eventually led to divorce.

At a time of great discouragement, Cathy discovered the Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) Chinese radio program, Good News.

The program introduced her to the daily Chinese Today devotional on We Chat—a mobile voice-and-text-messaging app that now offers video and live chat to 400 million users worldwide.

Particularly touched by a Chinese Today devotional on family, she wrote to BTGMI staff member Zhang, who via email shared scripture with Cathy and connected her with local support.

Later, Cathy replied: “Thank you for connecting me to the Christian counselor. She is very affirming and willing to listen...”



Cathy was inspired to give back to the program that has helped her.

BTGMI's Chinese team found a niche for Cathy to use her gifts. Now she volunteers for Chinese Today, selecting and regularly posting pictures for We Chat.

—by *Claudia Elzinga*,
Back to God Ministries International

Calvin's Service-Learning Center Turns 50



As a Calvin College student, Jan Vanden Bosch Veenstra was invited by the dean of student life to a conference on volunteerism at Michigan State University.

The conference challenged attendees to start volunteer programs on their college campuses, and Veenstra was inspired.

On the suggestion of the dean, Veenstra began working on a project. In the summer of 1964 with Sharon Draft Slager, a member of the college's social work club, she formed a new club focused on tutoring in inner-city schools.

By fall, some 25 students were part of a program headed by then-student coordinators Draft, VandenBosch and Jan Deur.

Over the next 50 years, their tutoring program would grow into Calvin's Service-Learning Center (SLC).

Slager, Veenstra and Deur never expected the after-school tutoring group they started in 1964 to grow into the multifaceted program it is today.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, more than 2,000 students participated in service-learning, averaging almost 27 hours each.

—*Grace Ruiter, Calvin College*



As part of the anniversary celebration, alums of the Service-Learning Center helped to clear an area for water runoff on the campus.

Formation for Ministry in Sierra Leone



Grant Hofman completed his first year in the M.Div. program at Calvin Seminary last May and headed off to West Africa to experience the life of the Christian Reformed Church in Kabala, Sierra Leone.

He was ready for immersion in a ministry context that was culturally very different from what he had experienced in the U.S.

He didn't plan on his trip being cut in half, from six weeks to three weeks, because he needed to leave due to an outbreak of the Ebola virus.

But while he was there, he says, his time was inspirational and productive.

Hofman was mentored by Reverends Istifanus Bala Bahago and Ezekiel James Sudu, both Nigerian ministers called to serve the CRC of Sierra Leone.

Hofman joined them in training church leaders in pastoral care and stewardship, using materials and strategies from the Timothy Leadership Training Institute.

Hofman says he came home with new sensitivities and insights.

For example, he learned that the Sierra Leonean way of worship is very joyful and loud, with lots of dancing and not a lot of structure.



Seminarian Grant Hofman is flanked by the church leaders of the Kabala CRC in Sierra Leone with whom he helped facilitate trainings in stewardship and pastoral care.

But Reformed elements have been introduced—like the weekly reading of the law and pastoral prayer for illumination. Both traditions were respected and present.

Hofman also saw the influence of the spiritual world, recounting how a girl fell down in worship because of the name of Jesus—Jesus Christ named as healer and deliverer.

“That’s something the African church really has to offer the western church—belief in the spiritual world that it is real and active daily,” he says.

—by Joella Ranaivoson
and Jinny De Jong, Calvin Seminary

Making a Difference



A life of addictions and prostitution had left Rhonda empty, yearning for something more. Cancer had made her ill.

Bob and Brenda Holtrop, church planters at Missio Dei in Omaha, Neb. met with Rhonda and found she had a receptive spirit, not fully understanding what the good news meant in her life.

But she was willing to learn and, a year later, she came to faith and Bob Holtrop baptized Rhonda in her home.

Rhonda's is not an isolated case in North America, where many people long for meaning and connection to God and people such as the Holtrops are stepping in to help.

The Holtrops are being joined in this work by a host of church planters, campus minis-



Bob and Brenda Holtrop

ters, leadership developers, and others in communities across North America, which are in turn supported by Christian Reformed Home Missions. »

» Rhonda says she accepted Jesus into her heart because the Holtrops are intentional about building relationships with all the people in their lives.

The Holtrops believed this so strongly that two years ago they felt called to gather a community of mission-minded believers to form a new church named *Missio Dei*, which means “The Mission of God.”

“As we love on our neighbors, we are starting to have conversations that mean a little bit more each time,” says Bob Holtrop.

For instance, his next-door neighbors have three girls who look up to him like a grandfather.

One of the girls knocked on Bob Holtrop’s door, and asked if he would be her guest on Grandparent’s Day. Holtrop happily agreed.

He says, “God is making a difference because of the way we love these children on a daily basis.”

—Rachel Gabrielse,
Christian Reformed Home Missions

Navigating Cultural White Water



In January 2010, four Chinese pastors attended a “Welcome to the CRC” event hosted by the CRC’s Candidacy Office.

This led to the formation of an eight-member, Sustaining Pastoral Excellence peer-learning group called East Meets West.

In May 2013, four additional pastors joined the group and it became East Meets West Expanded.

It is also leading to translation of the CRC Church Order into Chinese.

“Chinese pastors are more isolated in the Christian Reformed Church and seldom have a chance for meaningful fellowship among themselves,” says Pastor Wen Hsieh of the Chinese Church of Iowa City in Iowa.

