



Christian  
Reformed  
Church

2021 Issue 1

# Living the Call

A REPORT FROM THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

## GLOBAL MISSION

The Christian Reformed Church seeks to express God's love by living out five callings:

### Faith Formation

As a community of believers, we seek to introduce people to Jesus Christ and to nurture their faith through all ages and stages of life. (Report in August)

### Servant Leadership

Understanding that the lifelong equipping of leaders is essential for churches and ministries to flourish, we identify, recruit and train leaders to be servants in the Kingdom of God. (Report in October)

### Global Mission

Called to be witnesses of Christ's Kingdom to the ends of the earth, we start and strengthen local churches in North America and around the world. (Report in February)

### Mercy and Justice

Hearing the cries of the oppressed, forsaken and disadvantaged, we seek to act justly and love mercy as we walk humbly with our God. (Report in April)

### Gospel Proclamation and Worship

Believing that faith comes through the hearing of God's Word, we proclaim the saving message of Jesus Christ and seek to worship him in all that we do. (Report in June)

## From the Executive Director's Desk

Most of us are quite familiar with the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20.

The command 'go' in this passage is better translated '*as you go*'. In other words, Jesus' command to make disciples is not limited simply to those who venture far afield to spread the gospel. It involves all of us as we go about our lives.

As you think about that, it is also important to remember that our world has become smaller — human mobility has progressed to the point where most nations are no longer inhabited only by the Indigenous or historical peoples. People move for work, for school, in search of better economic conditions, or to flee persecution. As a result, our world has become a collection of diaspora peoples — both in our local communities and around the world. We are all missionaries!

And if there was any doubt that our world has become smaller and more interconnected, the advent of COVID-19 should have eliminated that. An infection that began in one part of our globe quickly spread to become a major impact worldwide.

As I reflect on all of this, I have begun to wonder if the gospel could be like COVID. What would it look like if all of us took Jesus' command to go and make

disciples so seriously, that in everything we did — in the way we engaged others, the way we uplifted others, the way we made them feel the love of Christ at every interaction — the natural salt and light, the grace and mercy of Christ shone through us and touched all others with a spark of the divine.

What if we committed, as far as it is up to us, to be so in tune with the Holy Spirit, that we suppress our selfish tendencies and the need to be right in favor of showing God's love to those he brings into our orbit. Could we be the source of a new spreading — the spreading of God's love which could be felt around the world?

In this issue, our theme is global mission. Ministries contributing reports to this issue are ReFrame Ministries (formerly known as Back to God Ministries International) and Resonate Global Mission.

As you reflect on these stories from our ministries and agencies, I encourage you to wonder with me about how we can collectively multiply this work into every community and locality to the glory of God.

COLIN P. WATSON SR.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR — CRCNA

## Resonate Global Mission



Parenting a new church is an opportunity for a congregation to see firsthand how God is at work in their community

It's no secret—healthy churches plant healthy churches.

In fact, every one of our Christian Reformed church plants, going back through the decades, owes its existence to the care and support of established churches. It's a privilege to be part of this tradition of passion for mission, and to carry it forward.

Planting churches is a priority for our denomination in the new *Our Journey 2025* ministry plan. As your denominational agencies work together to launch this plan, we realize that there's one big message we need to send to churches: we can't do it without you.

Today one of the significant obstacles to church planting is finding parent churches who can guide and mentor the new church. This is an area that Resonate staff are working to improve and expand within the denomination.

### Will your church plant a church?

Church planting is different than it used to be. Churches that parent church plants are no longer expected to provide all of the new church's funding or members. Rather, your church can provide a vital lifeline to a

church plant by providing mentorship for the planter, oversight for the new church's administration, and in-kind resources such as office or worship space.

Today, Resonate offers a diverse and capable team to help your church join God's mission and experience the joy and reinvigoration of serving as a parent church. Parenting a new church is an opportunity for your congregation to see firsthand how God is at work in their community, witness and celebrate people transformed by Christ, and grow in their ability to minister cross-culturally.

