



MINISTRY IMPACT REPORT



A celebration of faithful partnership and Christ's transforming work

October 2019–September 2020

The Reformed Church in America is a fellowship of congregations called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the very presence of Jesus Christ in the world.

Our shared task is to equip congregations for ministry—a thousand churches in a million ways doing one thing—following Christ in mission, in a lost and broken world so loved by God.



A MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY



Dear friends,

This has been a year of both/and: both tragedy and triumph, both lament and hope, both grief and gratitude. Even in the storms that our denomination and our world have weathered—a global pandemic, social and political unrest, and an uncertain

future, to name a few—I see both God’s mighty hand and his gentle presence.

I am daily humbled by both God’s faithfulness and by yours. Much of the triumph, hope, and gratitude of this past year is because of you, faithful partners of the RCA. Your prayers, words of encouragement, and financial support make our mission possible.

You make it possible to plant churches and baptize disciples in record-breaking numbers, to invite leaders and laypeople into transformative processes, and to share the gospel with people yet unreached around the world. This is all for the glory of God and for the expanding of his kingdom. I cannot say thank you enough for your role in this.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddy Alemán". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey background.

Eddy Alemán
General Secretary

CELEBRATING NEW CHURCH PLANTS AND WELCOMING CHRIST-FOLLOWERS INTO THE RCA

In June 2020, RCA Church Multiplication celebrated a record-breaking month in which 16 new congregation plans were approved, welcoming new church planters and congregations into the denomination. Fifteen of these church plants are Hispanic congregations in the southern United States, where the RCA has previously not had much presence.



Carlos Corro performs a baptism at Imago Church in California, another new multi-ethnic plant.

Among these new members is Fabio Sosa, a church planter in Houston, Texas, and a coach for Central Plains Classis.

“We are in a city where almost 50 percent of the population is Hispanic, between first- and third-generation. We have great expectations to reach these generations of Hispanics with the gospel,” he says. “A new church always brings hope; the idea of bringing hope to the city is something that motivates us to believe and have passion for preaching through this plant.”

This is a hope—and mission—that will continue to spread; each of the 16 new congregations is already working to plant more churches to make more disciples, fulfilling the Great Commission.

“Definitely for us, sharing the gospel and ministry has to do with a mission outward rather than inward,” says Sosa.

Your support of Church Multiplication has great effect: more disciples of Jesus Christ.

CHURCH MULTIPLICATION HIGHLIGHTS:

- **27** domestic church plants (July 2019–June 2020)
- New ventures in Brazil, Dominican Republic, and Europe
- New RCA church planters in Florida are also planting churches in their home countries in South America, including a plant in San Francisco de Yare, Venezuela, a city referred to as the “Shepherd’s cemetery” because there is an annual “dance to the devil” and churches struggle to survive there.



Honoring Our Stories, Lynden, Washington, October 2019

“Gleaning from amazing spiritual women and men has really caused a lot more growth and assuredness in God and his sovereignty. ... [This group has given me] that weekly encouragement to do what the Lord has asked me to do.”

—Susan Davis, participant in weekly calls for sharing lament and hope



Rekindle West Michigan, December 2019

Here's what participants are saying:

“As a woman leader, I'm experiencing God stretching me into other areas of leadership, especially since this new normal that we are in. ... God is showing me that I can do all things through him.”

—Elder Devonna Cousins, participant in NYC leadership collaborative



Rekindle NYC, March 2020

ENCOURAGEMENT, EQUIPMENT, AND EMPOWERMENT

This year, through Women’s Transformation and Leadership and your support, dozens of women across North America participated in life-transforming events and processes, whether in-person or virtual.

Between **10 and 84** people joined connection events and equipping calls each week, discussing the following topics:

- COVID-19 response
- Domestic violence
- Support for spouses of pastors
- Digital media
- Anti-racism
- Mental health



An average of **65 attendees** took part in the She Is Called Women of the Bible study sessions each week.

Through regional She Is Called leadership collaboratives, **67 women** explored their spiritual gifts and discovered individual leadership callings.



