

DEACONS STORY DECK

Deacons, get ready to inspire and thank your congregation for their generous offerings with these uplifting ministry shares stories!



STORIES TO INSPIRE & THANK

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GOSPEL WITNESS IN CHINA

A Resonate Global Mission Story

Chichibu, a city in Japan known for its many Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, has only a small Christian population. Yet, with support from Resonate Global Mission, local leaders like Mrs. Chieko Ishii are faithfully sharing the gospel and nurturing spiritual growth in this community.

Chieko grew up attending the Chichibu Church, which was planted many years ago with the help of Resonate missionaries. The church became a place of cherished memories for her.

However, as she grew older and life became busier, Chieko drifted away from both the church and her faith. She sought fulfillment in various areas of her life, but always felt something was missing.

Chieko decided to return to the Chichibu Church of her childhood, where she found renewed hope and recommitted her life to Christ. As her personal faith deepened, she felt called to help her church reach out to the local community.

With the guidance of Resonate missionaries, who were sent to Japan in order to equip and empower local leaders, Chieko began leading Bible studies and encouraging her small congregation to grow in their faith.

Although the Bible studies began with only a small group, Chieko's perseverance and joyful spirit gradually attracted more people, igniting a renewed passion for God within the church.

Today, nearly the entire congregation participates in Bible studies, and the church is actively engaging the community through art classes, dance lessons, and choir practices. Slowly but steadily, more people are coming through the doors.

Your generosity is playing a key role in this transformation, empowering the Chichibu Church to live out God's mission. Thank you for your faithful support!



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF CAMPUS MINISTRY

A Resonate Global Mission Story

Campus Ministries has played a vital role in nurturing and guiding students through the unique challenges of university life, offering prayer, mentorship, and unwavering support. Originally established in the 1970s to serve Christian Reformed students away from home, the ministry has grown into a compassionate mission that now reaches students from diverse backgrounds at the University of Guelph, University of Waterloo, and Wilfrid Laurier University.

Under the leadership of ministers like Brian Bork and Sara DeMoor, the ministry has expanded its focus to meet students where they are, providing essential support as they navigate complex issues related to faith, identity, and mental health. Sara's vision for campus ministry is that it would be a space where students can wrestle with life's toughest questions about faith, belonging, and purpose, all while being embraced by a community that reflects the curiosity, love, and reconciliation of Christ.

Through Bible studies, community meals, and open gatherings, your support has created spaces where students can deepen their faith, discover God's calling on their lives, and experience transformation through holistic discipleship.

Your generosity is making a tangible difference in the lives of thousands of students, and their stories continue to bear witness to the power of faith in action. Thank you for partnering with us as we shape the next generation of leaders in Christ!



HOPE FOR ROMANIA

A Resonate Global Mission Story

Csaba's* journey from despair to hope illustrates the transformative power of the Ózd Therapy Center in Romania. Initially seeking quick wealth through gambling, Csaba found himself overwhelmed by debt and struggling with addiction. In search of a new path, he discovered the Ózd Therapy Center, a Resonate Global Mission partner.

Situated in a serene village, the Ózd Therapy Center offers a haven for those battling alcohol, drug, and gambling addictions. For three decades, the center has provided support, care, and spiritual guidance, helping individuals like Csaba find a new direction in life.

Csaba entered the intensive six-month program with a mix of skepticism and hope. He engaged in daily chores on the working farm, from gardening to cooking, and participated in the center's communal meals, where prayers and fellowship offered a sense of belonging. Despite his initial reluctance, Csaba found himself drawn to the program's supportive environment and the spiritual guidance it provided.

After a brief visit home, Csaba realized the importance of completing his program and returned to the centre with a renewed conviction to change his life and embrace his faith. Csaba feels like he no longer needs to wear a mask. He can look in the mirror and know that he is on his own two feet. Through your support of the Ózd Therapy Center, when Csaba was ready for a new life, you were there for him! Thank you for your life changing partnership.

**Name changed to protect identity*



REACHING PEOPLE IN CHINA

A ReFrame Ministries Story

At a recent Direct Connect event, Jerry An, a Chinese ministry leader, shared a powerful update on how God is moving in China, despite the many challenges believers face. In a country marked by economic hardship and rapid social change, the church is not untouched. Yet, in the midst of adversity, ReFrame Ministries continues to stand as a beacon of hope, providing essential resources for spiritual growth and discipleship.