Church planting is the most effective ministry tool we have to reach new groups of people. But even before the challenges of meeting and starting ministry during COVID-19, finding parent churches has been challenging. Opportunities to reach out to your community, especially to diaspora or ethnic minority populations, are especially important in the coming year!

Find out how you can join God in your community by visiting [www.resonateglobalmission.org/PlantSupport](http://www.resonateglobalmission.org/PlantSupport), or get in touch with your Resonate Regional Mission Leader today!

**ZACHARY KING, DIRECTOR  
RESONATE GLOBAL MISSION**

### Regional Contacts for Mission

Regional Mission Leaders: your connection to mission around the corner and around the world

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## ReFrame Ministries



Before finding ReFrame’s Portuguese ministry, Quésia shared, “I didn’t know what it meant to hear God, and I didn’t know what salvation meant.”

The new year always comes with a bit of an adjustment period, doesn’t it? A busy holiday season has come to a close, and the first few weeks serve as a time to set our sights on where God is calling us in the next year.

As you may already have heard, *ReFrame Ministries* is officially the new name of Back to God Ministries International. This new name will undoubtedly also come with an adjustment period, especially in Christian Reformed congregations, where our ministry has been known as “Back to God” since 1939.

I think you will quickly see that, even during the initial adjustment, this name change won’t change the way people hear the gospel at home and around the world. In fact, our research suggests that this new name will

help us better connect with new audiences who do not yet know Jesus. Below, you’ll read about three different people who may never even hear the name ReFrame Ministries, and yet have been transformed by God’s Word through ReFrame’s partners and programs.

### Quésia in Brazil

Quésia grew up in a Christian home in a small town in Brazil, but she never really knew what it meant to follow Christ. Quésia’s husband introduced her to *Luz Para o Caminho* (Light for the Way), which is the name of ReFrame’s Portuguese ministry. Today, Quésia looks back on her time watching LPC programs on the television as a turning point in her faith. Now she is joining us in sharing God’s Word in Brazil, especially with women in the Presbyterian Church of Brazil.

### Anne\* in North America

ReFrame recently surpassed 500,000 subscribers to at least one of our six English ministry programs. Anne (name changed for her privacy) discovered us through *Family Fire*, our marriage and family ministry, and has been an active member of our closed Facebook group. There, she has found a safe place for community support and encouragement despite living in a marriage affected deeply by sin. “This overwhelming support and prayer means the world to me!” she wrote. “God is revealing himself to me, and I know I am not alone because God does love me.”

### Durgesh in India

In India, ReFrame partners with a local media ministry called Good Books Educational Trust. While talking with one of our radio producers, Durgesh shared his concern and desire to be delivered from his addiction to alcohol. The producer, Rajesh, shared the gospel with him and began to regularly pray with him over phone calls. Durgesh says that he is finding peace talking to Rajesh and that prayer and God’s Word are helping him to stay sober. “Kindly remember Durgesh and his family in your prayers,” our Hindi ministry leader shares. “Pray that God may manifest his power and the family may be completely delivered from the evil of alcoholism and experience abundant life in Christ.”

### ReFrame Ministries Reaches our World in:

- Arabic
- English
- Chinese
- French
- Hindi
- Indonesian
- Japanese
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Korean (in partnership with the CRC’s Korean Council)

For more information about these ministries visit [ReFrameMinistries.org/ministries](http://ReFrameMinistries.org/ministries)

## Mission As A Classis

God's kingdom is bigger than any one person or congregation. A classis is a community of churches that can work together to live into this larger vision of God's reign. Engaging in global mission as a classis both expands the impact of any one church and strengthens the churches themselves as they participate in, and learn from, new and fresh ministry opportunities.