“Our peer group provides a platform for mutual support, a safe place to have a deeper communication, and meaningful friendships.”

Often, they meet via conference calls.

As part of their peer-group proposal to SPE, they stated a goal of finding a way to contribute to “the worldwide ministry of the CRCNA.”

They are doing that by translating the CRC Church Order into Chinese. The translation is now finished and available.

Openly sharing their difficulties and receiving encouragement from one another has helped them grow in their ministries, say the pastors.

Group coordinator, Pastor James Chiang, a church planter in Los Altos, CA, says, “There is tremendous diversity within Chinese culture.

“We [the group members] come from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, and America. Our constant challenge is how do we cross cultural boundaries into the grace culture of the Kingdom of God? We appreciate the opportunity to learn from one another how to navigate through these cultural white waters.”

Also helpful was a gathering this fall of the pastors and their wives sponsored by SPE.

—by Lis Van Harten,
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence





Long-Term Results of Friendship Evangelism



When people in one West African community have questions about Islam, they look to Shafaat (not his real name) for answers.

As the son of the local Muslim teacher, Shafaat has even helped bring people who previously called themselves Christians to Islam.

But when Shafaat had doubts about his faith, he knew where to go for answers—a Christian Reformed World Missions missionary he trusted.

The missionary was surprised when she realized how much Shafaat already knew about both the Christian faith and Reformed beliefs.

“When he started talking about John Calvin and Martin Luther, I knew that he had been doing some serious studying,” she said.

CRWM missionaries have been living alongside Fulani people like Shafaat for more than 30 years. Less than five percent of Fulanis are Christians.

So, missionaries focus on sharing the gospel through developing friendships.

“Our time here is a long-term commitment,” said one missionary who lived in a Fulani village for 10 years before seeing someone turn to Christ.

A few weeks after their initial meeting, Shafaat and a friend returned to the missionary and spent nine hours discussing the Christian faith.

—By Brian Clark,
Christian Reformed World Missions

TOGETHERDOINGMORE

Always eat your vegetables

Nereyda González is a Nicaraguan nutritionist with 20 years of experience helping families learn healthier ways to eat.

World Renew and its partner, Acción Médica Cristiana (AMC), recently contracted with González to lead a workshop for men and women in the Matagalpa region of Nicaragua on food, health, local products and methods of preparation.

Through encouragement and instruction from AMC, these men and women have been planting vegetable gardens for the first time in their lives.

Unfortunately, very few traditionally use vegetables in the foods they cook, meaning most of the vegetables have been sold at the market or have gone to waste.

“Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in Latin America and despite the fact that most of its citizens are farmers, families often struggle to obtain adequate food to meet their needs,” said Bethany Beachum, who works for World Renew in Nicaragua.

Beachum explained that Nicaraguan farmers often grow only one or two types of crops, which limits their nutritional intake. Helping farmers grow more and healthier foods is the first step to a solution. The next step is teaching people how to prepare and eat them.

“In rural communities, cooking know-how is passed down from parents or grandparents. There is little access to education about how and why to cook balanced meals,” she said.

Traditional Nicaraguan diets once consisted of a variety of foods and cooking methods, but people’s eating habits have changed as a

result of colonialism and globalism, Beachum said.

The Spanish brought new foods such as pigs, shortening and rum to Nicaragua. More recently, global influences also impacted local eating by introducing preservatives and artificial coloring in the form of chips, sauces, soda, and candies.

González’s workshop focused on the different food groups, what constitutes a healthy diet for each stage of life, and how to defend against illness.

González also provided participants with hands-on opportunities to chop, peel, sift, grind, and cook a variety of dishes using local ingredients.

“Most of the recipes were an alternative take on traditional dishes,” said Beachum.

—By Kristen deRoo Vanderberg,
World Renew



Men and women in rural Nicaragua try out new recipes and cooking techniques at a workshop on family nutrition.

Back to God Ministries International

Back to God Ministries International celebrates 75 years of God's faithfulness in using media to proclaim the gospel, disciple those who want to follow Christ, and strengthen the church.

So much has changed in 75 years! As new opportunities and new media channels became available, by God's grace, we expanded into 10 languages, using traditional media like radio, TV and print. And with today's media—Internet, smart phones and social media—we are also able to share the gospel with people in nearly every country of the world. This is especially crucial in places where people would have no other access to biblical resources.

Read more about this 75-year journey of media ministry at BackToGod.net/75. Learn how God has used your prayers and support of media ministry to bring people to faith in Christ.



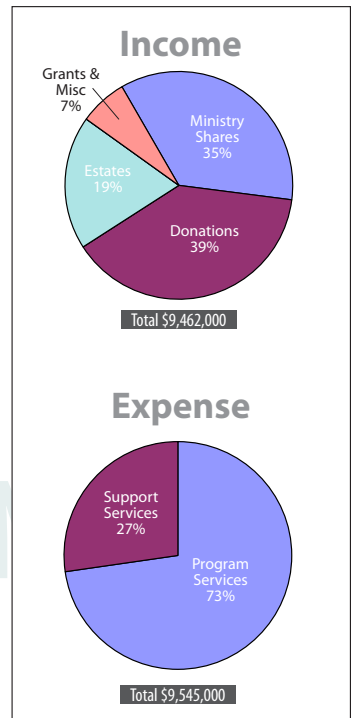
HIGHLIGHTS

Through ministry shares and individual gifts, BTGMI English ministry team—ReFrame Media—has developed nine program streams to assist churches, families, and individuals of all ages with discipleship and evangelism.

