

Church Planting Strategic Plan FAQ

Q. "What did synod decide on church planting and renewal?"

A. Synod 2025 instructed the CRC's agencies and institutions to develop a comprehensive ten-year plan for church planting. Developed collaboratively between June 2025 and April 2026, Resonate's director of church planting, Tim Sheridan, presented this plan to the delegates of Synod 2026. This plan was adopted with unanimous support from the delegates.

Q. "Is this plan achievable?"

A. We currently have identified approximately 50 potential church planters across North America in some stage of their discernment journey. While identifying another 100 over the next 5 years will stretch us as a denomination, we believe it is within reason if we all increase our intentional efforts in discipleship multiplication and leadership development.

Q. "Who actually owns this plan?"

A. This vision needs to be owned at the local level; Resonate has been tasked to steward this on behalf of the CRCNA. Church planting requires multiple partners to be sustainable - classes, local supporting churches, denominational agencies, and educational institutions. Getting to a place of denomination-wide clarity and shared ownership is vital and that is why the one-year objective aims for the following to be true in 12 months:

"the CRCNA will have designed and aligned an ideal church plant journey, with clear ownership across denominational agencies, Classes, and congregations for each stage from disciple to leader to church planter to launch, along with a funding plan to support implementation."

Without ownership at the local level by congregations and classes, this plan will not achieve its desired results.

Q. "What support does Resonate plan to offer?"

Resonate is committed to offering the following support:

- Working with congregations and classes to build church planting pathways so congregations and classes feel equipped to plant



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- Providing robust and holistic assessments for leaders with a call to church plant
- Providing contextualized training pathways to equip planters, churches, and classes
- Providing coaching support to church planters
- Providing coaching support to parent churches and classes
- Supporting the development and flourishing of local "partnership teams" to support church plants in a sustainable way

Q. "How will this plan be funded?"

A. Funding for this strategic plan will need to come from the following critical sources:

- Ministry shares that support the staffing and resources needed to offer critical support to local congregations, Classes, and church planters (e.g. church planter assessments, church planter coaching, Legacy pathway coaching, etc.).
- Classis funds to support church plants in the Classis (e.g. Classis church planting funds).
- Congregations willing to support church plants in their regions.
- Planters equipped to raise financial support through donors and other forms of income.

Q. "What do classes and congregations need to do in response to these plans?"

A. This vision needs to be owned at the local level; Resonate has been tasked to steward this on behalf of the CRCNA. Church planting requires multiple partners to be sustainable - classes, local supporting churches, denominational agencies, and educational institutions. Getting to a place of denomination-wide clarity and shared ownership is vital and that is why the one-year objective aims for the following to be true in 12 months:

"The CRCNA will have designed and aligned an ideal church plant journey, with clear ownership across denominational agencies, Classes, and congregations for each stage from disciple to leader to church planter to launch, along with a funding plan to support implementation." Resonate's plan starts with a plea for the church to begin by laying a foundation of prayer and fasting. From that foundation there are five other elements to prioritize: discipleship multiplication, leadership development, church planting pathways, legacy (or closing church) pathways, and funding and capacity development.

For this strategic plan to be sustainable and have impact, every congregation in the CRCNA will need to participate in some way. This plan invites all of us into a culture shift of multiplication that will include the following shared efforts:

- A commitment to prayer and fasting as a denomination for God to raise up leaders and church planters in the CRCNA.
- A renewed commitment to discipleship multiplication.
- As disciples are made, an intentional commitment to develop leaders.
- Participate as able in classis church planter pathways as they are developed, which may



include supporting church plants emerging in the classis.

- Participate in the ministry share covenant commitment as a congregation within the CRCNA.

Q: "How can my church participate in this initiative if we are struggling ourselves?"

A: Synod's plan emphasized that this is a denominational effort, not one that only involves "healthy" churches.

Resonate recognizes that not every church or classis is in a place right now to engage fully, which is why the plan includes an intentionally slower rollout. This plan invites every church and classis to prayerfully reflect on their current season of ministry and pursue local vitality. For some churches and classes, this will be a call to partner with Thrive on a journey towards renewal.

Resonate's plan gives opportunity for each classis to participate in some way - prayer and fasting, making disciples, identifying leaders, supporting classis efforts in church planting, supporting churches engaging the legacy pathway, and committing what they are able to financially to support this plan.

