

Report of the General Synod Council on Global Mission

POLICY WORDING

The RCA will connect and engage people to what God is doing in the world, through mission partners that cross boundaries in word and deed with the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ and enabled by the Holy Spirit.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTERPRETATION

Mission becomes a way of life when we reach out to people with the gospel, meeting needs in neighborhoods, countries, continents, and throughout the world. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we boldly give witness to the hope within us and willingly serve others by becoming the hands and feet of Christ in every corner of the world. The Reformed Church in America (RCA) commitment is to respond with God's love to meet spiritual and material needs around the globe. We are excited to engage mission through our churches by equipping mission leaders to maximize the impact their mission investment can make around the world. We are eager to move into a future where RCA Global Mission is part of a mission movement—a movement that comes from within our congregations, and is built on the passions of our members, and a future where we make connections through our history and expertise, where we connect individuals and churches with faithful partners, and where we help coordinate, inspire, and support the RCA in mission.

Individuals and churches experience transformation as they open themselves to be used by God and reach out in giving and receiving, learning and sharing, and extending the kingdom of God through missional engagement. It means bringing the good news of God's grace in Jesus Christ to those who have never heard the message, mobilizing the RCA congregations to connect with global partners for greater kingdom impact, helping resource volunteers for expanding involvement in mission efforts, and extending compassion, mercy, and justice in places of discrimination, poverty, famine, disaster, and injustice. In a world of brokenness and need, we offer help, hope, and tangible expressions of God's love.

GLOBAL MISSION

Over the past 379 years, RCA Global Mission has impacted millions of people around the world with the love of God. Truly, God has blessed our work. Today, the way we engage in mission is changing, and the role of the denominational mission organization is changing, too. We are excited to engage mission through our churches by equipping mission leaders to maximize the impact their mission investment can make around the world.

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Progress in 2021

While many short-term mission trips were not possible during 2021, we celebrate the many churches and individuals that were able to serve in mission. The Next Generation Missional

Engagement Fund Scholarship supported nine teams and six individuals in the 2021 calendar year. The scholarship awarded a total of \$27,940 to assist 199 young people in their mission service. In partnership with World Renew - Disaster Response Services, the fourth edition of the SENT Devotions focusing on Disaster Response was released in March. The Cultivate program was on hold during 2021, but it is sending new volunteers into the field beginning in the summer of 2022. As international travel restrictions continue to ease, Short-Term Mission is working with missionaries and partners to coordinate targeted vision and mission trips to support their work. We look forward to the opportunity to assist churches and individuals in serving God through mission around the world.

Amazing stories of God's grace and goodness continue to prevail in Europe and the Middle East despite a challenging season for missionaries and partners. Over the past year, we have seen growth in so many ways. The American Mission Hospital in Bahrain continues to grow and reach more people than ever before. A new hospital is under construction and is expected to be dedicated in early 2023. Church plants throughout Europe have not just survived the pandemic and the shutdowns but have actually grown. On the humanitarian front, RCA congregations and donors helped RCA partners to evacuate thousands of people from Afghanistan who were at risk of harm and death.

Our missionaries and partners in Asia and the Pacific region were able to continue proclaiming the good news of God's forgiveness and demonstrate God's love through their respective ministry contexts with ongoing and generous financial and spiritual support from RCA churches and individuals. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, our missionaries were able to effectively manage various responsibilities of their ministries, including but not limited to: planting new churches, supporting local pastors and their churches, educating and equipping next generation leaders, reaching out to the children and youth, serving the needs of isolated people groups, and translating the Bible into many languages by adopting new technologies and methods to reach those who had difficulty accessing God's Word due to COVID-19. For the kids and their families seriously impacted by COVID-19, for the seminary students who need Wi-Fi access to join online classes, for the village people who suffer from food shortage, and for the indigenous church leaders, the RCA's immediate assistance has been a huge source of comfort and relief as well as a very tangible expression of discipleship and demonstration of God's love and care.

