



Christian
Reformed
Church

Global Vision Implementation Team Report

May 2026

The Global Vision Implementation Team was created following the approval of the Global Vision Team report at Synod 2024. Its role is to strengthen relationships between the CRCNA and churches outside North America as part of synod's recommendations from that report. Their main tasks include making an inventory of resources that churches and classes can use as they navigate conversations with churches outside North America that are interested in affiliating with the CRCNA. The team also works to seek ways to foster closer relationships than are currently provided through the CRCNA's ecumenical structure. The focus of their work in 2026-2027 will be clarifying questions related to theology, practice, and polity.

Introduction

The CRCNA has had a global vision since its early years as a denomination. That vision initially revolved around the sending of missionaries, establishing mission agencies, and nurturing ecumenical relationships with denominations outside North America. Several denominations established through those efforts continue to identify as Christian Reformed.

Over the last thirty years, the number of immigrant congregations and leaders in the CRCNA has grown, and a new global dynamic has emerged. Immigrant pastors and leaders in the CRCNA are connecting back to their home countries to plant churches, evangelize, disciple leaders, and support community development. This work is often done in the name of the CRCNA, and results in the establishment of congregations that call themselves Christian Reformed. These congregations often desire a greater connection, and even affiliation with the CRCNA.

The report of the Global Vision Team (*Acts of Synod 2024*, p. 690-709) cast a vision, adopted by synod (*Acts of Synod 2024* p. 807-808), for how the CRCNA should engage with congregations outside of North America, specifically those that desire to ecclesiastically affiliate with CRCNA congregations and classes. Based on the recommendations of the Global Vision Team report, the *Global Vision Implementation Team* provides support to churches and classes exploring church planting and church affiliations from outside North America with direction and resources. This work includes engaging with CRCNA agencies, institutions, congregations, and classes, and with CRCNA international partners. Eventually, this work could include proposals to change CRCNA polity, governance, and organizational structures to support the CRCNA's global vision.

Team Members

Harold Caicedo, Stan Kruis (Reporter), Mario Matos (a leader of the Christian Reformed Church of the Dominican Republic, John Medendorp (Chair), Daniel Kang, Eric Sarwar, and Ahnna Cho Park. Zachary King and Susan LaClear serve as staff consultants. *David Cheung was originally appointed to the committee but resigned in December, 2024, due to scheduling conflicts.*

Progress

During the first eighteen months of its work, the *Global Vision Implementation Team* has been interviewing, listening to, and meeting with CRCNA leaders and congregations connected to and considering affiliations outside North America. In addition, the team has continued deepening conversations with denominations and congregations outside North America already begun by its predecessor, the Global Vision Team.

The team is also developing a draft affiliation guide (for congregations outside North America) and a draft discernment guide (for CRCNA classes and churches considering affiliations with congregations outside North America). In the process of drafting these two documents, it has become apparent that there are three areas that need to be addressed by the *Global Vision Implementation Team*, and eventually clarified by synod:

- Polity: The CRCNA is governed by its Church Order. The Church Order contains many scriptural and Reformed principles of church governance that must be broadly applied. Other principles derive from North American understandings of governance and allow for culturally appropriate applications. With regard to church order, what should be expected of congregations affiliating with the CRC outside North America, and what might be considered more flexible?
- Practice: The ministry practices of the CRCNA are formed by both scriptural convictions and cultural understandings, and some are a mix of both. For example, a congregation's support of its pastor is a scriptural principle. But some of the *types of support* expected by CRCNA pastors (and churches) are formed by North American realities. What level of alignment in ministry practice should be expected between CRCNA congregations and classes, and the congregations outside North America considering affiliation?
- Theology: The CRCNA is shaped by its confessional and creedal convictions, which are summaries of scriptural teachings. Many congregations outside North America are becoming increasingly aware and appreciative of these faith statements. Yet for some who are interested in affiliation, there are parts of the confessions that may not easily fit or be understood within their context. At what point is there sufficient alignment for both congregations outside North America, and CRCNA congregations and classes?