Jerry spoke about the vital role ReFrame Ministries plays in equipping local pastors and believers. Over the past year, the ministry has published 10 impactful books, addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by the Chinese church.

Titles such as *Under Heaven: Reframing My Worldview as a Chinese Christian* and *Here We Stand: Reflections on the Future of the Chinese House Church* have resonated deeply with believers, offering a vision for the future of the church in China.

In addition to books, ReFrame Ministries has expanded its reach through new media initiatives, including webinars, podcasts, and videos. One of the most exciting new projects is a video series that teaches Chinese speakers how to use media for ministry—a powerful tool for spreading the gospel not only in China but around the world.

Jerry's story is a vivid reminder of the far-reaching impact of these resources. In just the past year alone, more than 10,000 people have accessed these materials through ebook downloads, bringing the hope of Jesus to communities in desperate need of spiritual nourishment.

Your support makes all of this possible. It helps equip believers in China, foster their spiritual growth, and bring the message of Jesus to those who need it most. Thank you for your generosity in helping expand God's kingdom, one believer at a time.



GENERATION SPARK

A Thrive Story

Mary Hosmar is currently serving as a mentor to Laura Willet through Generation Spark, a dynamic program designed to foster lasting relationships between generations. Both Mary and Laura are part of the Generation Spark leadership team at Hebron CRC in Whitby, Ontario.

Generation Spark is transforming how churches build connections across generations, sparking change through mentorship. Participants work together on projects that strengthen their churches, but the program goes beyond just the work—it cultivates deep, meaningful relationships. By bringing together older and younger generations, it helps young people feel welcomed, valued, and supported by their church family. Mentors and mentees learn from each other, building trust and sharing faith stories along the way.

Mary and Laura recently attended a conference launching new mentorship seasons in several CRCNA churches, where they shared their experience. Reflecting on their journey, Mary shared, **“This was not as daunting a task as it may seem at first glance. The reward of getting to know your mentor or mentee and sharing faith stories is worth the effort.”**

Young adults like Laura emphasize that it's not flashy programs or pastors that keep them engaged in church—it's the warm, welcoming environment and the genuine relationships they build within their church family. Generation Spark creates that sense of belonging and connection, bridging generational gaps and helping individuals feel like they truly belong.

Thank you for your support of Thrive. Your generosity is helping this transformative program continue to foster meaningful connections across generations, ensuring that churches remain places of belonging, growth, and deep community.



PREVENTING ABUSE

A Thrive Story

For over 20 years, Thrive has been at the forefront of efforts to protect congregations and create safe, welcoming church environments. By addressing issues of abuse and promoting prevention, Thrive plays a critical role in helping churches navigate complex and sensitive situations, safeguard the vulnerable, and offer a healing space for survivors of abuse.

With a survivor-centered approach, Thrive Investigations provides trauma-informed care, empowering churches to respond to abuse allegations with both justice and compassion.

At the recent Annual Inter-Classis Safe Church Conference, nearly 70 attendees gathered to deepen their understanding of abuse prevention, enhance their response strategies, and connect with others committed to strengthening their churches' safety programs. This event served as a vital opportunity for churches to renew their commitment to keeping their communities safe and supportive.

In light of increased public scrutiny around the credibility and integrity of church leaders, Thrive's work is more essential than ever. By training church leaders, supporting abuse survivors, and helping congregations foster healthy, safe environments, Thrive ensures that churches can be places of refuge and restoration.

Your generosity enables Thrive to expand its efforts and ensure that every CRC church remains a safe, nurturing space for all who seek to belong. Thank you for your continued support in making this vital work possible.



ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

A Calvin Theological Seminary Story

Calvin Theological Seminary is dedicated to equipping Christian leaders to navigate the challenges of guiding organizations through change. In response to this need, the seminary recently launched the Adaptive Leadership Cohort, a six-month program designed to support leaders during times of transition.

This program offers more than just leadership skills—it provides a space for participants to connect with peers who truly understand the complexities of their roles. Through in-person workshops and monthly virtual meetings, cohort members are given the chance to step away from their daily demands and reflect on God's work in their lives and ministries.

