

# 2015 Ministry Report



Christian  
Reformed  
Church

## We Work Together, God Helping Us

**N**ehemiah spoke of “the gracious hand of my God upon me,” as he shared his vision for rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. Certain of his divine responsibility, he set about marshalling the community’s leaders and families, assigning each to rebuilding various sections and gates of the wall.

It must have been a complicated affair, akin to mobilizing the rebuilding of a city after the ravages of World War II. Certainly more complicated than many of the things we’re called upon to organize. Whatever the example, though, all such projects require people to take on specific roles and responsibilities, aligning their gifts and abilities to the job at hand.

Collaboration. Working together. Not the end goal, but a God-glorifying method for achieving a goal.

We value collaboration, but we can quickly become isolated, for much in our culture pulls us in that direction. The value placed on rugged individualism. The acclaim given to those who think for themselves rather than yielding to peer pressure. The visibility that comes with being “one-of-a-kind.”

We have nearly 160 years of history that proclaim the gracious hand of God has been upon us as, together, Christian Reformed people and churches have used our varied gifts and abilities to proclaim the good news, seeking the kingdom at home and abroad.

Admittedly, some of our history of togetherness has arisen less from our convictions and confessions than from our common ethnicity and status. The challenge is to continue to work together out of a shared commitment to Christ and his kingdom rather than the homogeneity of the past.

This ministry report illustrates ways in which we, together, are proclaiming the gospel and

investing in missions, both where we live and far away. We work together to develop leaders and strengthen our witness, supporting the formation of faith in each generation while we seek to show God’s mercy and pursue his justice.

At our best, we do this collaboratively. We gather as church councils to seek God’s will and make decisions about local ministry. We come together at classis meetings to learn from each other so that our churches may flourish. We collectively support regional, national and international ministries through Ministry Shares, gifts and offerings, so that God’s work may be furthered.

We miss the mark, however, when we fail to participate, believing that others will pick up the slack. We fail to be the body of Christ when we set off on individualistic agendas, unconcerned about others. We forsake the call when we stop working together.

Recently a group listened to CRC members across North America, identifying the challenges we face. From those challenges have emerged plans for strengthening congregations, focusing on faith formation, leadership development and identity. But necessary for all of these plans is for us to work together as the body of Christ.

Read again the book of Nehemiah—how Nehemiah organized the rebuilding of the wall. He led a team effort, a collaborative effort. Recall, too, the celebration that occurred when the wall was dedicated. The work required everyone and, when it was finished, all participated in the rejoicing, “because God had given them great joy.”



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

## A Wave of Hope

**N**early one billion people do not have access to safe drinking water, resulting in 3.6 million deaths - most of them children - each year from water-related disease.

Calvin College's new Clean Water Institute is a partner in employing solutions to the problem of unsanitary water.

Engineering professor David Wunder, the Clean Water Institute's inaugural director, says the path to clean water is more than a technical issue. "You need the technical aspects—engineering and geology—but you also need people that are experts with community development and education, and more broadly, policy," he says.

After years of planning and preparation, the Clean Water Institute of Calvin College (CWICC) officially opened on July 1. But Calvin's clean-water work pre-dates the institute.

Colin Gesink had a chance to experience these efforts firsthand. A computer science and media production major, Gesink traveled to rural Kenya in January 2014 as part of a group of 20 students and two professors.

While others worked with a mobile clinic, conducted a social survey of water needs, or designed alternative water options for the village, Gesink documented the trip through video and served on a team of students and residents tasked with fixing a borehole, thereby restoring clean water for the village.

"That is a moment I will never forget," Gesink said. "After tightening the last screw, we began to pump the well. With the whole village gathered, water began flowing ... a sight that had not been seen for five years."

Wunder, who is on a team that is looking into possible future partnerships in Ecuador, Ethiopia, Haiti, and other countries, says success comes only by God's grace. "That we can solve problems is a reasonable expectation," he says, "but it is presumptuous to think that we can do anything that God hasn't already ordained."

—Amanda Greenhoe,  
Social media manager, Calvin College



Children in an African village enjoy a gift of clean water.

## Returning to God in Haiti

"I have returned to God. All that I have is for God," Jean-Baptiste, a former Haitian voodoo priest, boldly proclaimed after accepting Christ as his savior.

For years Jean-Baptiste, who owns and operates a radio station, aired programs produced by the French outreach of Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) in Haiti. Through listening to these messages, his heart changed and his faith began to form.

After giving his life to the Lord in May, he proclaimed, "Now this station will only broadcast Christian programs."

BTGMI messages are broadcast on 40 radio stations, reaching all 10 provinces in Haiti. The ministry partners with Christian Reformed World Missions to recruit and train volunteers for follow-up and discipleship.

Thanks to your support through ministry shares and other gifts, the outreach in Haiti is making an impact on people's lives. Pastor Jackie Chéry, BTGMI team leader in Haiti, notes, "We are praying that this work can continue touching hearts."

—Kristen Fergus Van Stee,  
Back to God Ministries International



Jean-Baptiste gave his life to Christ.

## Pawns, Knights, Queens and Jesus

Teaching kids to play chess at a time when video games are the go-to source of entertainment might seem like an outside-the-box idea. Will kids be interested? Will they take the game seriously?

Rev. Albert Sideco, of the Filipino-American CRC in Jersey City, N.J., answers with a resounding yes! “Young children embrace (chess) and play it with passion.”



**The project enables kids aged five to 13 to gather each week to play chess.**

“When we think of church projects, we are sometimes boxed in by ideas that sound spiritual,” Sideco says.

Although a program called “A Disciplined Approach to Life Through Chess” may not sound very churchy, “with God’s grace, we are seeing that it complements our goals for evangelism and discipleship, as well as church unity and bonding.”

The project, with funding from a Sustaining Congregational Excellence grant, enables kids aged five to 13 to gather each week to play chess -- and they are getting good at it.

“Our teens, young adults, and parents sit in to learn or play with our young chess enthusiasts,” Sideco notes. “They are actually losing to our young children of ages five and six!”

In September, a number of the kids competed in the “Chess in the Schools” program event in New York’s Central Park.

The chess project has increased awareness of the church. Community members are asking about church activities and some are attending services and Bible studies. An invitation for children to play chess ultimately resulted in one child’s older sister and her husband being baptized. And the kids take turns opening and closing each game with prayer.

“How wonderful that God uses a chess project to bring his Word to young people,” Sideco says.

