

# MINISTRY IMPACT REPORT

OCT 2020 – SEP 2021

A celebration of faithful  
partnership and Christ's  
transforming work



## A message of thanks from the General Secretary

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.



Dear friends,

This has been another wearying year for many of us in ministry, but I am so encouraged by the stories of God's faithfulness that I regularly witness and hear.

Church plants continue to spring up at an incredible rate, and new believers are baptized weekly. Mission partners continue to bring Jesus to their communities, and the Word continues to go out to people of all nations, tribes, and tongues. Ministry leaders continue to innovate and equip the church to be the hands and feet of Jesus in a lost and broken world so loved by God. Through Transformed & Transforming, Church Multiplication, and RCA Global Mission, God is working in mighty ways.

The goodness of God bolsters me to continue the work he has called me to do. And I pray that God's goodness and grace give you comfort and courage as you press on in his service. God is still at work, and he is faithful.

May these stories encourage you as we continue to serve together.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddy Alemán".

Eddy Alemán  
General Secretary

# Providing comfort and care in the wake of COVID-19



Thanks to your generosity and prayers, over \$100,000 was raised to provide relief and comfort to these families as they mourned the loss of their loved ones.

One woman left behind two children and her husband, who are still coming to terms with the loss. Your gifts made it possible to provide monetary aid to the family in their time of deepest need and for the next year until they are able to stand back on their feet.

You supported many other families by removing a source of worry as they mourn the loss of their loved ones. Monetary gifts do not bring complete comfort, but the gifts do help cover the day-to-day expenses. Your contributions are ensuring that food is on the table and daily needs are being met for grieving Christian families in India.

**Thank you!**



## Cooking pots help further church and community mobilization

In the Alale region of Kenya, a group of 18 women came together, unified by the common household challenges they face as mothers and by similar aspirations and life goals. Through church and community mobilization training, provided by RCA mission partner John Lokeno, the women had a vision: a catering business. The women and their families rely on daily wages from casual labor, but the women were determined to set money aside and make their vision a reality. After one year of saving, the women were able to buy 18 large cooking pots. Out of gratitude for the training they'd received—and with

thankfulness to God for helping them realize their vision—the women gave one of the pots to the local church's kitchen.

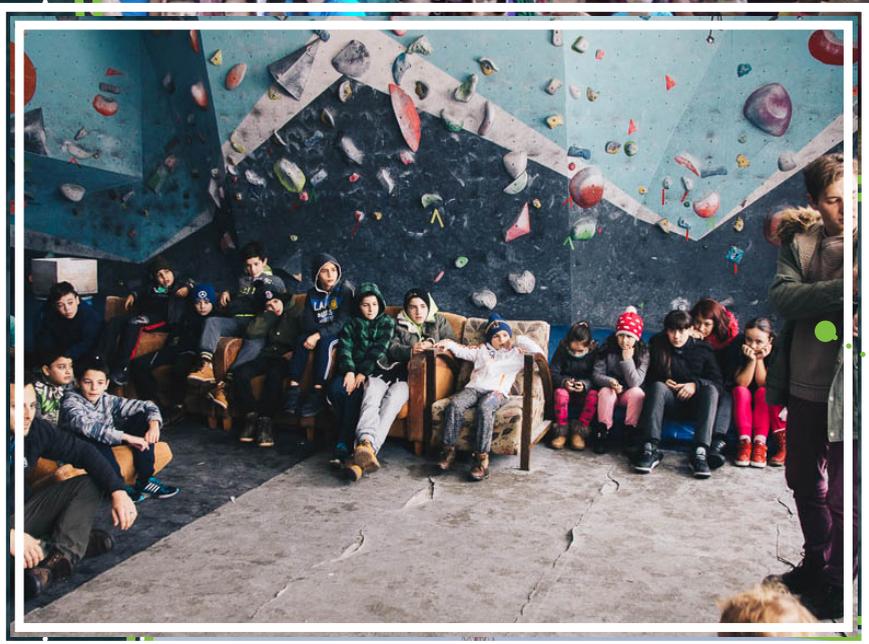
These women, deeply committed to walking with Christ, are also “paying it forward” by serving as cooks for the region's triennial church and community mobilization training, which builds on resources the community already has and encourages people to develop new skills and expertise. The women are also pursuing more financial management training and investment opportunities so that they can further bless the community and the church.