She is Called Holy Land trip, November 2019

“ My fellow senior pastors and I have the opportunity to not only enrich our own walk in faith, but to speak about the unique challenges that we face in these positions. Especially in a time that has been isolative for me, this group has been a God-send! It has offered me the blessing of a community of support and reflection and already impacted my personal leadership and ministry.

—Chris Vande Bunte, pastor of Delmar Reformed Church
in Delmar, New York

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A LEADERSHIP COHORT FOR SENIOR AND LEAD PASTORS

Because of your support this past year, RCA Leadership Development has hosted events and cohorts that benefited 78 people like Chris. Pastors, elders, deacons, and lay leaders from the East Coast to the West Coast and from Canada to Texas have grown in their leadership skills and received tools and support for navigating changing ministry contexts, strengthening team relationships, and prioritizing mission in the church.

YOUNG LEADERS SEEK RACIAL RECONCILIATION AND HOPE FOR THE CHURCH

This past year, six college students led the RCA in anti-racism work through the Robben Island Project, a collaboration between three RCA initiatives: Advocacy, Local Missional Engagement, and Next Generation Engagement. The students explored intersections of racism, history, and their personal life journeys; developed their own leadership skills; and experienced spiritual formation. These elements culminated in a project and process that each leader could bring back to their own context.

“This project emphasizes how we can move forward with our actions in love and grace and humility,” says Bizzy, one of the participants. “It’s helped me to know myself better so that I can commit myself better to do what I feel like God has called all people to do—and that is to truly embody, to truly believe that all people are made in the image of Christ and to love them like Christ loved them. And that does not mean complacency or just believing it. It means enacting that and confronting it every day.”

Your support makes it possible for the RCA to continually work toward being a multicultural denomination freer from racism.



“We all have a common goal and a passion towards racial reconciliation, healing within the church, and having hope in the church.”

—Bizzy Feekes, Robben Island Project participant





A FESTIVAL TO THE GLORY OF GOD

Hundreds of stories of God's goodness and thousands of people reached with the love of Christ—this was the heart behind Mission 2020, a Global Mission event in January 2020, which celebrated God's faithfulness across more than 375 years of Global Mission history. Attendees left encouraged, hopeful, and expectant for God's call for the next 375+ years.

Mission 2020—and the ongoing work of Global Mission—are possible because of your generosity and vision to see more people come to know Christ as their Lord and Savior.

225 people attended Mission 2020 in Orlando, Florida.

38 missionaries, partners, and experts in their field representing **18** countries led workshops or spoke on stage at Mission 2020.

THE GLOBAL CHURCH IS ON THE MOVE!

In January, just prior to Mission 2020, church planters, missionaries, and supporters from every continent gathered for the All Nations summit, hosted by Church Multiplication and Global Mission. During their time together, presenters focused on the spreading gospel and growing church in the southern hemisphere. It was a time of learning for those in the northern hemisphere especially—to sit at the feet of church planters and experts from the Global South, to discern how to equip these leaders for further disciple-making, and to be inspired by how God is on the move.

As part of the All Nations summit, participants celebrated the Lord's Supper. Drawing from global practices of communion—specifically from nomadic people in Africa, where bread and wine are unavailable—elements of meat and milk were served.





THOUSANDS RECEIVE THE GOSPEL IN THEIR NATIVE TONGUE

Imagine how amazing it would be to hear the Bible spoken to you in your heart language. Because of your support, this is now a reality for **more than 12,000 people in India** who have received an audio Bible this year.

“In countries like India, if I speak your heart language, we’re related,” says JP Sundararajan, director of RCA Global Mission. For audio Bible listeners, then, that means, “the God of the universe now speaks your language, like you’re actually related to God. ... How profound that is for all of us who talk about a personal relationship with Jesus.”

With the vision of even more people hearing the gospel in their heart languages, the HUM app was launched this year. This free mobile download originated with Bible recordings in 43 heart languages and has received **12,695 downloads** in its first six months. Eventually, the app will also have sermon recordings and will allow people to ask questions and receive answers in their native tongue.

SUPPORT FOR **FIRST-TIME** PASTORS

Five years ago, a pilot First Call cohort launched in the Regional Synod of Albany, gathering together ministry leaders in their first call and providing needed support and tools.