SCE Health & Renewal grants are available to churches with 150 or fewer active, adult, professing members. Application deadlines are June 1 and December 1. For information, contact [sce@crcna.org](mailto:sce@crcna.org) or call toll free at 877-279-9994 X2805, or check out the details at <http://www2.crcna.org/pages/sce.cfm>.

—Lis Van Harten,

*Sustaining Congregational Excellence*

## From Mangulile to Moline

Caspar Geisterfer, a missionary with Christian Reformed World Missions, spends much of his time supporting churches in the Christian Reformed Church of Honduras.

As he walks alongside leaders of the CRC’s sister denomination, he also facilitates cross-cultural partnerships between Christian Reformed churches in North America and Honduras.

One such partnership is that of Mangulile (Honduras) CRC and Moline (Michigan) CRC.

“The goal of this relationship,” said Geisterfer, “is to get to know other members of God’s family: who they are, how they live, and how they express their faith in a different environment.”

When Moline CRC responded to this call, a few members of the church travelled to Honduras for an initial visit. They visited a few communities, but felt God calling them to partner with Mangulile.

“We saw so many similarities,” recalls Melanie Bennink of Moline. “We are both from farming communities and the people there felt so much like family.”

The relationship has grown as each church has made one visit per year to the other. In »

» June 2015, Pastor Adonis Romero, his wife Noemi, and their son Rafael, visited Moline for the first time, with Sandra Juarez, who had visited in 2013.

One reason they chose to visit in June was to take part in “Moline Love”, an annual summer service project for the Moline community and surrounding areas.

“We joined Moline in cleaning up yards, building ramps for wheelchairs, and improving the walls of homes,” said Romero, adding that it was a great way for him and his family to learn how to improve on their own church’s community outreach project—a project that began after Juarez visited Moline.

After seeing the success of “Moline Love,” the Mangulile church started *Amor en Accion*



**Members of Moline and Mangulile CRCs take turns hosting one another.**

or “Love in Action”. The project helped grow the church’s passion for service and increased church membership.

“People whom we served began visiting the church and now it is bursting at the seams,” said Juarez.

When members of Moline CRC visit Mangulile, they usually take part in *Amor en Accion*, helping with road repairs, cement work and building latrines.

These partnerships are one way that World Missions works alongside Christian Reformed churches to encourage and enable them to fulfill the Great Commission.

—Brian Clark,  
*Christian Reformed World Missions*



**Nicole Veenkamp speaks with another distance learning student during a visit to the seminary campus.**

## Distance Learning Creates Bonds

Chad Van Ginkel didn’t have far to travel when he appeared at Synod 2015 together with other ministry candidates from Calvin Theological Seminary.

Synod was meeting at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, and Van Ginkel, the first of two graduates of the seminary’s Distance Learning Program, is the youth pastor at nearby Faith CRC.

His friends and family were there, but what he found especially appealing was that many of his fellow distance-learning students were looking on via the Internet.

Nathan Bierma, associate director of distance education at the seminary, says the distance program has developed a strong community that spans North America and beyond.

Bierma adds that the online community is growing. Of 40 incoming M.Div students at Calvin Seminary this fall, about 17 are Distance Learning students. Currently, about 70 students are in the program.

Nicole Veenkamp, a worship planner at Redeemer CRC in Sarnia, Ontario, is now in her third year of the program.

She says she especially appreciates the program’s flexibility. “There are videos to watch, papers to write, discussions to post, but you can work it around your schedule and circumstances.”

—Chris Meehan, *CRC Communications*

## Back to God Ministries International

**B**ack to God Ministries International carries out its mission of reframing lives with God's story. Through a variety of media outlets, we proclaim the gospel, disciple believers, and strengthen the church throughout the world.

As BTGMI has expanded internationally, the resources available to CRC members have sometimes been overlooked. In an effort to better reflect our unified mission with ReFrame Media, our English outreach, we have launched a new visual identity (see below) to highlight our ministry in North America *and* around the world.

ReFrame Media produces a family of six resources online and on the air to help people see God's story in their lives. For more information, please visit [reframemedia.com](http://reframemedia.com).



### 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

- The *Today* devotional celebrated 65 years of ministry. In addition to the distribution of 210,000 print copies, more than 300,000 people receive the daily *Today* digitally.
- Working with Timothy Leadership Training Institute in Burkina Faso, BTGMI introduced a pilot French language radio program that includes a corresponding Bible study called *Choosing Good Leaders*.
- In partnership with Christian Reformed World Missions, BTGMI helped churches in northern Japan train leaders to establish Bible study groups for listeners and new believers. Until recently people in this area have resisted the Christian faith.
- Through a Christian hotline produced by BTGMI Russian staff, more than 300 Ukrainian refugees each month were connected with supportive churches in Ukraine.
- With partners in northern India (Good Books Ministries and Words of Hope) BTGMI launched a new Hindi radio program called *New Mornings*, bringing hope to people living in poor urban areas.



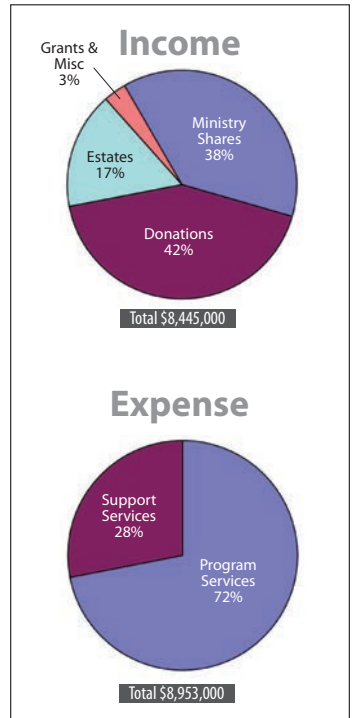
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# Christian Reformed Home Missions

**H**ome Missions calls, catalyzes, and collaborates with God’s 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. We live in a fast-paced, globalized, secularized world – the task of spreading life and light is great, but so is our God. Home Missions is committed to joining God’s mission in neighborhoods and churches. Together, we can cultivate community and build relationships on a gospel-centered foundation.

At Home Missions, 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.



Pastor Mark Knetsch leads children’s worship at Resurrection Life Church.