**Your gifts have provided this life-changing training!**



## The Gift of Surgery

In June 2021, RCA missionary John Hubers asked for emergency funding to help Mihret, a professor at Mekane Yesus Seminary in Ethiopia, receive surgery for a heart condition. Two months later, the funds were completely raised, thanks to you, our generous donors. After her visa was approved, Mihret was able to travel to Turkey for surgery. The surgery was successful, and Mihret is recovering well at home.



# Your support of **RCA** **Global Mission** helps make all of this possible:



Short-Term Mission received **155 requests for SENT devotions**, which equip church mission leaders (and others!) with the tools they need to lead a Christ-centered mission experience.



In Myanmar, approximately **130 new believers have given their lives to Christ** in the last year, many of whom were previously Buddhists or animists.



**150 kids are enrolled in the climbing gym programs** at Fără Limite in Romania, through which RCA missionaries Felipe and Janelle deWaard-Silva seek to build trust, perseverance, character, and courage in Roma youth. Many of these families now also attend Anchor Church, the associated church plant that launched this past year.



**600 students returned to school** because of generous gifts that rebuilt the Iraqi Kurdistan school



**More than 163 Christians and vulnerable people were safely evacuated** from Afghanistan in September 2021.

You are changing lives! **Thank you!**

# Global church planting partnerships flourish

Early last fall, Iglesia Reformada Dominicana (the Dominican Reformed Church [IRD]) joined Classis de las Naciones, the RCA's newest classis, for the next two years. The IRD is a fledgling denomination that began 12 years ago in the Dominican Republic out of a close relationship with the RCA.

The partnership of the IRD and Classis de las Naciones is supported by the Regional Synod of Mid-America and has been in consultation with Global Mission, Church Multiplication, and experts in RCA church order.

"It's part of the dream that many of us as Latino leaders of the RCA anticipated, to be able to sit with the American leadership at the same table, for preaching the gospel to all the nations," says Brigido Cabrera, an RCA minister who lives in the Dominican Republic and trains church planters in the IRD.

"A new day has dawned on the RCA," says Randy Weener, director of RCA Church Multiplication. "The picture of nations, tribes, peoples, and languages gathering around the throne in Revelation 7 is becoming our current reality. The IRD represents the first fruits of new disciples from the south being blended into our family, and it is yielding mutual blessings."

RCA Church Multiplication and RCA Global Mission are working with local mission partners to start new churches around the world—in Brazil, Kenya, Nepal, Korea, Thailand, Hungary, the Netherlands, the Dominican Republic, and elsewhere.

**Your gifts are making a difference around the world as church plants sprout and sow seeds of the gospel.**



RCA Church Multiplication approved  
**27 new congregation plans**  
in fiscal year 2021.

**Seventy-eight percent of these are  
led by Hispanic pastors.**

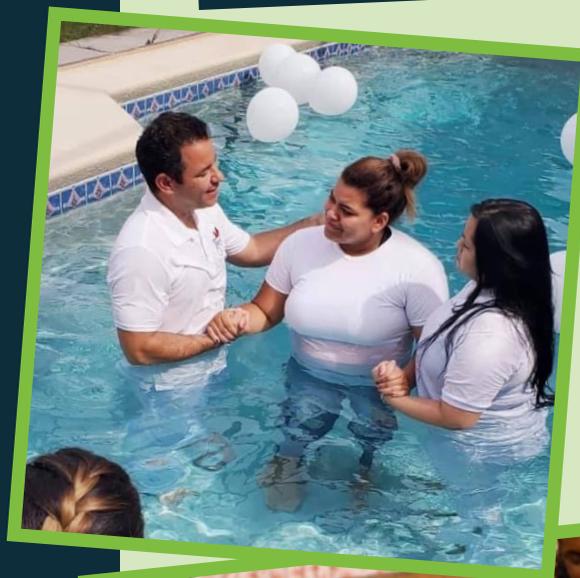
# Transformed & Transforming

## at a glance

Over the past year, Transformed & Transforming staff journeyed alongside pastors, helping them navigate the many challenges and changes of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included practical guidance on digital discipleship and worship, social entrepreneurship, and exploring business as mission at a time when precarious church finances created new openness to additional streams of revenue (and opportunities for mission).