Church Planting is one significant, and growing, way that a classis can engage in global mission. Recent statistics suggest a denomination needs to start three new churches per year for every hundred churches it has, just to stay even. That could mean something like *every classis involved in starting one new church every two years*. What would it look like if the question in a classis wasn't "should we plant a church" but "which church among us is willing and able to parent a new church this year, which of us will do so in two years, which of us in four years" and so on?

The church planting collaborative team is working on wide systemic support for church planting, which cannot happen without strengthening the classis. Churches plant churches, but do so with guidance, funding, and accountability of the classis. And church planters have a deep desire to be part of such a community.

Church planters and leaders of existing churches have much to learn from one another *and* much to offer one another. In a classis meeting, I heard a church planter say: "I am your experiment!" This classis blessed this new church by cultivating it and supporting it; now this church planter was blessing the classis by experimenting, trying new things and sharing his learning with others.

With a reciprocal dynamic like this, the kingdom of God can advance while every classis church can experience a mutual blessing.

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CLASSIS RENEWAL, PASTOR CHURCH RESOURCES

Help is Only a Call, Click,  
or Chat Away



Click Call Chat

We're making it easier for you and your church to access CRC resources. If you're involved in Global Mission work or another part of church ministry, and wonder if your denomination can help with something, just CALL (800-272-5125), CLICK ([www.crcna.org/Resources](http://www.crcna.org/Resources)), or CHAT (from any page on [www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org)). We're here to serve, and would love to connect you with people and resources to support your ministry.

## Mission on The Network

### General Mission Resources

[5 Tips for Sharing Your Faith](#) from a Resonate missionary who spent 29 years among the Fulani, a people group in West Africa who come mostly from a Muslim background.

Pastor Peter Kelder suggests there's much we can [learn about mission from campus ministries](#).

Resonate's Amy Schenkel shares how churches can begin to move from a consumer to missionary mentality in [A First Step for Making the Missional Shift](#).

Is your church planning a mission emphasis service or event? [Here's a list of 27 mission-focused worship songs](#).

[10 Things Church Planters Want You to Know About Church Planting](#) is both informative and eye-opening.

### Missions in the Context of COVID-19

How do we build relationships with non-Christians during a global pandemic? Pastor Marc Holland suggests [YouTube may have something to teach us](#).

What does loving your neighbor look like during this COVID-19 season? Resonate's Amy Schenkel offers some suggestions in the article [Community Engagement and COVID-19](#).

Timothy Leadership has [created a manual](#) to help families and individuals show love to their neighbors in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pastor Kyle Brooks shares 5 tips to help churches and believers respond to the coronavirus and its aftermath in [God's 'New Thing' During COVID-19](#).

[Praying for Our Muslim Neighbor in Light of COVID-19](#) includes a 30-day prayer guide to help us remember our Muslim neighbors during the pandemic.

[When your Summer Mission Trip Is Cancelled](#) offers COVID-free ideas to connect your youth with ministry in another city, culture, or country.

Pastor Jerry An believes that many of the [media changes](#) that churches are making right now should last past COVID-19.

[How to Care for Your Missionary During COVID-19](#) offers practical tips for how churches can continue to support missionaries during the pandemic.

## Want to Learn More?

Stay up-to-date on what the CRCNA is doing in Global Mission:

**CRC News** — Subscribe at [crcna.org/subscribe](http://crcna.org/subscribe) for a weekly digest of stories in your inbox

**The Network** — Visit [crcna.org/Network](http://crcna.org/Network) to post your questions, participate in discussions around the topic of "Global Mission", or review available resources

**Resonate Global Mission e-updates** — Stay up to date with ministry stories and prayer requests by subscribing to our email updates. [resonateglobalmission.org/resources](http://resonateglobalmission.org/resources)

**ReFrame Ministries** — Join our email list and stay updated [ReFrameMinistries.org](http://ReFrameMinistries.org)

**Call 1-800-272-5125 with any of your ministry questions.**