CRCNA congregations, classes, and synod only make up one side of this partnership. The *Global Vision Implementation Team* will continue to listen to the voices of our global partners, while exploring the expectations of our North American congregations and ecclesiastical assemblies. Sorting out questions related to theology, practice, and polity will be the focus of our work in 2026-2027.

Resources

In response to its synodical mandate, the *Global Vision Implementation Team* is sharing a list of resources to assist congregations and classes in their discernment before the end of the ministry year.

1. Foundational Reports

- Global Vision Team Synodical Report ([Acts of Synod 2024, p. 690-709](#)): The Global Vision Team's report to Synod 2024 contains a wealth of information and reflection on affiliation relationships between churches in North America and their global partners. It contains healthy values and theological perspectives that nurture such relationships. It also includes a witness of what global vision looks like in other denominations, and some initial concepts that could support affiliations outside North America.
- God's Diverse and Unified Family: A resource for discerning how a biblical vision of diversity intersects with relationships between churches of different ethnicities.
- EIRC Ecumenical Charter 2019: A resource that provides biblical principles for relationships between churches

2. Resources for North American Congregations Building Ministry Relationships with Churches Outside North America (*with a special focus on in-person visits and resource sharing*)

- [Across the Street and Around the World](#) (Jeannie Marie)
- [Cross-Cultural Partnerships: Navigating the Complexities of Money and Mission](#) (Mary T. Lederleitner and Duane Elmer)
- [When Helping Hurts](#) (Corbett & Fikkert) (also available in video, small group study and seminar format)
- [Helping Without Hurting & Asset-Based Community Development \(ABCD\)](#) Training (World Renew: info@worldrenew.net)
- [Connection Tours & Global Learning Experiences](#) - World Renew
- [Helping Without Hurting in Africa](#) (Chalmers Institute)
- [Helping without Hurting in Generosity](#) (Chalmers Institute)
- [Cultural Values in Ministry \(CICW\)](#)
- [African Friends and Money Matters](#) (David E. Maranz)
- [Witness Trips](#) (Resonate)

3. Resources for Building Inter/Cross-cultural Relationships

- [Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot-and Cold-Climate Cultures](#) (Sarah Lanier)
- [Christians and Culture Difference](#) (David Smith & Pennylyn Dykstra-Pruim)
- [The Culture Map](#) (Erin Meyer)
- [Intercultural Development Inventory](#) and Intercultural Cohorts (intercultural@crcna.org)
- [Healing Hearts. Transforming Nations](#)

- Cultural Awareness Workshop - Gary Timmerman, Resonate (gtimmerman@crcna.org)
4. Denominational Staff Contacts:
- [Church & Community Engagement \(CaCE\) Team](#)- World Renew (info@worldrenew.net)
 - Church Order: Joel Vande Werken (jvandewerken@crcna.org)
 - Candidacy and Ordination: Susan LaClear (slaclear@crcna.org)
 - [Intercultural Ministry in Canada](#): Sebastian Maldonado and Jeremiah Bašurić (intercultural@crcna.org)
 - Resonate (Cultural Awareness): Gary Timmerman, Resonate (gtimmerman@crcna.org)
5. Best Practices
- Try to include a third person who has an understanding of both cultures in your conversations. This could be a missionary or former missionary who lived in the culture, someone from the other culture that has lived in North America for awhile, etc. They can help you learn about different contexts from an unfamiliar culture. For example, when you are trying to set something up or when you have an awkward or baffling situation, you can ask them how something will sound or what might have been behind the awkwardness.
 - Spend more time building relationships than you think you'll need. In white North American contexts, trust is often built by following through on commitments and efficiency. In other cultures, trust is built by spending time together and building relationships. Because of this, processes may take longer than expected, so prioritize the opportunities to be together and build relationships.
 - The most helpful resource is involving cross-cultural individuals who are already serving in the places where people want to build partnerships.

Conclusion

As the CRCNA continues to grow in its global relationships, there is increasing opportunity to learn from, support, and partner with churches around the world. Meaningful global partnerships require humility, patience, and a commitment to mutual relationship-building, but they also offer the church a richer understanding of God's work across cultures and contexts. Through continued collaboration and shared mission, these partnerships can strengthen the global church for years to come.