Virtual leadership trainings for women and disability advocates also brought together hundreds of people for fellowship and learning. In addition, podcasts hosted thought leaders on important topics: the Black Church Still Speaks, Lavish Hope, Faith and Mental Health, and Food for Faith.

Your gifts make these transformative experiences possible and help equip leaders for ministry.





## Church plant offers refuge, rehabilitation, and community service

Faith Fighters is a new but growing church plant in Tulare, California, planted by John Fiscus. The church plant recently celebrated its one-year anniversary of worship services. But its mission and outreach also includes a men's discipleship home, which offers refuge and rehabilitation to men struggling with addiction, homelessness, unemployment, and lack of social support. At the home, they find the grace of a loving God. They get care and support, community and respect.

This past June, the home expanded again to include service to the community. The residents are offering free lawn maintenance to the underserved and elderly population in the community. This teaches the residents life and employment skills and offers the dignity of work. It allows them to give back to the community. The church plant and discipleship home are intertwined and flourishing together, holistically connected.

**Thank you for supporting Church Multiplication! Through RCA church plants, people are coming to know Christ and are, in turn, blessing their communities.**

# Covering General Synod in prayer

During General Synod 2021, Judy Nelson served as the chaplain, offering prayer for and with delegates throughout the week. Judy also served with the prayer planning team leading up to General Synod, inviting the denomination into a month of dedicated prayer, providing prayer resources, and facilitating weekly prayer gatherings.

Judy is a long-time RCA chaplain, currently serving with Tyson Foods in Zeeland, Michigan, and providing spiritual and emotional care to the Tyson employees.

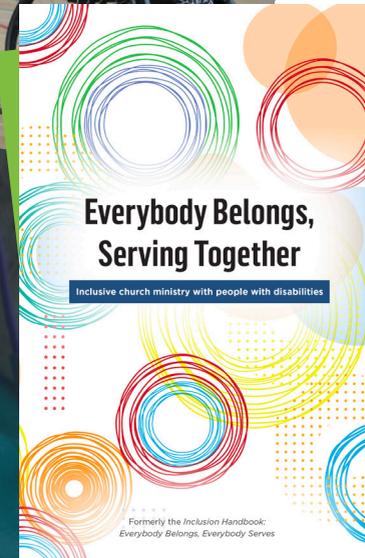
We give God thanks for our RCA chaplains, who bring the presence of Jesus to the many varied places in which they serve. Your support makes their work possible!



# Increasing inclusivity in the church

In partnership with the Christian Reformed Church in North America, Christian Horizons, and Elim Christians Services, RCA Disability Concerns launched *Everybody Belongs, Serving Together* in multiple formats: printed handbook, ebook, audio book, and online resource. In its first few months, this practical digital resource has already reached 2,000 people, helping individuals and churches be more fully inclusive of people who have disabilities.

“I think we’ve only scratched the surface of how this new resource can benefit the church’s ministry with all people, not just people with disabilities,” says Terry DeYoung, coordinator for RCA Disability Concerns.





## Office for Advocacy and Race Relations

In summer 2020, general secretary Eddy Alemán created an office for advocacy and race relations through which staff and ministries help churches and individuals establish equitable, hospitable practices and processes for oft-marginalized groups, especially women, people with disabilities, and people of color.

“This office is about making sure there’s full inclusion within the framework and system. [Advocacy and equitable hospitality] is not a side, marginalized ministry, but should be incorporated into everyday life,” says Peter Watts, supervisor for advocacy and race relations and coordinator for the RCA’s African American Black Council. “We’re helping the denomination live into Revelation 7—helping us practice that here on earth—and live into the Belhar Confession. This is our opportunity to live into a new day.”