- These resources are available online, in print and through social media. To learn more, visit www.MeetReFrame.com.

BTGMI values denominational and international ministry partners.

- Working with CRC agencies, as well as ministries such as Words of Hope and Reformed denominations worldwide, we are able to develop more effective discipleship ministries together than any one of the partners could do independently.
- In 2014 we began a partnership with CRWM, Timothy Leadership Training, and the Reformed Church of Japan, developing a training center that will equip local churches to minister to listeners seeking to learn more about the Christian faith.
- Through expanded Internet, social media and smart phone apps, BTGMI has been able to share the gospel with more people in more cost effective ways.
- The Today devotional is now delivered digitally to more than 300,000 people daily.
- In China more than 10,000 people downloaded the new Chinese Today mobile app in the first five months after it launched.
- Each month at least 375 new seekers are connected to discipleship staff and volunteers through phone, text, and Skype.



Back to God
Ministries International
Telling His Story... Sharing His Love

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Calvin College

Calvin College is one of the largest Christian colleges in North America and is internationally recognized as a center of faith-anchored liberal arts teaching and scholarship. The college offers its 4,000 students, from 46 U.S. states, 55 countries and six Canadian provinces, a campus environment that is just as academically challenging as it is



Christian. Calvin's core curriculum built on knowledge, skills and character development provides a solid foundation for students studying each of the college's 100-plus majors and programs.

Founded by the Christian Reformed Church and named for the 16th-century reformer John Calvin, the college equips students to think deeply, to act justly and to live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Appointed Cheryl Brandsen, academic dean at Calvin, to the position of provost.
- Ranked third nationally among baccalaureate institutions by the Institute of International Education for the total number of students who study abroad; ranked fifth in same category for number of international students studying on campus.
- Calvin's Plaster Creek Stewards received a \$1 million grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to expand their work in the Plaster Creek Watershed.
- The Michigan Department of Education approved a program that will give students the option to major or minor in Chinese language education.
- Celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Service-Learning Center at Calvin.
- Graduated nearly 900 students representing 60 majors. The college's most recent annual employment and grad school report shows that 96 percent of Calvin grads are professionally employed or in grad school within nine months of graduation.
- Raised \$25 million toward reducing the college's long-term debt and recorded the second-best fundraising year in college history with \$37.3 million in gifts and pledges for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.
- The Vital Worship Grants Program has awarded more than \$300,000 in grants for projects related to public worship and faith formation representing congregations and schools from 31 denominations in 21 states and two Canadian provinces.
- This summer, 81 students worked on 44 projects with 40 professors from eight departments in the science division as part of the McGregor Fellowship program.

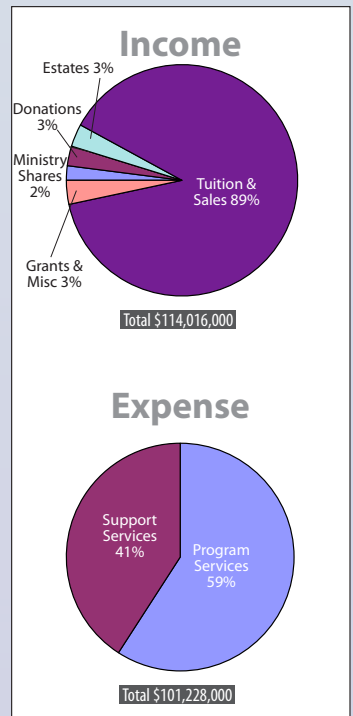


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Calvin Theological Seminary

Calvin Theological Seminary is a learning community in the Reformed Christian tradition. CTS forms church leaders who cultivate communities of disciples of Jesus Christ.

HIGHLIGHTS

Founded almost 140 years ago by the Christian Reformed Church, Calvin Seminary continues to live out the values of its legacy in this 21st century and as expressed in these affirmations:

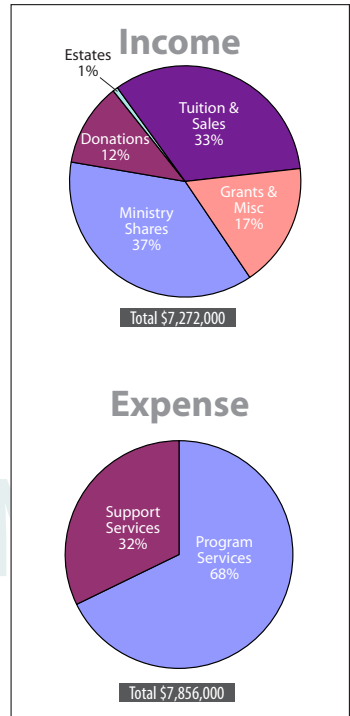
- All our teaching and formation grow from a shared understanding of God's Word as articulated in the Reformed confessions.
- We are formed by and serve the church, God's agent of hope for the world.
- Paying attention to cultural contexts, we aim to give our students tools to sow the gospel in a multicultural world even as we challenge one another to have hearts that engage the broader world God so loves.
- Desiring formation for ministry to be holistic, we cultivate meaningful relationships with our students to foster personal and spiritual growth throughout our learning community

Praying for Calvin Theological Seminary

- May God grant us the grace and courage to be a learning community where our life together measures up more and more to our words of mission.
- May our knowing about God be authentically wedded to knowing God so that we are granted "understanding to know the Lord," who both delights in and "exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on the earth." (Jeremiah 9:23 & 24)
- May the Holy Spirit flood the hearts and minds of every professor, student, and staff member with the wisdom that comes from heaven: "pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere" (James 3:17).
- May the graduates of 2014—all 76 of them—find ministry positions that fit their educational accomplishments, honor their callings, and allow them to be a blessing to God's children everywhere.