## 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

- 1,103 churches and 48 classes served through regional, ethnic, and catalytic leaders
- 80+ ministries receiving funding in the U.S. and Canada
- Regional leaders, ethnic leaders, and catalytic leaders train, equip, support, and encourage pastors and churches across North America
- 36 new churches receiving financial assistance
- 36 campus ministries supported

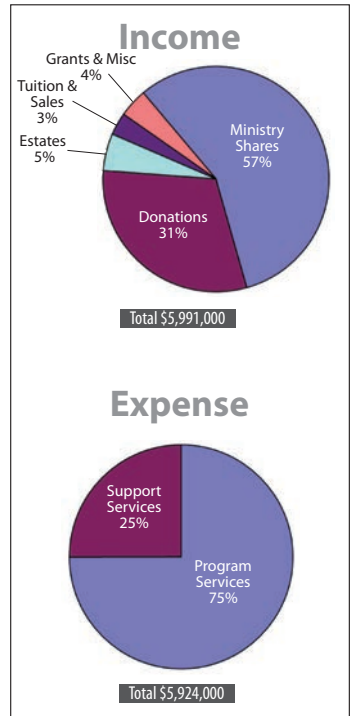
We support a wide variety of ministry leaders including church planters, campus ministry leaders, cluster leaders, and more. Please pray:

- For open doors and open hearts
- For the hundreds of pastors, leaders, and congregations working to join God’s mission in their communities
- For a renewed passion for prayer and mission in the Christian Reformed Church



## CONTACT INFO:

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# Christian Reformed World Missions

For more than 125 years, Christian Reformed World Missions has been helping Christian Reformed Churches fulfill the Great Commission. When members of the CRC feel God’s call to serve, CRWM joins with congregations to provide prayer, care, finances, and other resources. CRWM has more than 200 missionaries serving in over 50 countries, working in the areas of:

- Christian Education
- Leadership Development
- Evangelism and Discipleship
- Transforming Communities



A leadership training workshop in Uganda

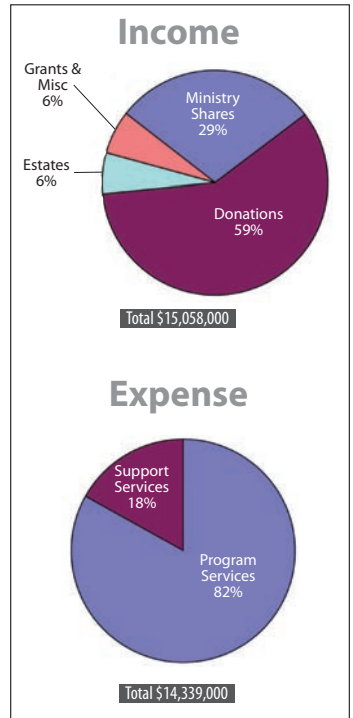
## 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 16,000 participants took part in CRWM-related leadership training programs. After one leadership training event, a missionary in West Africa wrote, “I love listening to the believers share the Word of God. We can see that the Lord is at work in their lives and that they are growing in their understanding and love for the Lord.”
- A total of 438 volunteers served with CRWM in cross-cultural ministry work. “My heart, mind, and soul were impacted, and now I try to see God where I never thought to look for him before,” said one volunteer.
- More than 5,000 people participated in CRWM-related adult discipleship ministries. A missionary who leads an adult Bible study said, “The group is an ongoing blessing. They make us smile as they find so much joy in reading and growing in God’s Word.”
- A total of 85 teachers and administrators served students of all ages in international schools through CRWM. One student wrote, “My way of teaching and interpreting Scripture has been transformed into a theology that aims at covering the needs of all those who are seeking Christ through His Church.”



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# Calvin College

**F**ounded by the Christian Reformed Church, Calvin College is a top-ranked liberal arts college that equips and empowers its 4,000 students from 46 U.S. states, 55 countries and six Canadian provinces, to think deeply, to act justly and to live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world.

With an adventurous core curriculum, Calvin students are free to chase the wonderings of philosophy, the intricacies of languages foreign and familiar, and the beauty of the world at a molecular level. We offer 100+ majors and programs, with advanced courses that have often been compared to graduate-level experiences.



Students talking outside Hekman Library

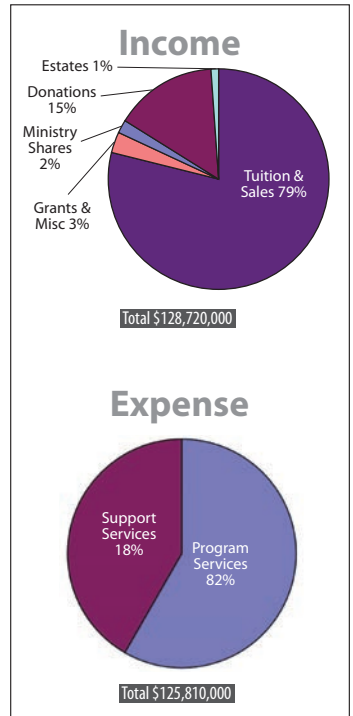
## 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

- Received the Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for demonstrating meaningful collaboration with local, regional, national and global communities.
- Designated as a Level II Partner by The Partners for a Racism Free Community for proving our college-wide commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Received its 16th Goldwater Scholarship since 2008, a number unmatched by any other undergrad institution over that span of time. The scholarship is considered the most prestigious award given to undergrads in science, math and engineering.
- Released the first few titles of Calvin Shorts, a series for global Christians who want to understand the world better.
- Graduated more than 850 students representing 60 majors. The 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. [www.calvin.edu/go/gradstories](http://www.calvin.edu/go/gradstories)
- Claimed league titles in 11 varsity sports. Five student athletes earned academic All-American honors.



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## Faith Formation Ministries

The pastor on the phone from Western Canada went straight to the point: “I heard your presentation on the role of storytelling and testimony in faith formation a couple of months ago. We discussed it at council last night, and we have some follow-up questions. Can we talk?”

Faith Formation Ministries (FFM) is a new denominational initiative that was launched at Synod 2015 to encourage and equip congregations in their discipleship and faith formation callings. Questions like this pastor’s are bubbling up all over the denomination.

Questions like: How are we intentionally discipling children, teens, and young adults? What practices might support such intentional discipling? What kind of goals and guidelines are helpful for strengthening faith formation for all ages? How might we grow communities in which discipleship and faith formation flow freely between generations?

Reformed theology provides powerful tools for addressing these questions.

God is sovereign; He faithfully leads all things and works in us through the Holy Spirit, and calls us into a covenantal partnership to **work out** what he is **working in**. He works amazing grace within us, and we work it out through discipleship and faith formation. That’s why FFM ministers under the motto, “Encouraging discipleship shaped by grace.”