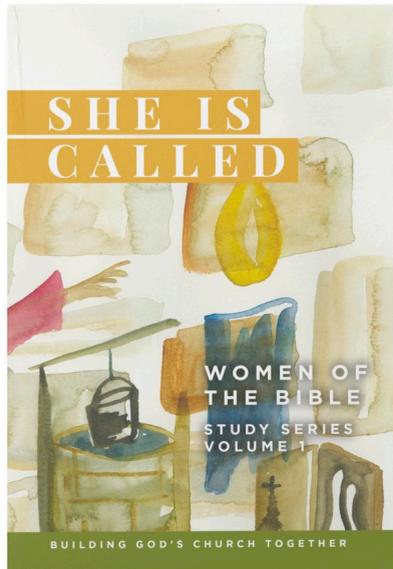
## Practicing equity-based hospitality

With racial injustice brought to the forefront last summer, many pastors and church leaders were looking for reconciliation resources. To help the church, multiple Transformed & Transforming initiatives jointly hosted a ten-week course called “From Outreach to Embracing,” based on the work of pastor and missionary Denise Kingdom Grier, who led master classes on the Gospel of John. More than 80 people signed up for the course, which left space for hard questions and helped people apply the master class concepts to their lives. By the end of the course, each person had committed to living out equity-based hospitality in one specific way in their life or ministry.

**Thank you for supporting this work that helps the church become more like Revelation 7:9, with all tribes and tongues and peoples.**

# Bible study helps women live into their God-given callings

This past year, RCA Women's Transformation and Leadership launched the She Is Called Women of the Bible study series digitally on Faithward.org and in a printed book. Since then, more than 155,000 people have engaged the study online, and nearly 200 people have purchased at least one copy of the book. This resource is reaching women and men alike, in the RCA and beyond, for individual and small group study—all for the purpose of digging deeper into the lives of women in the Bible and discovering what their stories can teach people today.



A second volume is expected to continue this engagement and transformation when it launches later this year.

Rev. Liz Testa, coordinator for Women's Transformation and Leadership, reports that several women have enrolled in seminary after engaging the Bible study and participating in the master class. Janet Paduano Cardillo, a deacon at Colonial Church of Bayside in Queens, New York, is one such woman.

"[The class] filled my heart with appreciation for the works of these women. ... Because of the study and the personal testimonies of women during breakout sessions, I was able to recognize that the Holy Spirit was working through Rev. Testa to reach me," says Janet. "I received emails and Facebook posts about seminary and this

made me both restless and curious. It was the study that gave me the courage to do what I was being called to do."

Following the Women of the Bible master class, Janet enrolled in the two-year theological studies certificate program at New Brunswick Theological Seminary. She plans to pursue a master's in pastoral care and counseling after she completes the certificate course.

"My life will never be the same again," she adds. "I'm not sure what God's plan is, but I know that it is far better than I could ever imagine and I am humbled to know that I am not walking this journey alone."

**Your support of RCA ministry makes stories like this possible. Thank you!**

## By the number:

### She Is Called Women of the Bible online study

- 156,000+ people reached through Faithward.org
- 230,000+ pageviews
- 1,000+ PDF downloads
- Age of audience: primarily ages 18 through 44
- Men make up 35.5% of the audience

## A church plant for a digital age



As many churches returned to in-person worship after more than a year of online worship services, one church decided to lean into that virtual space and launch a digital church plant. Kelle Alavi is answering God's call to journey through virtual connection and is now the digital planting pastor of CenterPoint Digital, an outreach of CenterPoint Churches, a multi-site church based in Ohio.

She and her team are wrestling with questions about which online platforms to use, how to accommodate time zones, how to build authentic community and do pastoral care, and what the sacraments look like for a digital church.

"There is no one right way," says Kelle. "There is only God's unique call and how we are willing to go. I believe this is the next step in the power of the Holy Spirit leading us to witness to the ends of the earth."

**Thank you for helping plant churches in all shapes, sizes, and places!**

## Bringing comfort and peace in Canada

Last summer, the buried remains of hundreds of Indigenous children were found on former residential school grounds in Canada.