“The companionship and support I received through the program helped me to navigate the many challenges of ministry,” says Lindsey De Kruif, a past participant who now serves as lead pastor of Helderberg Reformed Church in Guilderland Center, New York. “I was also challenged to understand myself as a leader at a deeper level and how I can get in the way of effectively leading in ministry.”

With support from Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches—an initiative of Transformed & Transforming—and with De Kruif’s leadership, the First Call cohort and the Albany Synod Fellowship Program continue to support leaders in their first ministry call.

This year, a new First Call cohort launched in the Regional Synod of the Heartland, supporting and equipping seven ministry leaders as they begin their years of ministry and service.

Thank you for your support of Transformed & Transforming initiatives, which help equip pastors and leaders for more effective ministry!



RCA missionary Bob Abel serves in partnership with Remember Nhu. Here are some highlights from Remember Nhu, a global organization committed to ending childhood sex slavery through prevention:

- **0** children and staff infected by COVID-19
- **1** new transitional home for teenage girls in Thailand
- **20** youth baptized in Thailand
- **100+** first-generation students graduating to middle school and high school in Bolivia

Your faithful support of RCA Global Mission makes it possible for these children and young adults to attend school and achieve their dreams of a fulfilled life.

DIGGING INTO DISCIPLESHIP

Church staff and leaders at Christ's Community Church in Glendale, Arizona, went through a transformational process of discipleship coaching this past year. According to Jeff Allen, the RCA's lead coordinator for Discipleship, discipleship coaching is an opportunity to learn and listen so you can live more like Jesus personally and as a church.

"This journey has been powerful for our people," says Randy Wieland, lead pastor. "They're looking with fresh eyes at the people that they bump into and asking themselves, who am I supposed to be for these people in this context? How might Jesus use me in this relationship?"

Thank you for your role in creating and renewing disciples! Discipleship coaching and other transformative discipleship initiatives are possible because of you.





Terry DeYoung (center), along with the two people who nominated him, Barbara Newman (who died from an aggressive cancer in mid-September, 2020) and Mark Stephenson.

CONGRATULATIONS, TERRY AND TEAM!

This has been a celebratory year for RCA Disability Concerns, an initiative of Transformed & Transforming, the RCA's 15-year vision for ministry.

- In the summer, Terry DeYoung, RCA coordinator for Disability Concerns, received the Henri J.M. Nouwen award, which honors the work of individuals who “reflect a ‘Nouwen style’ of compassion for, commitment, and dedication to ministry and servanthood that values and esteems people with developmental disabilities.”
- This is the 11th year of the RCA's Disability Concerns initiative and partnership with the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA).
- Disability Concerns' quarterly newsletter, *Breaking Barriers*, and their blog, both co-published with the CRCNA, were honored with the Award of Merit by the Associated Church Press.
- For the first time ever—due to the coronavirus pandemic—Disability Concerns held their annual leadership training virtually, with very positive feedback. This year's theme was agility.

Through your support of Transformed & Transforming, this vital work continues so that everybody belongs and everybody serves.

SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH NEPALI PEOPLE, WHEREVER THEY MAY BE

Yakuv Gurung is called to share the gospel wherever there are Nepali people. For the last two years, his ministry, Jibit Asha International (which translates to “living hope”), has partnered with Global Mission, Church Multiplication, and RCA churches in the United States to propel a church planting effort in Nepal.



“Our main goal and prayer is to reach out to villages without churches,” says Gurung. “At the same time, we want to help the local churches and help planters raise more leaders. Not every one of those leaders will go and plant a church, but we want to train them so that they can go and mentor other people.”

Highlights made possible by you

- **35+** Nepali villages reached with the gospel
- **9** new fellowships (groups of 5-20 people)
- **17** church planters
- **72** leaders in training

Because of COVID-19 and a strict shutdown in Nepal, church planters have faced a number of challenges this year, including not being able to make visits to villages with new Christians. Instead, many have been faithfully making phone calls and appointing leaders in each village.

“We are raising leaders locally, even if they are not fully trained,” says Gurung. “Our church planters are delegating to younger leaders and finding new ways to do what they were doing.”

And, the growth is not just in Nepal. Church plants already exist in Michigan for Nepali people, and more opportunities are cropping up in the United States, Bahrain, and Norway.