Professors Lyle Bierma, left, and Mary Vandenberg prepare the Master's hood for graduate Willie Beattie who received the Master of Arts in Educational Ministry at the 2014 Seminary Commencement.



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Home Missions

Home Missions calls, catalyzes, and collaborates with God’s missionary people to start and strengthen missional churches and campus ministries that transform lives and communities.

North America is rapidly becoming one of the largest mission fields in the world. Our call and a sense of urgency lead us to engage the enormous changes now taking place in our culture. In congregations, campuses, neighborhoods, workplaces, families—together we seek to join God in mission.

Joining the mission of God, Home Missions desires to partner with local congregations in sharing the Gospel with people across North America. God calls us to listen and discern together, that our eyes might be opened to see more fully God’s mission in the world.

Ministry teams led by regional leaders, together with ethnic leaders and catalytic leaders, coordinate and support the work of joining God’s mission at the local level so that people are brought to Christ and welcomed into our community of faith.



Before us lies the opportunity to start and strengthen churches and campus ministries. As Home Missions shares God’s call, as we work together as a denomination, we’re humbled and grateful. With imagination and hope, we can become more and more a missionary people, sharing the unchanging message of God’s grace in new ways. Your gifts, your encouragement, your prayers, and your passion for God’s mission are an answer to prayer. Thank you.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1,103 churches served
- 100+ ministries funded in the U.S. and Canada
- Seven regional offices, three ethnic leaders, and three catalytic leaders training, equipping, supporting, and encouraging
- 59 identified networks of leaders including 28 clusters, 11 Kingdom Enterprise Zones
- 50 new churches receiving financial assistance
- 48 classis connections through regional, ethnic, and ministry resource leaders
- 34 campus ministries supported
- Over 90 initiatives and partnerships with denominational and classical partners
- Over 400 connections with local and classical ministries



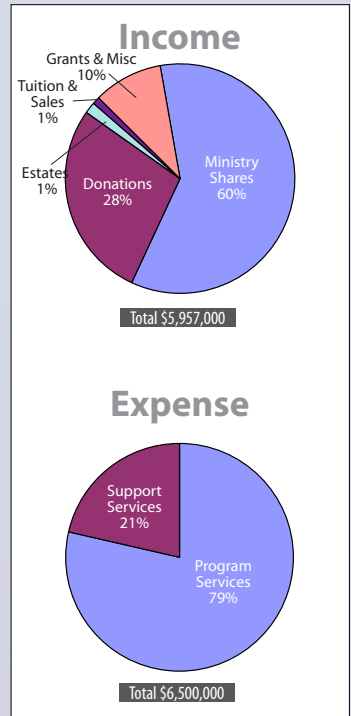
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World Missions

The Christian Reformed Church's work in global missions grew this year thanks to generous financial support for new missionaries. For these missionaries, the process of sharing their future work with churches and other supporters was encouraging.

"In these past six months we have met so many people whose stories inspire and encourage us," said George Ahiome, who is now serving God's people in Nigeria. "We have felt God reach out and embrace us through the encouragement and affirmation of His people."

This encouragement and inspiration from support networks was one of the major benefits that Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) staff anticipated when they adopted a new funding model for missionary support.

"The most effective approach for support raising," said Rev. Steve Van Zanen, CRWM's director for missions education and engagement, "is when individuals challenge those who know and love them to support a ministry that they are passionate about and personally involved in. God is faithful and He is moving His people."



Missionaries serve alongside local Christian leaders

HIGHLIGHTS

- The new support model opened the door for eight missionary positions, which has not happened in more than a decade.
- More than 225 new worshipping communities were established last year.
- Nearly 16,000 people participated in CRWM-related leadership training programs.
- A total of 375 volunteers served through CRWM across the world.
- A total of 85 teachers and administrators served in international schools through CRWM.



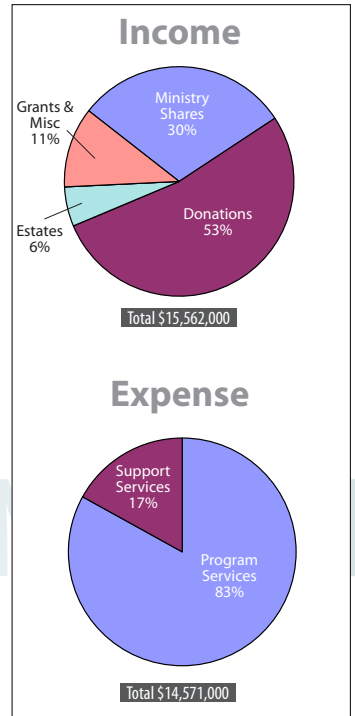
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World Renew

World Renew is compelled by God's own deep passion for justice and mercy to respond to poverty, hunger, disaster and injustice around the world in Jesus' name. Thank you for making another year of ministry possible.