Faith Formation is guided by a clear set of core values:

- Practicing discipleship and faith formation is the calling of the local congregation, and FFM walks alongside as encouragers and equippers who listen carefully before speaking.
- Every congregation has a unique identity, calling, history and context, and FFM respects and enhances that uniqueness.
- Discipleship and faith formation grow step-by-step, gradually but

steadily. FFM is here to help congregations discern the next best step.

How are these core values worked out in “real life”?

- The digital “Children at the Table Toolkit” (available on our website) provides guidance for congregations on their journey of welcoming children to the Lord’s Supper, along with resources and ideas to support and equip families as they nurture the faith of their children.
- We are running an experimental project using the “Building Blocks of Faith” as a tool to help congregations be more intentional and articulate in their discipleship practices (in collaboration with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship and CRC Worship Ministries).
- A two-pronged congregational support strategy combines regional catalyzers who have and will develop relationships with congregational leaders, and a richly curated website to help leaders find resources that fit their unique context.
- We are working with Worship Ministries (and others) to translate the riches of the Belhar Confession in ways that are more accessible for congregational discipleship.
- A Youth Ministry Support Project will strengthen congregational youth ministry, in cooperation with the Canadian members of the Board of Trustees and Youth Unlimited.
- We are developing toolkits in the areas of Public Profession of Faith and the Intergenerational Church.



Christian Reformed Church

### CONTACT INFO:

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## Calvin Theological Seminary

Calvin Theological Seminary prepares people to lead in ministry for Christ’s church and his Kingdom. Founded 140 years ago by the Christian Reformed Church, Calvin Seminary continues to live out the values of its legacy in which all our teaching and formation grow from a shared understanding of God’s Word as articulated in the Reformed confessions.

### 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

First-time highlights from Calvin Seminary Commencement 2015:

- 7 is the largest group ever to receive the Ph.D hood at one commencement, marking their accomplishment of successfully completing the requirements for the highest academic degree. There are now 60 Calvin Seminary Ph.D. leaders serving in churches and theological schools around the world.
- 2 graduates were the first to receive M.Div. degrees through the distance learning program begun just three years earlier at Calvin Seminary. Because of some advanced credits, Chad Van Ginkel and David Van Eyk were the first two distance students to achieve this professional ministry degree.
- 36 local Grand Rapids pastors completed the Certificate in Hispanic Ministry, offered for the first time at Calvin Seminary. These bi-vocational pastors successfully completed nine academic courses over the course of the last three years. Six are continuing in master’s degree programs at the seminary.
- 106 graduates in all were honored in this graduation ceremony—the largest group ever to be on the commencement stage.

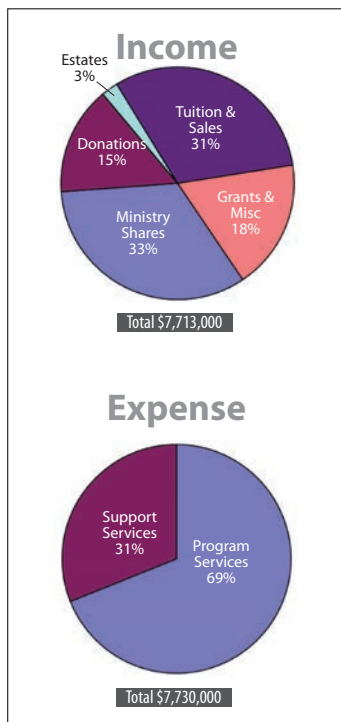


Ph.D. graduate Dr. Mika D. Edmondson is congratulated by Academic Dean Ronald Feenstra, center, and pastoral care professor Dr. Danjuma Gibson, right.



### CONTACT INFO:

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## Worship Ministries

**R**ecognizing the centrality of worship, the Christian Reformed Church formed Worship Ministries to come alongside those doing this important pastoral work by:

- developing networks for mutual support
- sharing creative gifts already present in our churches
- finding and creating resources
- helping churches deepen the questions they ask around worship

This means connecting with pastors, worship leaders, planners, musicians, tech folk, artists, dancers, scripture readers...you!



### 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

- Supported new networking groups.
- Book groups formed to study *Stilling the Storm: Worship and Congregational Leadership in Difficult Times* by Kathleen Smith.
- Made use of [network.crcna.org/worship](http://network.crcna.org/worship) - a place to post discussions, resources, and read Worship Spotlights.
- New liturgical forms reviewed by the churches, to be presented to Synod 2016.
- Sponsored discussions and workshops around the topic of worship in times of tension with Pastor Church Relations and the *Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (CICW)*.

### NEW RESOURCES

- Free webinars and videos related to worship ([crcna.org/worship](http://crcna.org/worship))
- *Reformed Worship* (print magazine, e-newsletter, blog – [reformedworship.org](http://reformedworship.org))
- *Lift Up Your Hearts* - Large Print version, ([LiftUpYourHeartsHymnal.org](http://LiftUpYourHeartsHymnal.org)) - App available through *The Hymnary*, and a free book of descants by Larry Visser through CICW.
- *Psalms for All Seasons* - digital version and App ([PsalmsForAllSeasons.org](http://PsalmsForAllSeasons.org))



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## World Renew

Through your support of World Renew, you follow Jesus' example and extend Christ's love in word and deed to those living in poverty, hunger, injustice, and times of disaster.

In the 2014-2015 ministry year, you helped World Renew staff walk alongside Christian leaders from 65 churches and community organizations in 23 of the world's poorest countries.

Christ's love was shared through adult literacy classes, agriculture trainings, small business loans, gender justice trainings, promotion of good governance and in other ways with more than 289,000 people and their families.

World Renew also rebuilt homes and provided food, water, shelter, and rehabilitation programs to more than 565,000 people following disasters.

### 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

- World Renew's Disaster Response Services volunteers assessed the needs of 5,529 North American disaster survivors and repaired or rebuilt 697 homes.
- World Renew's refugee sponsorship program helped 156 people begin a new life in Canada.
- Through World Renew, 223 North American congregations engaged in social justice and advocacy around such issues as creation care, immigration and refugee policies.
- In total, World Renew served in 40 countries responding to disasters and providing long-term community programs that helped 855,241 people.
- World Renew's ministry was supported by 3,211 volunteers who donated 254,569 hours – roughly the equivalent of 122 full-time employees for one year.

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](http://worldrenew.net).