“There is some connection there. We’re always thinking about our Nepali people and how we can reach out,” says Gurung. “Our goal is to plant 50 churches in five years. I don’t know how far we can go, but God can give more than that.”



A WORSHIP SERVICE TO REMEMBER

Global Ministries Church in Orlando, Florida, officially organized in September 2020. A new church is always cause for celebration, but this particular service held extra layers of rejoicing—33 extra reasons for celebration, to be exact.

On this first Sunday as an official RCA church—marked with the presence of classis leaders—pastor Jose Rea baptized **33 people** into the family of God.

This story of celebration is not an isolated event; adult baptisms accompanying organizational services are a hallmark for many of the RCA's newest church plants. To God be the glory for these new disciples!

Your generosity helps build the kingdom of God, one disciple at a time. Thank you!



THANK YOU, CHAPLAINS!

Approximately half of the RCA's 220 chaplains around the world serve in hospitals and long-term care facilities—assisted living, skilled nursing, hospice, and more. During the coronavirus pandemic, RCA chaplains were on the frontlines, providing spiritual care and bringing the hope of Christ to patients, families, and staff.

THE MISSION CONTINUES THROUGH A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Thanks to you, our faithful donors, RCA Global Mission worked with **33 partners** in **24 countries** during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide food relief, raise awareness, provide trauma counseling, and distribute masks for protection. Hundreds of people were able to keep their jobs, and thousands of people received essential daily needs. Our mission partners estimate that the funds distributed benefitted over 50,000 people in need.

In addition, RCA Global Mission, Local Mission Engagement, and Church Multiplication teamed up to provide grants to over 40 RCA churches, helping them reach out and support the immediate humanitarian needs of their own communities.

Thousands of people were shown the love of Jesus through the generosity of donors and the care of RCA churches.

Thank you for your overwhelming love and support for people in a time of great need!

GENEROSITY IN A TIME OF NEED

When stay-at-home orders were issued during COVID-19, members of the community surrounding Reformed Church of Los Angeles were shortly without jobs, income, and food. Pastor Rudy Rubio and other church members were determined to serve their community and help families in need. And God—and the community—showed up.

“God has given us great friendships and partnership with the sheriff, the local council, and the food pantry,” says Rubio.

The food pantry needed a place to serve the 50 families they provided with food each week. Rubio contacted another local pastor who offered his parking lot. Teamed with volunteers from Reformed Church of LA, the food pantry continued in this way

PIVOTING AND TRUSTING GOD'S TIMING



COVID-19 canceled Wyoming Harbor Church's plans to launch a Sunday worship gathering in the fall of 2020. Instead, the church plant focused on starting missional communities, small groups of 10-20 people that meet in people's homes or at parks.

“We had to think intentionally about how to be the church outside of Sunday,” says Jordan Stonehouse, pastor of Wyoming Harbor. “We wanted people to have missional communities to belong to ... and to be good news in

for four months, eventually distributing food to 200 families per week.

“Whatever we received, we would put it right back into the community,” says Rubio, who applied for and received a “greatest need” grant from Church Multiplication.

The church plant’s presence and care for the community invited people into the church.

“We built relationships and trust through food. Now, they trust us, and they can trust our message,” says Rubio. “God is good, and people are coming.”



Wyoming. ... The vision we cast said we needed to take a slower approach and earn credibility before we gather—to move at the speed of relationship.”

Stonehouse considers all of this to be God’s perfect timing, citing a deepened relationship with the local school, families that have become part of the church because of food deliveries during the pandemic, and a bond of trust with the owners and staff at the local brewery, to which Stonehouse now has keys “to do whatever he wants with the building” when the brewery is closed on Sundays.

“Is there a better time to launch a church? I’m not sure,” he says. “God is opening up doors to be light in ways I’ve never thought.”

Your support makes it possible for church plants like Wyoming Harbor to root, grow, and flourish in their communities, allowing them to love their neighbors and share the love of God.

CARING FOR THE UNREACHED DURING COVID-19

After years of showing care to and being among a community of 6,000 East Africans in Tennessee—a group that is chief among the most unreached people—Nick and Melissa James were well-positioned to love their neighbors when the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

“[The shutdown] just dramatically affected the number of East Africans we know. A number of them got sick and there’s been a handful of deaths as well, so we just started trying to connect people and needs,” says Nick.