PHOTO BY TOM PRICE

These women participated in a World Renew cash-for-work project following Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

During the 2013-2014 ministry year World Renew staff walked alongside Christian leaders from 74 local churches and community organizations in 23 of the world's poorest countries to equip them to recognize and respond to needs in their communities. As a result, Christ's love was shared with 480,000 individuals and their families who took steps to improve their lives and achieve their God-given potential through community-based programs.

World Renew also continued to respond to disasters and crisis situations as they arose. This included the horrific on-going conflict in Syria, the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, the on-going needs following flooding in High River, Alberta, and several major tornadoes and storms across the United States. Thankfully, every time a need arose, members of the CRC responded with generosity. These gifts were then leveraged through World Renew's international alliances, enabling it to reach 536,722 disaster survivors with food, water, shelter, and other emergency aid and rehabilitation programs.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- World Renew served in 37 countries responding to disaster and providing long-term community programs
- World Renew supported the work of 74 community-based churches and partners to help them improve lives in 1,654 communities
- World Renew's ministry was supported by 3,322 volunteers who donated 297,480 hours – roughly the equivalent of 143 full-time employees for one year
- World Renew's Disaster Response Services volunteers assessed the needs of 16,477 North American disaster survivors and repaired or rebuilt 436 homes
- In Canada, World Renew's refugee sponsorship program helped 32 families (74 people) begin a new life in Canada
- World Renew relies on gifts and offerings to support its work and does not receive Ministry Shares. To learn how you can get involved, please visit worldrenew.net.



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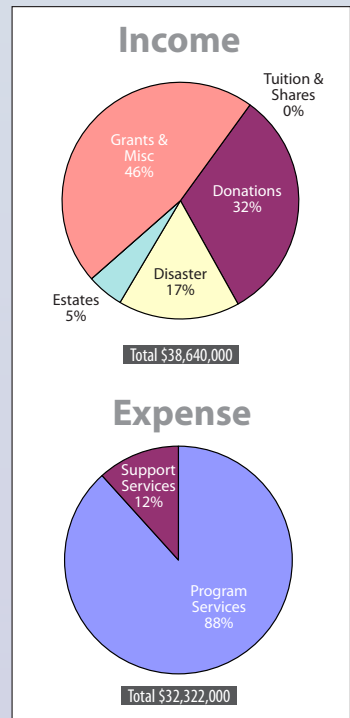
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Note: Facts, figures, and financial data are preliminary. An official annual report will be available in January 2015. Look for one in your church or visit worldrenew.net for more information.



Faith Alive Christian Resources

Although Faith Alive no longer exists as a standalone agency, the product lines are alive and well. *Lift Up Your Hearts*, *Dwell*, *Discover Your Bible*, *Seeking God's Face*—all of these excellent resources and many more will continue to be available and supported in the future.

In fact, you'll notice new products introduced under the Faith Alive name in the coming years. The Faith Alive imprint will be used for resources developed by the CRCNA—whether in the areas of faith formation, worship, justice, leadership, church renewal, or other ministry areas. Continued use of the Faith Alive imprint will also help maintain strong sales outside the CRC.

Even as it voted to disband the board of Faith Alive, Synod expressed a strong commitment to continue publishing essential resources for our churches. So you can continue to expect new resources that are labeled Faith Alive—resources designed to equip churches for effective ministry. Future publishing efforts will be more focused on the needs of our churches, and will be born out of a closer connection with those churches. New distribution models are also being explored to reduce costs and ensure any new resources can be used as widely as possible by our churches.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Sales of the *Lift Up Your Hearts* hymnal have surpassed sales goals. Digital editions are now available as well as new iPad app.
- The Church Staff Handbook is now available. This handbook fills out the The Elder Handbook and The Deacon Handbook collection of church leadership guides.



Contact info:

Websites:
www.FaithAliveResources.org
www.TheBanner.org
www.ReformedWorship.org

www.LibrosDesafio.org
Orders: 1.800.333.8300
Facebook: www.facebook.com/faithalive

The Banner

The *Banner*, the official magazine of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, continues to enjoy a wide and diverse readership.

As a result, as a denomination we sometimes have our differences—perspectives, views, concerns.

This past year *The Banner* has again provided us with a place where we keep in touch with each other and where we seek to “speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15).

HIGHLIGHTS

- In “Together Doing More,” we provide ongoing monthly updates on the ministries that we engage in together as a denomination.
- Feature articles, news, and a variety of columns, such as “Catch Your Breath” and “Reformed Matters” round out our synodical mandate to inform, inspire, educate, and challenge readers.
- And we also, of course, get to hear from you, our readers, in “Letters to the Editor,” “IMHO,” and the very lively online discussions in the “Comments” section following each posted article

BANNER

Contact info:

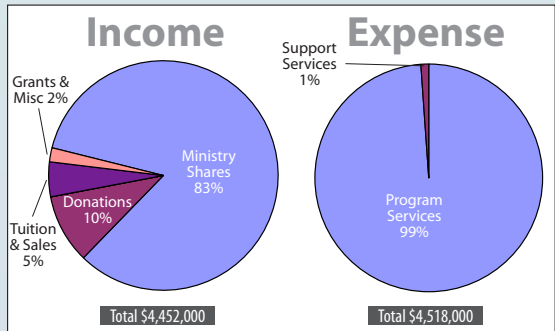
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Denominational Services

This ministry office supports the work of synod, the CRCNA's Board of Trustees, Synodical Services, the office of the executive director, the office of advancement, and specialized ministries such as:

- Safe Church Ministry
- Race Relations
- Disability Concerns
- Office of Social Justice
- Chaplaincy and Care Ministry
- Pastor-Church Relations
- Office of Communications
- Urban Aboriginal Ministries
- The Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue

Specialized Ministries



Chaplaincy and Care Ministry

Chaplaincy and Care Ministry (CCM) is the office that enlists, endorses, and encourages the ministry of 122 men and women currently serving as chaplains in hospitals, hospice care, prisons, the military, workplaces, and other locations throughout the U.S. and Canada (some military overseas). Together they touch thousands in crisis, and often their families as well. CCM is also tasked with encouraging churches and classes to recognize and support the chaplains in their area while also encouraging chaplains to share their pastoral care expertise with the local church.



An interactive map with chaplain's names and employers can be found on our web site: crcna.org/chaplaincy

Because chaplains are paid by the institutions for which they work, every dollar invested in Chaplaincy and Care Ministry yields more than \$50 in ministry by chaplains.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 63 work in health and hospice locations
- 21 in military or VA settings
- 11 in corrections, workplace, etc.
- 35 students in training



Contact info:

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 616.295.8686 (cell)
 Email: chaplain@crcna.org

Pastor-Church Relations

Pastor-Church Relations supports congregations and their leaders in times of transition and discernment by providing consultations and resources that foster personal and communal health.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Specialized Transitional Ministry (STM) program is flourishing; it continues to be a hopeful dimension of our work. Currently there are 15 seasoned and trained pastors endorsed by our office. In addition there are five pastors in various stages of becoming endorsed.
- PCR staff was invited by the Board of Trustees to propose strategies for more timely involvement with congregations. The "Better Together" team is seeking to learn from church visitors and regional pastors and to resource them so that can be better equipped and more effective in supporting pastors and congregations.
- A training tool for councils and pastor-search committees developed by Pastor-Church staff is being used in many congregations. More than a Search Committee can be downloaded online. Written copies are available for the price of mailing from Faith Alive Christian Resources.



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Laura Palsrok

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Sustaining Congregational Excellence (SCE)/ Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE)

SCE offers grant opportunities and learning events for smaller congregations as they seek to foster health in their ministry setting. SPE supports and encourages pastors and pastors' spouses through pastor peer group grants, pastors' spouses' conferences, and pastor-couple learning events.

HIGHLIGHTS

- To date, 83% of eligible Canadian churches and 68% of eligible U.S. churches have participated in SCE programming.
- Just over 300 churches have attended a learning event.
- Churches have sustained over 40 SCE grant projects/new ministries.
- Pastor peer learning grants have been awarded to 180 groups involving 77% of CRC pastors.
- Almost 100 women attended the September Pastors' Spouses' Conference. It was a great opportunity to share the joys and challenges of ministry.



Contact info:

Websites:

www.crcna.org/spe

www.crcna.org/sce

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Holly Koons,

administrative coordinator

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Disability Concerns

Disability Concerns helps bring about the participation of people with disabilities in the life of the church and the participation of the church in the lives of people with disabilities so that everybody belongs and everybody serves.



Francine Bell, a volunteer with Disability Concerns, published a book of personal devotions called *I Can Do All Things*

HIGHLIGHTS

- Collaborates with Reformed Church in America Disability Concerns ministry on conferences, volunteer engagement, our award-winning newsletter, *Breaking Barriers*, and the *Inclusion Handbook*
- Assists churches through volunteer disability advocates, communications, conferences, and consultations
- Provided training for over 150 ministry leaders on “Doing Ministry with Youth on the Margins”
- Produced brief videos for use in worship and other settings that tell the stories of people living with various disabilities



Contact Info

Website: www.crcna.org/disability
Rev. Mark Stephenson, director
888.463.0272

Facebook: www.facebook.com/disabilityconcerns
Network blog: network.crcna.org/disability
Email: disabilityconcerns@crcna.org

Race Relations

The Office of Race Relations’ mandate is to promote biblical reconciliation and racial unity within the church. We encourage Christian Reformed Churches to embrace their identity in God’s diverse and unified family through workshops we offer such as the Dance of Racial Reconciliation (DORR), Widening the Circle (WTC), Cultural Intelligence Building and Church Between Borders.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Office of Race Relations has created a monthly gathering called The Healing Circle. Based on the encouragement by previous DORR participants to further engage and provide a space where dialogue initiated during the workshops can continue. The circle is a place to speak, to listen, to respect others, to process, to meditate, and learn.
- Approximately 12 students attending CRC-sponsored educational institutions have received scholarship money from offerings in response to All Nations Heritage Sunday.
- Race Relations has partnered with Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue and Office of Social Justice to offer a new workshop this year called The Blanket Exercise, the workshop focuses on some of the history and experience of the First Nations and Native American peoples of North America. Please contact us for more information.



Contact Info:

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Rudy Gonzalez, advocate
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Danielle Rowaan, communications
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Office of Social Justice

The Office of Social Justice (OSJ) educates CRC members, encourages and supports their engagement in social justice issues, and occasionally is involved in direct advocacy.