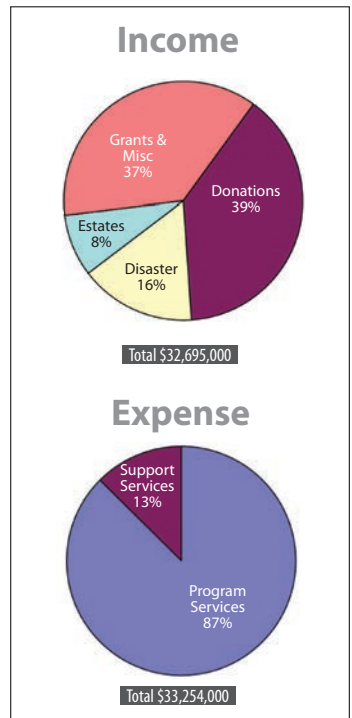
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Website: [worldrenew.net](http://worldrenew.net)  
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 Canada: 800-730-3490 or 905-336-2920

**Note:** Facts, figures, and financial data are preliminary. An official annual report will be available in January 2016. Look for one in your church or visit [worldrenew.net](http://worldrenew.net) for more information.



Parvin lives in the Outfall slum neighborhood of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Through World Renew and its partner, SATHI, Parvin has learned valuable lessons about health and nutrition. She now volunteers in her community to teach other mothers.



## Aboriginal Ministry

**A** boriginal Ministry in the CRC aims to support healing and reconciliation between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal people in Canada. It is made up of a national committee - Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee (CAMC) - which includes the heads of the three Urban Aboriginal Ministries, a Justice and Reconciliation Mobilizer, and volunteers from across the country.

The Indigenous Family Centre spent its summer focused on kids' camp. The children had a great time making drums and pottery, making friends and going on field trips. The centre is having some renovations done to make it more accessible.

The Edmonton Native Healing Centre celebrated National Aboriginal Day with the community with a walk which included praying for missing and murdered Aboriginal women, as well as a BBQ and a painting presented to the Edmonton Police Service.



The Indian Metis Christian Fellowship is planning a celebration for the homecoming of the paintings, *Kisemanito Pakitinasuwin*, *The Creator's Sacrifice*, and developing a theatrical play incorporating the themes and images from the art. The play has been selected for a development workshop by the Saskatchewan Playwrights Centre.

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## Disability Concerns

**R** ecently, CRC and Reformed Church in America (RCA) Disability Concerns ministries celebrated six years of working together to assist churches in ministry.

### Awareness and Education

We jointly publish an award-winning newsletter, *Breaking Barriers*, and the Inclusion Handbook: *Everybody Belongs, Everybody Serves*, which guides church leaders in engaging people with disabilities in all of church life. We share resources on our websites and shared Facebook page ([facebook.com/disabilityconcerns](https://facebook.com/disabilityconcerns)).

### Leadership Training

We have co-sponsored over 15 training events for disability advocates and other church leaders in various locations in Canada and the United States.

### Networking

Our ministries work with over 700 people who serve as church and regional disability advo-

cates and promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in congregational life. We also work with deacons through partnership with Diaconal Ministries Canada.

### Public Policy (U.S.)

Both of our ministries are members of the Interfaith Disability Advocacy Coalition (IDAC), based in Washington, D.C., whose mission is "to mobilize the religious community to speak out and take action on disability policy issues with Congress, the President and Administration, and society at large."



### CONTACT INFO:

Websites: [www.crcna.org/disability](http://www.crcna.org/disability)  
[network.crcna.org/disability](http://network.crcna.org/disability)

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Phone: 888-463-0272

## Race Relations

The Office of Race Relations seeks to assist the church in engaging the ministry of racial reconciliation. Through workshops and training resources such as Cultural Intelligence Building, Dance of Racial Reconciliation and Widening the Circle, Blanket Exercise, and Church Between Borders, we offer tools that equip churches to be culturally aware and effective in reaching their ethnically diverse communities.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Approximately 15 students attending CRC-sponsored colleges have benefited from scholarship money given in response to All Nations Heritage Sunday.
- Participation with the Black and Reformed Conference, The SEAPI (Southeast Asian Pacific Islanders) Conference, and El Consejo Latino Conference.
- New booklet "African Americans: We've Come This Far By Faith", the second informative booklet in a series on ethnic minorities within the CRC, produced by the Office of Race Relations.
- As we live in culturally and racially tumultuous times, the CRC continues to place value on the dignity of all persons, the inclusion of multiple cultures, and the integrity of our identity as God's diverse and unified family. Race Relations continues to lead and encourage the churches, and we attribute the progress that has been made in this ministry to the grace and goodness of God. Please keep us in your prayers.

### CONTACT INFO:

Website: [www.crcna.org/race](http://www.crcna.org/race)

U.S.

Rev. Esteban Lugo, director

1-877-864-3977 (toll free)

E-mail: [elugo@crcna.org](mailto:elugo@crcna.org)

Canada

Bernadette Arthur, Race Relations Coordinator

1-905-336-0967

## Office of Social Justice

The OSJ's current focus issues are immigration reform, creation care, restorative justice, and peacebuilding, based on mandates we received from synod.

### HIGHLIGHTS:

- OSJ led a group of 20 pastors to the Arizona-Mexico border to expose them to issues of immigration that people on both sides of the border are facing. The goal of the trip was to encourage a greater dialogue in churches about looking at immigration from a faith-based perspective.
- OSJ has been partnering with Safe Church and the Office of Race Relations to offer a workshop called Restorative Practices for Congregations. Restorative Practices are a set of tools to build relationships, have tough conversations, and restore harmony.
- The "Sanctity of Human Life Sunday" materials were well-received and used in many churches.
- We have been working to mobilize congregations to learn about the effects of climate change on partners in the Global South ([www.climate-conversation.org](http://www.climate-conversation.org)) and to pay attention to the historic COP 21 climate negotiations in the fall.
- We are partnering with other agencies to fulfill Synod's mandate to encourage congregations and classes to participate in the Blanket Exercise to build a foundation for reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and other peoples in North America.
- Our recent action alerts cover topics such as family detention of migrants, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, maternal and child health, and Rohingya refugees. See action alerts at [http://www2.crcna.org/pages/osj\\_actioncenter.cfm](http://www2.crcna.org/pages/osj_actioncenter.cfm)

### CONTACT INFO:

Website: [www.crcjustice.org](http://www.crcjustice.org)

Email: [osjha@crcna.org](mailto:osjha@crcna.org)

Phone : 616-241-1691 x2783

## Safe Church Ministry

Safe Church Ministry equips congregations in abuse awareness, prevention, and response. Our work depends on hundreds of volunteer safe church team members, our “feet on the ground” who are active in their congregations, classes, and communities across the U.S. and Canada.

