

Volunteer Abroad

Christian Reformed World Missions offers volunteer opportunities for young adults and adults throughout the year.

This summer, young adults have the opportunity to be part of volunteer teams in Asia and the Mideast. A joint team of North American and Filipino young adults is needed to lead HIV and AIDS prevention workshops in churches and schools in the Philippines. Other Asia-based summer opportunities include leading VBS outreach teams and teaching English. Young adults can also join a Hope Equals team to Israel and the West Bank for four weeks.

Volunteer opportunities, from one week to over a year, are available for all throughout the year. Open volunteer spots include a guest lecturer position in Malawi, helping with Christian education workshops in West Africa, and working with children with special needs in Nicaragua or Nigeria.

CRWM's new Program Coordinator for Volunteer Ministries, Lisa Sochaki, will be facilitating all CRWM volunteer opportunities. For more information on our volunteer opportunities, visit www.crwmm.org/serve.

Bathing Missionaries in Prayer

Christian Reformed World Missions missionaries testify to the power of prayer in their lives and ministries. And because of that, writing prayer letters is a high priority for Christian Reformed World Missions and our missionaries. When church members receive the letters, they see what God is doing in missions and gain a clearer picture of prayer needs.

Here's how you can help your church become an effective prayer partner for your missionaries:

- Distribute missionary letters as soon as possible. Copy them and put them in the Sunday bulletins and mailboxes or include them in your church newsletter.
- Make sure the right person in your church is receiving the prayer letters so he/she can pass them on. The church address is often used as the recipient address to ensure delivery to a supporting church.
- Prayer letters contain many prayer requests. Ask your pastor to remember urgent pray requests in congregational prayers and put them on your church's prayer chain(s).
- Let your missionaries know that you read their letters and pray for them.
- Pray for things that missionaries may not always mention; such as spiritual health, emotional health, family health, relationships with colleagues, national leaders, and political stability.
- Encourage your pastor and missions committee to write missionaries and invite others to write too.
- Share prayer requests with your missionaries so they can pray for your church.
- Unfortunately for security reasons, the names, prayer letters, and places of ministry of several of our missionaries should not be publicized. Please do not mention these missionaries on your church website or post or forward their prayer letters electronically.
- Encourage members to ask missionaries to add them to their prayer letter mailing list.

Through your support of missionaries, you are part of fulfilling the Great Commission. You also have the special privilege of sharing in the life of your missionaries. What a blessing this is — for you and your missionaries!



We rejoice with you this Christmas in the gift of God's Son, Jesus. May you know His peace and hold onto His everlasting grace.

Rejoicing in the Messiah's birth

For fifteen days every fall the sky of Kathmandu, Nepal gets thick with the queasy pungent smoke of countless incense sticks lit to worship the Hindu goddess Durga. Temples and idols are awash with red vermillion and orange paste. Bells ring out intermittently to welcome the gods and fend off their displeasure. Throughout the city, people sacrifice animals to Durga. It's all part of Dashain, Nepal's largest Hindu festival.

In one neighborhood, Christian Reformed World Missions missionaries Troy and Faith Bierma watch as a Nepalese woman, carrying a bell and a plate covered with an assortment of pastes, flowers, and food, carefully makes her way to a small temple. Stopping in front of the temple's idol, she begins the *puja* (Hindu worship ritual). Murmuring prayers, she smears a bit of vermillion on the idol's head, lights a stick of incense, and arranges flowers around the shrine. She lets her food-laden plate drop to the ground for the god to eat as it desires. Then, taking some paste from the idol's head, she makes a mark on her forehead up to her hairline. Finished, she walks back the way she came, ringing the bell as she goes.

She is one of many who do not know Jesus. She worships at the foot of a human-made statue, not knowing the One who made humankind. And she and her family will sacrifice animals in worship to Durga, not knowing of the Messiah who made the ultimate sacrifice for all people.

Amid the joy of celebrating Christ's birth, we as Christians cannot help but think of the many people who do not yet know Jesus as their Savior. Pray for Christ's name to be proclaimed and known throughout the world. Pray for missionaries as they share the story of Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection to those who need to know of His saving grace.



Muslim Ministry Training

Over the last few years, the CRCNA has received questions from CRC congregations who wondered where they could learn more about Islam and reaching out to Muslims. In

response, representatives from all of the CRC agencies met to discuss how this could be done — thus was born Advancing Ministry Among Muslims (AMAM).

The goal of AMAM is to train people who can in turn train congregations and other groups about the Muslim faith and how to reach out in love to Muslims. The hope is that, as people understand Islam from biblical and historical perspectives, people will respond with compassion and love to their Muslim neighbors rather than fear and mistrust.

This fall, Greg Sinclair was appointed as AMAM's Training Coordinator. Greg's main goal is to train people to lead trainings on ministering to Muslims. If you are interested in becoming a trainer or your church is interested in receiving this training, contact Greg Sinclair at g Sinclair@crcna.org.

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