HIGHLIGHTS

- OSJ offers many ways for people to stay connected. Our most well-read newsletter, “OSJ Prayers,” is a weekly digest of the most pressing justice issues around the world. It’s great for use in small groups or for personal or congregational prayer.
- For a comprehensive overview of various social justice issues, visit www.crcjustice.org.
- We also have an active presence on Facebook and Twitter for those who prefer shorter, more immediate updates.
- Visit our Action Center at www.crcjustice.org for effective ways to defend marginalized people, from the situation in the Middle East to immigration reform and global poverty. Don’t know how to advocate? We can help with that too!
- Our congregational mobilizers are happy to speak or preach on any issue or to give a general introduction to social justice.
- We’re sharing justice stories on our blog. Join the conversation at crcna.org/dojustice.



Contact info:

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Peter Vander Meulen

616.224.0807

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Safe Church Ministry

Safe Church Ministry equips churches in abuse awareness, prevention and response. We respond to hundreds of requests each year from individuals and churches related to situations of abuse, policies for prevention, and strategies for increasing awareness. We also depend on over 350 volunteer safe church team members, who are active in their churches and communities across the U.S. and Canada.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Awareness and Team Training—New materials and web-based resources cover topics such as: safe church policy, domestic violence, healthy boundaries for church leaders, bullying, pornography, and more. Information can be found at www.crcna.org/SafeChurch/resources-abuse-awareness
- Conference—Over 60 people from 28 different classes gathered in Grand Rapids in April to become better equipped for safe church ministry
- Circle of Grace – Over 50 churches have signed on to this excellent safe environment program for grades K-12. Find out more at www.crcna.org/SafeChurch/education-best-prevention



Contact info:

Website: www.crcna.org/safechurch

Bonnie Nicholas, director

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616.224.0735 (office)

616.485.4595 (cell)

TOGETHER DOING MORE

Canadian Ministries

We are blessed to serve so many. We continue to serve local churches, Indigenous people groups, and both the Canadian context and around the world. We do this by partnering with ministry agencies within our denomination and also with others outside the CRC.

HIGHLIGHTS

- God continues to bless ministry efforts through the Urban Aboriginal Ministry Centres in Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg.
- The Canadian Aboriginal Ministries Committee and the Centre for Public Dialogue continue to train leaders to present the Blanket Exercise dramatic telling of history, from the perspective of Indigenous people.
- As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission wraps up its work we are honoured to work with Indigenous church leaders and organizations, and of other churches to encourage a continuing focus on reconciliation, through research and advocacy on indigenous education reform.
- Volunteer Ministry development continues through ServiceLink in facilitating how church leadership can engage members in ministry roles that work towards leadership development.
- The Justice and Faith project is working toward encouraging and enabling CRC people to embrace justice as an integral aspect of Christian faith and life. Interim findings are available on the Canadian Ministries webpage. Look for a Justice and Faith community event near you in Spring 2015.
- 'Do Justice', a collaborative blog of the Centre for Public Dialogue and the Office of Social Justice, continues to gather speed. You can hear what writers from across the denomination are thinking about and being challenged by at dojustice.crcna.org.



Contact info:

Website: www.crcna.org/canadianministries

800.730.3490

905.336.2920

Rev. Darren Roorda, Canadian Ministries Director

ServiceLink

ServiceLink is the Volunteer Services Program of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and serves the denominational agencies and ministry programs as well as churches across Canada and the United States.

The vision for ServiceLink is two-fold:

First of all, ServiceLink, works in the promotion of global missions and the placement of CRC members as they offer time, talent and treasure for meaningful involvement in ministry both at home and abroad. Staff partner with agencies and other Christian ministries for greater impact, enabling the CRC to stretch further in its mission to transform lives and communities worldwide and be examples of loving mercy and doing justice.

Additionally, ServiceLink functions in the area of volunteer ministry development within the local church, providing guidance in how best to recruit, train, equip and recognize volunteers.



Contact info:

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800.730.3490

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Website: www.crcna.org/servicelink

Christian Reformed Church Foundation

The Christian Reformed Church Foundation serves the denomination by funding priorities that enable the CRC to pursue our mission in new and adaptive ways.

The Foundation enhances the capacity of agencies and ministries to develop innovative initiatives, both within our denomination and in partnership with the Reformed Church in America and others. It encourages generosity and stewardship among external funders on their behalf and works with the agencies and ministries to identify new resources rather than compete for charitable gifts.

Though the Foundation may partner with an agency to develop financial resources, it primarily seeks funds to develop new ideas and start-up programs that:

- Fall outside or extend denominational agency and ministry mandates.
- Integrate program resources on behalf of the denomination as a whole.
- Support innovative efforts that are not currently funded by ministry shares.

The Foundation works under the authority of the CRCNA Board of Trustees. It is legally established in the United States and Canada.



Contact info:

Website: www.crcna.org/foundation

616.224.0817 or 877.272.6299

Email: foundation@crcna.org

CRC Loan Fund

The CRC Loan Fund extends loans to organized US churches for the purchase or construction of church properties. Loans are also available for remodeling, improvements and repairs to church facilities. Loans are usually made at interest rates and terms more favorable than those from other lenders, like banks or credit unions. The primary source of funds for our loans is cash invested in the Loan Fund by church members, churches, and classes of the CRCNA and related organizations.

HIGHLIGHTS

- During fiscal year 2014, the Loan Fund closed ten new loans totaling more than \$5.0 million, the largest yearly total in over five years.
- Loan quality remains outstanding, with only one past due account at the close of the fiscal year and none which are considered to be non-performing.
- 2014 resulted in continued solid financial performance and a very strong cash position, providing us with significant lending capacity.