"This was a very sad day for the First Nations people of Canada and has again stirred up negative emotions towards 'the church,'" said Nathan Gullion, a bi-vocational First Nations pastor who also works as a pipe fitter. "I think part of our jobs as pastors is to bring about unity and also to comfort those who have been hurt from the church in the past.

"Giving people hope and reassurance that the church has changed will undoubtedly take time. ... I think people just need to be reminded of what it is we do as the church, and maybe this could be a time when we can shine by stepping up and really being there for the First Nations people of North America."

To help with his ministry of comfort and reconciliation, RCA Church Multiplication gave Nathan a grant. Nathan recently finished seminary and is now making plans to start an RCA church plant on a reservation in Canada.

Your support of Church Multiplication makes stories like this possible. Thank you!

# A new space and a new focus on local mission

Last year, Harlingen Reformed Church in Belle Mead, New Jersey, began working with the RCA's Local Missional Engagement staff to understand the needs of their community and how the church might better serve the community. During that process, church leadership identified that the church needed a different space for community welcome and outreach. They applied for and were awarded a Flourishing Churches Grant, funded by the RCA's Church Growth Fund.

"The upgrades we have experienced over the summer have generated such excitement in our congregation and community that we are seeing God's hand already in motion to bless, not just our building, but our ministry," says pastor Christopher Heitkamp. He reports "new energy" for mission work, a discipleship and mission focus in small groups, and community newcomers to men's ministry, senior luncheons, and Sunday worship services.

Harlingen's new space is helping the congregation live out new plans for local mission, and the church is experiencing growth as a result. Eight new families have become engaged in church life, four of which joined as members last fall.

"We truly believe and feel that this gift only reinforced that we were on track of what God is wanting to do in this church and community," says Heitkamp. "Thank you for all of your prayers and support."

Thank you for helping churches live into local mission and bless their communities!





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

During such uncertain times, our donors and churches have been faithful contributors to the mission and ministry of the Reformed Church in America. Praise be to God! Thanks to your generosity, the RCA exceeded our fundraising goal for the On Mission Fund. In addition, we received over \$500,000 in estate gifts, and we received a \$1.3 million grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc for Generation Spark, a mentoring process for churches facilitated by Next Generation Engagement.

These generous donations and grants enabled the RCA to spread the good news of Jesus's love through Church Multiplication efforts, Global Mission projects, and Transformed & Transforming equipping work. Many examples of how this work was carried out in 2021 are presented in this ministry impact report.

It is truly a blessing and an honor to steward the funds so generously given to the Reformed Church in America. I am extremely grateful for your faithful support of the RCA, and I am humbled by the work that God is doing through your gifts.

Thank you!

### FINANCIAL RESULTS

REVENUE	Fiscal Year 2021		Fiscal Year 2020	
Contributions and Grants	\$10,331,918	52%	\$10,783,045	54%
Assessments	\$5,916,752	29%	\$5,410,187	27%
Other Income	\$4,086,167	19%	\$3,941,006	19%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$20,334,837</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$20,134,238</b>	<b>100%</b>
EXPENDITURES				
Church Multiplication	\$912,461	5%	\$1,226,427	7%
Global Missions	\$6,898,917	42%	\$7,126,503	42%
Transformed & Transforming	\$2,738,290	17%	\$3,298,347	19%
Work of General Synod	\$3,822,841	22%	\$2,845,032	17%
General Operations	\$2,218,170	14%	\$2,674,933	15%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$16,590,679</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$17,171,242</b>	<b>100%</b>
NET INCOME	<b>\$3,744,158</b>		<b>\$2,962,996</b>	

*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](http://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](http://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 On Mission Fund" or "RCA Global Mission" to:

**U.S.**  
Reformed Church in America  
Attn: Finance Dept.  
4500 60th St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49512

**Canada**  
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](http://www.rca.org/ministryimpact).



This impact report is also available online and in Spanish. Visit [www.rca.org/ministryimpact](http://www.rca.org/ministryimpact) for either version.