- **Awareness** – Collaboration increases awareness and creates new resources. This year we worked on a webinar about healthy ministry relationships (with Pastor Church Relations), a presentation about the prevalence of abuse among those with disabilities (with Disability Concerns), training in restorative practices for congregations (with Office of Social Justice and Race Relations), facilitating a workshop on child sexual abuse (with Classis Columbia), and creating council training materials for more effective ministry (with Classis Eastern Canada). Our website is frequently updated with new resources for everyone.
- **Prevention** – Team members stay informed with a monthly newsletter, conference calls, meetings, and training events as they develop prevention strategies in their own contexts. An increasing number of congregations are using *Circle of Grace*, our recommended abuse prevention program for children and youth.
- **Response** – Abuse is here, in our communities and congregations. Team members often act in a “walk-alongside” role, responding to abuse, reflecting the Lord’s compassion and justice. It only works when we work together.

### CONTACT INFO:

Website: [www.crcna.org/SafeChurch](http://www.crcna.org/SafeChurch)  
 Email: [safechurchministry@crcna.org](mailto:safechurchministry@crcna.org)  
 Phone: 616-224-0735

## Centre for Public Dialogue

It’s been quite the year. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission wrapped up this year, presenting its report and recommendations for building a more equitable relationship between Indigenous peoples and other Canadians. We have been working hard to raise awareness of this sacred moment and the call to reconciliation.

### HIGHLIGHTS:

- “Journey with Me” refugee workshop and online toolkit, created in collaboration with other CRC ministries, launched in Toronto and Vancouver. This will equip congregations to walk alongside our refugee neighbours and advocate for better refugee policy ([www.crcna.org/journeywithme](http://www.crcna.org/journeywithme)).
- CRC participation in the final event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including a worship service, an evening with the reForming Relationships paintings, and a series of “milestones on the road to reconciliation” ([crcna.org/milestones](http://crcna.org/milestones)). The CRC committed publicly to reconciliation through an “Action for Reconciliation”.
- Letters to the Canadian government and congregations about assisted suicide.
- Deep involvement in the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force.
- We coordinated federal election materials on justice issues from various agencies ([crcna.org/vote2015](http://crcna.org/vote2015)).
- The Justice and Faith project presented its findings about understandings of justice in the CRC in Canada, through a theatre production called “Just Faith?” in locations across the country.

### CONTACT:

Website: [crcna.org/publicdialogue](http://crcna.org/publicdialogue)  
 Email: [publicdialogue@crcna.ca](mailto:publicdialogue@crcna.ca)  
 Phone: (613) 686-6298



## Candidacy Committee

The Candidacy Committee is charged with facilitating, coordinating, and offering leadership in the ordination processes for pastors in the Christian Reformed Church.

This year highlights of their work include:

- Endorsement of 44 individuals for approval by Synod 2015 as first-time candidates for the office of Minister of the Word.
- A review and revision of the EPMC (Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidates), the program that offers orientation to the CRC for students who go to seminaries other than Calvin Seminary. The program is now available through resident studies for a fall semester, and through non-resident, on-line course work.
- Completion of the ninth year of the KIM (Korean Institute for Ministry) program, with seven Korean pastor participants this year who are in the process of affiliating with the Christian Reformed Church.

A total of 113 pastors have participated in this program over the past nine years, facilitating the pastoral leadership needs of the 115 Korean congregations in the CRC. Over 10 percent of the denomination's congregations are now Korean.

- Encouragement of other ethnic ministry subgroups, including the SEAPI (South East Asian Pacific Island) pastor peer group, with 14 pastors who met for their annual retreat in August. The pastors met this year in coordination with a youth ministry retreat including 120 Asian youth from various SEAPI congregations. Including the Korean churches, more than 25 percent of the congregations in the CRC are now ethnically diverse.



Participants in the KIM program



An ethnic pastor orientation event



Christian  
Reformed  
Church

### CONTACT INFO:

Website: [www.crcna.org/candidacy](http://www.crcna.org/candidacy)

Director of Candidacy: Rev. David Koll

Email: [dkoll@crcna.org](mailto:dkoll@crcna.org)

Phone: 800-272-5125 x2779

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

**S**CE 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

#### SCE

- To date, 89% of eligible Canadian churches and 70% of eligible U.S. churches have participated in SCE programming.
- Two learning events are planned for 2015/2016. They're great opportunities for ministry leaders to gather for sharing and learning about healthy congregations. Just over 330 churches have attended an event.
- Churches have sustained over 40 grant projects/new ministries after their SCE grant funding ended.

#### SPE

- Pastor peer learning grants have been awarded to 188 groups involving 67% of CRC pastors.
- Pastors' Spouses' Conferences are great opportunities for attendees to share their lives and encouragement. The next one will be held November 9 & 10, 2016 in San Diego, CA.
- The sabbaticals webpage is the most viewed page—almost 4,000 times in the last year.



Block party hosted by CenterPoint Church in Plainfield, Ill.



Planting community garden at Faith CRC in Nashville, Tenn.



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Church

### CONTACT INFO:

Websites: [www.crcna.org/spe](http://www.crcna.org/spe), [www.crcna.org/sce](http://www.crcna.org/sce)

Lis Van Harten, program director

E-mail: [lvanharten@crcna.org](mailto:lvanharten@crcna.org)

877-279-9994 X2805

## Chaplaincy and Care

Our 134 chaplains serve in a variety of settings, and we have seen significant growth in the number and the variety of chaplains in recent years. Some recent applications have come from campus chaplains, which will expand the number of categories represented in our ministry.

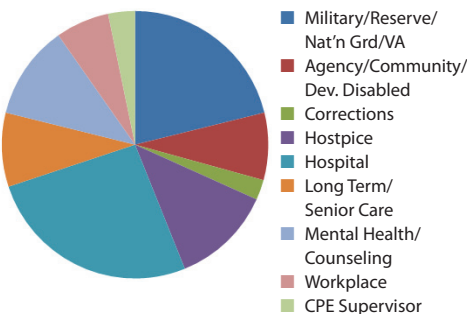
- total # of endorsed chaplains: 134
- the number of prospective chaplains in process of endorsement: 50+
- current rate of endorsement: 1 per month (and increasing)
- recent applicants are trending younger (often applying during their seminary education process) and more diverse in gender and ethnicity
- chaplaincy has become a large ministry despite its small budget, because chaplains are all employed by other agencies or institutions
- we are beginning to plan our 75th anniversary as a ministry (beginning June 2016)

See our website for more information, including a map of current chaplain locations: [crcna.org/chaplaincy](http://crcna.org/chaplaincy).