Contact Info:

Web site: crcna.org/LoanFund

Email: crlf@crcna.org

Phone: (616) 224-0829 or (800) 332-0012

TOGETHERDOINGMORE

Ministry Shares Receipts and Gift Income Summary

2014 2013

Back to God Ministries		
Ministry Shares	3,346,000	3,548,000
Gift and offerings	3,679,000	4,021,000
Estate Gifts	1,796,000	1,262,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	641,000	
Total	9,462,000	8,831,000
Calvin College		
Ministry Shares	2,308,000	2,571,000
Gift and offerings	3,136,000	3,244,000
Estate Gifts	3,614,000	1,405,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	3,812,000	
Total	12,870,000	7,220,000
Calvin Seminary		
Ministry Shares	2,701,000	2,864,000
Gift and offerings	846,000	976,000
Estate Gifts	52,000	277,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	1,261,000	
Total	4,860,000	4,117,000
Faith Alive		
Ministry Shares	1,747,000	1,173,000
Gift and offerings	295,000	303,000
Estate Gifts	0	0
Grants/Miscellaneous	223,000	
Total	2,265,000	1,476,000
Home Missions		
Ministry Shares	3,557,000	3,757,000
Gift and offerings	1,660,000	1,856,000
Estate Gifts	95,000	234,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	583,000	
Total	5,895,000	5,847,000
World Missions		
Ministry Shares	4,694,000	4,848,000
Gift and offerings	8,240,000	7,829,000
Estate Gifts	867,000	510,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	1,761,000	
Total	15,562,000	13,187,000
World Renew		
Gift and offerings	12,329,000	12,315,000
Disaster Gifts	6,420,000	3,924,000
Grants	17,955,000	16,521,000
Estate gifts	1,936,000	1,379,000
Total	38,640,000	34,139,000
Specialized Ministries		
Ministry Shares	3,712,000	3,879,000
Gift and offerings	434,000	483,000
Estate Gifts	0	4,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	88,000	
Total	4,234,000	4,366,000
Denominational Services		
Ministry Shares	2,667,000	2,862,000
Gift and offerings	20,000	31,000
Estate Gifts	0	23,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	477,000	
Total	3,164,000	2,916,000
Foundation		
Gift and offerings	145,000	1,175,000
Estate Gifts	0	0
Grants/Miscellaneous	11,000	
Total	156,000	1,175,000
Special Assistance Fund		
Ministry Shares	27,000	34,000
Gift and offerings	0	0
Grants/Miscellaneous	52,000	
Total	79,000	34,000

Gift Summary for Fiscal 2014

God once again blessed the Christian Reformed Church through the generosity of those who support his church with their financial gifts. The ministries of the CRC's agencies, institutions and specialized programs receive strong support from dedicated members and friends.

Ministry Shares gifts were down by nearly \$800,000 compared to the previous year, but still generated \$24.8 million in revenue. About one-third of this decline is attributable to the strength of the U.S. dollar compared to the Canadian dollar in fiscal 2014.

The denomination continues to do a tremendous amount of ministry with these Ministry Shares gifts that have almost no overhead costs. Thanks to all the churches, large and small, in Canada and the U.S. that contribute to this vital base of revenue.

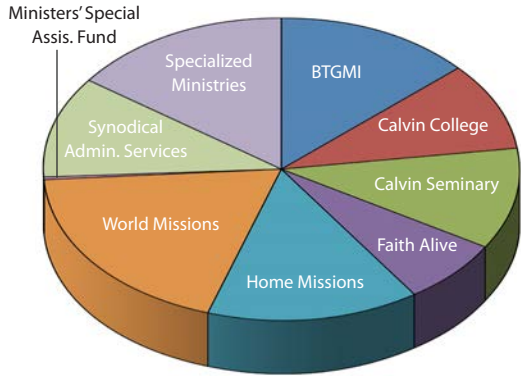
Special church offerings and individual gifts (not including disaster response projects) generated \$31.7 million in support, down by \$2.8 million from the prior year. As with Ministry Shares gifts, about one-third of this reduction is attributed to the decline in the value of the Canadian dollar vs. the U.S. dollar.

World Renew received \$6.4 million in designated disaster relief funding from churches, members, and other supporters, up from \$3.9 million last year. World Renew also received more than \$16.4 million in grant funding up \$1.0 million from fiscal 2013. These grants include funds designated for various areas of their global ministry, including community development and disaster relief work.

In addition, the CRC was blessed with gifts of more than \$8 million from those who included the church in the distribution of their estates, an increase of \$3.4 million from the prior year.

CRC Agency 2013-14 Ministry Shares Received

Back to God	
Ministries International	\$3,346,000
Calvin College	\$2,308,000
Calvin Seminary	\$2,701,000
Faith Alive	\$1,747,000
Home Missions	\$3,557,000
World Missions	\$4,694,000
World Renew	\$0
Ministers' Special Assis. Fund	\$27,000
Synodical Admin. Services	\$2,667,000
Specialized Ministries	\$3,712,000
Total:	\$24,759,000



You add.

God multiplies.



Ministry Shares is powered by a simple commitment to be a part of something bigger. About six dollars a week from each active member enables all of us to participate in life-changing ministries, at home and around the globe. Thank you! www.crcna.org/MinistryShares

**MINISTRY SHARES
TOGETHER
DOING MORE**