This past year, our partner, the Evangelical Church of the Republic of Niger (EERN), inaugurated and opened the first phase of the Polyclinique "Dutsin Ceto" in Dogon Doutchi, Niger, on March 20, 2021. The name "Dutsin Ceto" means "Rock of Salvation" in the Hausa language. The small private hospital is built on the edge of the town of Dogon Doutchi (pronounced: DOEGN DUE-CHEE), which means "tall rock" or "mountain." After four years of planning, work, and building, this clinic is the fulfillment of RCA missionaries Dr. Susan and Jeremy Beebout's work with the development office of EERN to provide quality healthcare to the extremely underserved and impoverished population in the rural interior of the country. Opening with three Nigerien doctors, a team of nurses, laboratory facilities, and other capabilities, the Polyclinique "Dutsin Ceto" has doubled the number of doctors in a regional department with a population of 1 million. The aim of EERN's medical ministry is also to provide responsible outreach and witness to its Muslim neighbors. EERN's healthcare model has proven to be sustainable: Clinique Olivia, the first clinic launched in 2012 in the capital city, Niamey, has an excellent reputation for providing quality medical care beyond what the public clinics provide.

Now, via the in-patient and out-patient services of these two clinics, EERN medical ministry serves approximately 25,000 patients per year.

Throughout 2021, the RCA remained engaged in endeavors to reach unreached and under-reached people groups in Africa and build the capacity of our partners for ministry. These church planting and holistic mission endeavors include healthcare, hospice, and compassionate care; equipping pastors, church, and servant leaders, Christian Muslim Relations programs; water, agricultural, and community development; animal husbandry; and orphan care programs. After more than five years of our strategic partnership with Setshabelo Family and Child Services in Botshabelo, South Africa, which provides loving families for children, we celebrate these 2016–2021 metrics: 284 in-country adoptions, 768 foster placements, 233 family reunifications of children, 358 Temporary Place of Safety Placements, and 18,308 Family Preservation Program participants, and over 60 churches mobilized to advocate for the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children.

Goals for 2022

Global Mission's current goals are derived from our commitment to strongly reflect and mobilize the passions and gifts of RCA congregations to serve. These goals include:

- Increase mutually beneficial collaboration between RCA Global Mission and all RCA congregations, including those that may want to move on from the RCA.
- Keep RCA mission support in RCA churches as well as from churches that are moving on.
- Raise an additional 33 Partnership-in-Mission (PIM) shares for our missionaries who are currently fundraising.
- Communicate our field stories to our constituents, creating relevance for North American congregations and offering opportunities to serve with RCA Global Mission.

GLOBAL MISSION

Working together to share God's love with the world

RCA Global Mission exists to strengthen and grow the global church by supporting ministries of compassion, developing leaders, and sharing the good news. Our goal is to provide engagement opportunities for RCA churches to partner with global churches in ways that are collaborative and mutually meaningful that help us all to live and love like Jesus.

Partnership-in-Mission Shares

The mission personnel and staff of RCA Global Mission would like to express appreciation to the churches and individuals of the Reformed Church in America who so generously support our mission programs. The RCA mission program is supported almost entirely from contributions and Partnership-in-Mission (PIM) shares. Without you, there would be no RCA Global Mission.

The Reformed Church in America has over 80 active partnerships in 45 countries around the world. There are 43 mission personnel and 49 partner personnel (who are employed by the partner but supported through RCA PIM shares). These mission personnel were supported by 384 churches and 267 individual donors through PIM shares. There are over 120 active projects, including disaster response and projects of compassion. These projects were supported by gifts from 310 churches and 1,383 individual donors.

Global Mission proposes that the value of a full Partnership-in-Mission share be maintained at \$6,900 in 2023. We are also asking that every RCA congregation that does not currently support an RCA missionary with a PIM share consider taking on a full or partial share of support.

GM 22-1

To maintain the value of a Partnership-in-Mission (PIM) share at \$6,900 for 2023.

New Mission Assignments

Angel Lopez will serve as a border and immigration advocate. In this role, Angel will help RCA congregations embrace and understand immigrants who are encamped and crossing the southern border and provide a Christian witness and faith-based advocacy resources to build deeply impacting relationships throughout their sojourner process.

Deaths

Emery Blanksma passed away on May 31, 2021. Emery and his wife, Sharon, served in Kenya for ten years where they ran a health clinic and managed a mission station and school in the West Pokot region. Emery loved his time in Kenya and often told many stories of his adventures.

Paul Meyerink passed away on June 21, 2021. Paul, along with his wife, Dorothy, served in Chiapas, Mexico, for over 38 years beginning in 1955. They were among the missionaries who pioneered the Tzeltal Bible School, where they served in Bible translation and teaching.