### CONTACT INFO:

Website: [www.crcna.org/chaplaincy](http://www.crcna.org/chaplaincy)  
 Email: [chaplain@crcna.org](mailto:chaplain@crcna.org)  
 Phone: 616-224-0733

### Chaplains by work category



## Pastor-Church Relations (PCR)

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

- At the Board of Trustees' request, PCR formed the Better Together Delivery Team to determine how to better equip classical leaders for helping churches and their pastors build strong healthy relationships. One recent result is the publishing of information for classical leaders (Regional Pastors, Church Visitors, Classical Counselors, Stated Clerks, and Mentors) which can be found at <http://www.crcna.org/pcr/classis-leaders>
- To better serve churches and pastors, our staff has focused on streamlining the Church Profile Form and Ministerial Profile Form and developing a more user-friendly process for accessing and updating these forms. With the use of a portal, the enhanced system will allow direct access to the profile forms by pastors looking for a call and churches looking for a pastor. Forms for the Church Profile and Ministerial Profile are available on the PCR website at <http://www.crcna.org/pcr>.
- The Specialized Transitional Ministry (STM) program is flourishing. Currently there are 17 seasoned and trained pastors endorsed by the PCR. STMs are well suited to support congregations in adjusting after the departure of a long tenured pastor, preparing for and finding a new pastor, or managing some difficulty or conflict.

### CONTACT INFO:

Website: [www.crcna.org/pcr](http://www.crcna.org/pcr)  
 Rev. Norm Thomasma  
 Email: [nthomasma@crcna.org](mailto:nthomasma@crcna.org)  
 Rev. Cecil Van Niejenhuis  
 Email: [cvanniejehuis@crcna.org](mailto:cvanniejehuis@crcna.org)  
 Phone: 616-224-0764

### The Network

**T**he Network ([crcna.org/network](http://crcna.org/network)) started as a humble idea to connect people across the CRC who are doing ministry. Since its beginning in February 2010, The Network has grown to be one of the most popular and active sites in the CRC.

The value of The Network comes from the participation of the community. By connecting pastors, deacons, Sunday school teachers, musicians, webmasters, and many others, we learn with—and from—each other.

There are currently 60 different ministry topics on the site, including prayer, youth ministry, elders, church administration, job openings, and so much more! Within each topic is a wealth of articles, resources, websites and tools to help answer your ministry questions.

Additionally, The Network is a social site where you are encouraged to post your own specific question, lesson learned, or valuable resource. Get involved today! Subscribe to The Network email at [network.crcna.org/subscribe](mailto:network.crcna.org/subscribe).

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Since 2010, there have been over 15,000 posts on the site.
- The Network receives over 40,000 page views each month.
- We consistently receive blogs, resources, and ministry Q&As that encourage, inform, and inspire readers.

#### CONTACT INFO:

Website: [crcna.org/network](http://crcna.org/network)

Staci DeVries, community and content manager

Email: [network@crcna.org](mailto:network@crcna.org)

Phone: 616.224.0842

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### Christian Reformed Church Foundation

**T**he Christian Reformed Church Foundation serves the denomination by funding priorities that enable the CRC to pursue our mission and ministry plan 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.

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 address the adaptive challenges of our denominational ministry plan.

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](http://www.crcna.org/foundation)

Email: [foundation@crcna.org](mailto:foundation@crcna.org)

Phone: 616.224.0817 or 877.272.6299

## 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 new loans totaling more than \$1.1 million, a fairly modest amount compared to recent years.
- Loan quality remains outstanding, with no past due accounts at the close of the fiscal year and none which are considered to be non-performing.
- 2015 resulted in continued solid financial performance and a very strong cash position, providing us with significant lending capacity.

### CONTACT INFO:

Website: [crcna.org/LoanFund](http://crcna.org/LoanFund)

Email: [crlf@crcna.org](mailto:crlf@crcna.org)

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

## *The Banner*

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

Because of this diversity, as a denomination we sometimes have our differences—perspectives, views, concerns.

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

### HIGHLIGHTS

- In “Together Doing More,” The Banner provides 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 the synodical mandate to inform, inspire, educate, and challenge readers.
- Readers contribute through “Letters to the Editor,” “IMHO,” and the very lively online discussions in the “Comments” section following each posted article.

### CONTACT INFO:

Website: [www.thbanner.org](http://www.thbanner.org)

Mail: The Banner, 1700 28th St. S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49508-1407

Editorial: 616.224.0785 [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org)

News: 613.330.3145 [news@thebanner.org](mailto:news@thebanner.org)

Display Ads: 616.224.5882 [ads@crcna.org](mailto:ads@crcna.org)

Classified Advertising: 616.224.0725

[classifieds@thebanner.org](mailto:classifieds@thebanner.org)

### Faith Alive Christian Resources

Under the Faith Alive Christian Resources imprint, the CRC provides quality resources that are theologically Reformed and promote biblical principles including *Lift Up Your Hearts* hymnal, *God Loves Me* storybooks, DWELL Sunday school curriculum, *Discover Your Bible* studies, and numerous other resources. You can expect new resources created as need for them arises—resources born out of close connection with churches and in partnership with ministries.

This past year, new distribution models have been explored in order to reduce costs and to be more responsive to the needs of our churches. Two successful crowdfunding initiatives were launched, including a revised edition of the *God Loves Me* storybooks (in partnership with Faith Formation Ministries) and a large print edition of the *Lift Up Your Hearts Hymnal* (in partnership with Worship Ministries). Faith Alive also released digital editions of *Discover Your Bible* studies (in partnership with Home Missions) and *Psalms for All Seasons* (in partnership with Worship Ministries).

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Crowdfunding initiatives for the *God Loves Me* storybooks and *Lift Up Your Hearts* Large Print Edition were met with positive response from both churches and individual members. The *God Loves Me* crowdfunding initiative resulted in nearly \$35,000 in revenue, and the *Lift Up Your Hearts* Large Print Edition crowdfunding initiative resulted in nearly \$6,700 in revenue. As a result, these resources were created and made available to churches and individuals.
- New *Discover Your Bible* studies have been created and released in both print and digital formats, including *Discover Isaiah* and *Discover Ephesians*.
- Due to the phasing out of the *Walk With Me* curriculum, DWELL, Faith Alive's

newest Sunday school curriculum, will continue to be used by more than 400 CRC churches. DWELL builds on the best features of *Walk With Me*.

- Faith Alive's newly revised website was launched in March 2015 with a refreshed design, all-in-one cart, and clearer pricing.