One of those connections was with RCA Church Multiplication, which gave Refuge Church a grant to meet the church plant’s greatest need. The church plant used the grant to provide grocery vouchers, redeemable at the local East African markets, to families in the community who were out of work and struggling to pay rent and utilities.

“We’ve met at least 120 new families through this, and these are new relationships that we’re following up with and trying to continue to be a source of love,” says Nick. “We want to embody the message and be people that reflect Jesus with how we serve, how we give, and how we go.”

***Your generosity made these grants—and stories of caring for people on the margins—possible.
Thank you!***

Here's what COVID relief grant recipients are saying:

"Funds awarded to Gospel Community were used to assist in the startup of a breakfast ministry which serves hot breakfast to the homeless and those in need on Holland's Northside on Sunday mornings."

—Nate Heyboer, Gospel Community

"Because of your generosity, we were able to keep our staff employed, provide food and lodging for multiple homeless families, and provide 36 backpacks filled with needful supplies and the Gospel for children and families in need. In addition, we were also able to purchase some gear we needed to temporarily transition to 'online only' Sunday services. Thank you so much for your partnership in the Gospel."

—Dustin Neeley, Refuge Church

"It has been tough and rewarding at the same time. We have reached our 34th person for Christ and to hear some of the people that have come to Christ that never have read the Bible or gone to a church and not having a relationship with Christ, it really let us know that we are where God wants us, sharing the good news."

—Ricky Sanchez, Iglesia Roca Fuerte





A NOTE FROM JILLISA TEITSMAN, THE RCA'S CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The RCA ended the year with a net surplus of nearly \$2.9 million. This surplus was not earned on operational areas; rather, \$1.6 million was earned on endowed funds and a \$1 million Lilly Foundation grant was received for a specific purpose, to be used over the next three fiscal years.

On the operational side, we ended the year with a surplus of \$300,000. Assessments were discounted by 30 percent on two quarterly installments: one as a form of relief for churches due to the COVID-19 pandemic and another quarter due to the postponement of the General Synod's annual meeting.

I am extremely grateful for your faithful, generous support of the RCA and am humbled by the work that God is doing through your gifts. Thank you!

FINANCIAL RESULTS

REVENUE

	Fiscal Year 2020		Fiscal Year 2019	
Contributions and Grants	\$10,783,045	54%	\$9,757,273	49%
Assessments	\$5,410,187	27%	\$6,518,059	33%
Other Income	\$3,941,006	19%	\$3,519,091	18%
Total Revenue	\$20,134,238	100%	\$19,794,423	100%

EXPENDITURES

Church Multiplication	\$1,226,427	7%	\$1,125,645	6%
Global Missions	\$7,126,503	42%	\$7,855,619	41%
Transformed & Transforming	\$3,298,347	19%	\$4,310,947	23%
Work of General Synod	\$2,845,032	17%	\$3,102,503	16%
General Operations	\$2,674,933	15%	\$2,650,683	14%
Total Expenditures	\$17,171,242	100%	\$19,045,397	100%

NET INCOME

\$2,962,996

\$749,026

These figures represent unaudited financial results. The RCA's financial statements are audited by Capin Crouse, LLP, and final audit results will be available at www.rca.org/finance.

Thank you for your support! The mission and ministry of the RCA cannot be done without you. There has never been a more important time than now for the life-transforming work of the RCA. We invite you to continue this journey of making a difference.

Please use the provided envelope to send your gift via mail.

To donate online visit
www.rca.org/ministryimpact.

By phone (U.S. only): Call Terri Boven
at 616-541-0835.

By mail: Please send your check,
made out to “Reformed Church
in America” and designated “RCA
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Regional Synod of Canada
PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

To designate your gift toward the RCA On Mission Fund or RCA Global Mission, please check the appropriate box on the envelope. If you don't designate your gift, we will apply it toward the greatest need.



Gifts may also be given online at
www.rca.org/ministryimpact.

This impact report is also available online and in Spanish. Visit www.rca.org/ministryimpact for either version.



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