The experience is transformative, helping leaders develop the tools they need to bring about both personal and organizational change. As a result, participants return to their churches, schools, and nonprofits with renewed vision and energy, ready to foster growth and renewal.

Your support plays a crucial role in expanding programs like the Adaptive Leadership Cohort, ensuring that even more Christian leaders receive the training and community they need to thrive. Your investment in their growth shapes the future of Christian ministry and education.

The impact of your generosity extends far beyond the program itself. By empowering leaders, you're helping to transform the communities they serve, creating lasting change for years to come.



EXPANDING HEARTS EXCHANGED

An Indigenous Ministry Story

“What does it mean to live out the gospel?” This question was one that Helen often wrestled with. When she joined the Hearts Exchanged program, she wasn’t sure what to expect, but she was eager to learn how the church was engaging in the important work of truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

Over the course of this 8-month learning journey, Helen took part in activities and talking circles designed to foster meaningful dialogue and inspire action to begin healing the broken relationships between Indigenous peoples and Reformed Christians.

Since its launch in 2020, Hearts Exchanged has already seen 42 cohorts and over 500 participants from across Canada. Building on the momentum of the past five years, the program is now expanding with Hearts Exchanged: Communities of Practice—a new initiative that provides ongoing support and resources to help congregations implement local reconciliation plans.

Through Hearts Exchanged, church communities are learning what it means to live out the gospel by engaging with Indigenous neighbours and fellow image-bearers in the critical work of reconciliation. As Helen shared, **“This hasn’t been easy, but it is necessary.”** Thank you for your support in sustaining and expanding this vital, transformative work.



GROWING IN JUSTICE

A Centre for Public Dialogue Story

Addressing justice is never simple. It's a delicate balance between confronting systemic issues and meeting the immediate needs of communities. For many Christians, the desire to respond biblically to injustice can leave them seeking practical, faith-based guidance. This is where the Centre for Public Dialogue steps in, offering workshops that help individuals navigate these complex issues with a solid biblical foundation.

One such workshop, Faith in Action, explores how the Bible envisions communities of peace, justice, and faithful action. Cindy Stover, the workshop facilitator, shares her vision: **“Participants will not only be grounded in a biblical understanding of what it means to do justice, but they will also become more aware of the resources and strengths they already have to address injustice when it impacts them and their neighbors.”**

The Faith in Action workshop covers vital topics such as the root causes of injustice, the role of advocacy, and the healing required after injustice. It equips participants with practical, actionable steps to pursue justice in their local contexts. Whether in person or online, this workshop meets people where they are, helping them apply their learning to real-world situations.

When you give to the Centre for Public Dialogue, you support the development and delivery of transformative workshops like Faith in Action, both in-person and online. Thank you for your contributions towards empowering individuals and churches to engage meaningfully with elected officials and take steps toward justice and healing in their communities.



SUPPORTING MULTICULTURALISM

An Intercultural Ministry Story

Peter Carrión's story beautifully illustrates the power of intercultural ministry. Originally from Ecuador, Peter found that he was missing the opportunity to worship in his native language of Spanish. This led Peter to begin hosting services in his home, which eventually grew into La Roca Spanish Ministry. As the ministry expanded, the need for a larger space led to a partnership with Immanuel CRC in Brampton, Ontario. Peter and the La Roca community are part of a broader vision to build vibrant, multicultural church communities across Canada.

Peter and other church leaders are currently participating in a 10-month collaborative initiative aimed at exploring what it means to be a healthy, multicultural church. This unique program brings together 13 Canadian congregations from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds to share insights, deepen their understanding, and develop innovative practices for fostering multicultural hospitality and community.

As Canada's demographic landscape continues to evolve—with projections indicating that by 2044, half of the population will be Indigenous, Black, or a person of colour—churches are increasingly seeking ways to embrace and reflect this diversity in ways that are faithful to the Gospel. The learning cohort is focused on equipping leaders with the tools and strategies needed to navigate the complexities of multiculturalism.

Thank you for investing in leaders and congregations as they work to build inclusive communities where people of all backgrounds can follow Christ and love their neighbours in ways that reflect the rich diversity of God's kingdom.