#### CONTACT INFO:

Websites:  
[FaithAliveResources.org](http://FaithAliveResources.org)  
[TheBanner.org](http://TheBanner.org)  
[ReformedWorship.org](http://ReformedWorship.org)  
[LibrosDesafio.org](http://LibrosDesafio.org)  
 Orders: 1.800.333.8300  
 Facebook: [facebook.com/faithalive](https://facebook.com/faithalive)  
 Twitter: [twitter.com/faithalive](https://twitter.com/faithalive)



### ServiceLink

ServiceLink is the volunteer services program of the Christian Reformed Church. We help to make it possible for CRC members to participate in ministry, both at home and abroad, working in partnership with agencies and other Christian ministries.

ServiceLink also assists congregations in the area of volunteer ministry development, providing guidance in how to recruit, train, equip and recognize volunteers. Staff are available to meet with churches, as well as provide workshops on how to effectively engage volunteers.

#### CONTACT INFO:

Website: [www.crcna.org/servicelink](http://www.crcna.org/servicelink)  
 Carol Sybenga, Program Manager  
 E-mail: [csybenga@crcna.org](mailto:csybenga@crcna.org)  
 Phone: 800.730.3490

# MINISTRY SHARES RECEIPTS & GIFT INCOME

2014

2015

Back to God Ministries		
Ministry Shares	3,346,000	3,194,000
Gift and offerings	3,679,000	3,585,000
Estate Gifts	1,796,000	1,394,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	641,000	272,000
Total	9,462,000	8,445,000
Calvin College		
Ministry Shares	2,308,000	2,389,000
Gift and offerings	3,136,000	19,891,000
Estate Gifts	3,614,000	1,044,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	3,812,000	3,684,000
Total	12,870,000	27,008,000
Calvin Seminary		
Ministry Shares	2,701,000	2,567,000
Gift and offerings	846,000	1,164,000
Estate Gifts	52,000	180,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	1,261,000	1,394,000
Total	4,860,000	5,305,000
Home Missions		
Ministry Shares	3,557,000	3,398,000
Gift and offerings	1,660,000	1,832,000
Estate Gifts	95,000	320,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	583,000	247,000
Total	5,895,000	5,797,000
World Missions		
Ministry Shares	4,694,000	4,382,000
Gift and offerings	8,240,000	8,852,000
Estate Gifts	867,000	879,000
Grants/Miscellaneous	1,761,000	945,000
Total	15,562,000	15,058,000
World Renew		
Gift and offerings	12,329,000	12,723,000
Disaster Gifts	6,420,000	5,143,000
Grants	17,955,000	12,075,000
Estate gifts	1,936,000	2,754,000
Total	38,640,000	32,695,000
Specialized Ministries		
Ministry Shares	3,712,000	5,678,000
Gift and offerings	434,000	725,000
Estate Gifts	0	0
Grants/Miscellaneous	88,000	309,000
Total	4,234,000	6,712,000
Denominational Services		
Ministry Shares	2,667,000	2,398,000
Gift and offerings	20,000	19,000
Estate Gifts	0	0
Grants/Miscellaneous	2,687,000	3,578,000
Total	5,374,000	5,995,000
Foundation		
Gift and offerings	145,000	1,928,000
Estate Gifts	0	0
Grants/Miscellaneous	11,000	6,000
Total	156,000	1,934,000
Special Assistance Fund		
Ministry Shares	27,000	87,000
Gift and offerings	0	0
Grants/Miscellaneous	52,000	152,000
Total	79,000	239,000

## Gift Summary for Fiscal 2015

God has once again blessed the Christian Reformed Church with the generous spirit and strong support of dedicated members and friends to the ministries of the denomination's agencies, institutions and specialized programs.

Ministry Shares gifts were down by nearly \$700,000 compared to the previous year, but still generated \$24.1 million in revenue. Most of the decline is attributable to the strong U.S. dollar compared to fiscal 2014. It should be noted that the impact on revenue of the decline in the value of the Canadian dollar is offset in large part by the corresponding reduction in the cost of ministry expenditures in Canada.

The denomination continues to do a tremendous amount of ministry with these gifts that cost almost nothing to administer, and in which all members of the congregation participate. Thanks to all the churches, large and small, both in Canada and the U.S., that help to provide this vital base of revenue.

Special church offerings and individual gifts (not including support for disaster response projects) generated \$35.3 million in support, up \$3.5 million from the prior year. As with Ministry Shares gifts, this increase was in spite of the impact of the decline in the value of the Canadian dollar vs. the U.S. dollar.

World Renew received \$5.1 million in designated disaster relief funding from churches, members, and other supporters, down from \$6.5 million last year. World Renew also received more than \$10.8 million in grant funding, down \$5.5 million from fiscal 2014. 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 nearly \$6 million from those who included the church in the distribution of their estates.

## Your Ministry Shares: Where the Money Goes

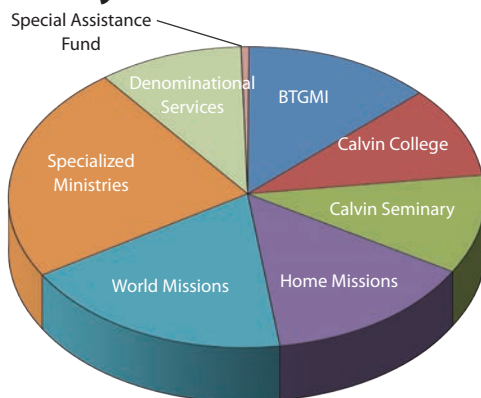
The money you give to Ministry Shares provides about \$25 million each year to support programs that enable your church to send missionaries around the world, start new churches, train pastors and leaders, use media to spread the gospel, and much more. The Ministry Shares program costs very little to administer. In fact, it costs only 1% as much as regular fund raising efforts. It also enables everyone in the congregation to participate in that support, rather than only those with substantial assets.

Ministry Shares gifts provide about one third of the budgets for most CRC mission agencies and Calvin Theological Seminary, and between 60 percent and 90 percent of the budgets for CRC Ministries.

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

### CRC Agency 2014-15 Ministry Shares Received

Back to God	
Ministries International	\$3,194,000
Calvin College	\$2,389,000
Calvin Seminary	\$2,567,000
Home Missions	\$3,398,000
World Missions	\$4,382,000
World Renew	\$0
Specialized Ministries	\$5,678,000
Denominational Services	\$2,398,000
Special Assistance Fund	\$87,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$24,093,000</b>



*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](http://www.crcna.org/MinistryShares)

**MINISTRY SHARES  
TOGETHER  
DOING MORE**