Discipleship is the foundation. As disciples are made and multiplied, future leaders begin to emerge—particularly among those who demonstrate a pattern of discipleship multiplication. Among these future leaders will emerge future church planters. Resonate has already identified approximately 50 potential church planters across North America in some stage of their discernment journey. While identifying another 100 over the next 5 years will stretch us as a denomination, this goal is within reason if each church and classes will make intentional efforts in discipleship multiplication and leadership development.

Q. "What happens to declining churches?"

A. The investment in the resources needed to strengthen a legacy pathway for churches nearing the end of their life cycle is a vital part of this strategic plan. As the plan articulates, "end-of-life-cycle churches are not a problem to be managed but a legacy to be stewarded." Increasing our capacity to support declining churches will be critical to the success of this strategic plan.

Q. "What about smaller or struggling classes?"

A. There is also an intentionally slow roll out of this plan as we recognize that not every church or classis is in a place right now to engage fully. BUT, we would say that this plan is a call for every church and classis to examine their own health and work on internal renewal. We would hope that this might lead many churches and classes to partner with Thrive on a journey towards renewal.



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We also believe every classis is able to participate in some way—prayer and fasting, making disciples, identifying leaders, supporting classis efforts in church planting, supporting churches engaging the legacy pathway, and committing what they are able to financially to support this plan.

Q. "Why start with discipleship instead of planting?"

A. Discipleship is the foundation. As disciples are made and multiplied, future leaders begin to emerge - particularly among those who demonstrate a pattern of discipleship multiplication. Among these future leaders will emerge future church planters. As we multiply disciples, we will multiply leaders, and as we multiply leaders we will increase our capacity to multiply churches. Without the foundation of discipleship, the multiplication of leaders needed to sustain movement in church planting is not possible.

Q. "How will success be measured?"

A. This strategic plan is calling for Synod 2026 to prioritize church planting for the next 10 years and embed annual progress reports into every Synod for the next 10 years. We will ask for annual updates on the following key metrics as we strive towards the 3-year milestones and 5-year moonshot::

- how many churches, classes, and leaders are engaged in discipleship multiplication;
- how many leaders each classis aspires to raise up in the next 10 years;
- how many classes develop an intentional discipleship multiplication pathway, leadership development plan, and church planting pathway;
- how many churches nearing the end of their life cycle engage a legacy pathway that will prioritize church planting; and
- the financial support and commitment made to support the church planter pathway in each classis.
- Stories of planters being raised up and new worshipping communities bearing witness to the gospel.

Q. "How does this affect our denominational identity?"

A. This plan has the potential to change the culture and identity of the CRCNA to become known as a church planting denomination committed to multiplication at all levels - disciples, leaders, and church plants. We believe that this plan invites us to renew our identity as God's missionary people. As the report reminds us, "And this gospel is meant to be embodied by a community of people commissioned and sent by the risen Jesus to make disciples of all nations as they are being transformed by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to this good news with the entirety of their lives." We believe this plan invites us into an exciting preferred future rooted in a passion to see the gospel saturate our world by multiplying disciples, leaders, and churches.

Q. "What is required in the first year?"

A. The plan narrows the focus of year 1 to one key outcome: designing a denomination-wide church



planting journey; clarifying ownership for each stage of this journey between classes, congregations, and denominational agencies; and clarifying the financial plan required to support the implementation of this plan over the next 10 years.

Q. "What kinds of churches will we plant?"

A. Within the context of our shared commitment to plant churches that are Reformed in polity and theology, we envision a variety of church planting models contributing to this strategic plan. This may include the following:

- Established churches adding additional services and/or campuses to multiply their witness in their local communities.
- Church plants among different language groups and/or diaspora communities.
- Established churches opening up their facilities for church plants of different language groups and/or diaspora communities.
- Networks of intentionally smaller churches meeting in homes or public spaces.
- Restarts of churches who have experienced decline for an extended period of time.

Q. "What kind of leaders are needed to help carry this vision forward in our classes?"

A. We will need at least two primary types of leadership in our classes to carry this vision forward. On the one hand, we will need leaders who can advocate for the growing number of diverse church planters who are entering the CRCNA with a passion to plant. The strategic plan identifies a number of barriers that we will need to overcome to strengthen our support for the growing diversity of leaders finding a home in the CRCNA. On the other hand, we will need leaders who have a passion and vision for multiplication in their classis. Leaders who can collaborate with other classes and denominational staff to develop intentional church planting pathways from discipleship multiplication → leadership development → equipping of church planters → supporting church plants. The plan calls for each classis to identify a strategic leader in their classis to help champion this vision for multiplication.