

## **The Belhar Confession: An Introduction**

The Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) is recommending to Synod 2009 that the Belhar Confession become the fourth confession of the CRC (in addition to the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, and the Heidelberg Catechism). Furthermore, because of the importance attached to adding a fourth confession, the IRC recommends that Synod 2009 propose to Synod 2012 the adoption of the Belhar Confession. This procedure allows the congregations and classes of the denomination a three-year period of consideration before final action.

The IRC proposes the adoption of the Belhar Confession because it believes that it supplements and compliments the three confessions that already form the confessional basis of the CRC. Previous synods have acknowledged that the Belhar Confession is consistent with the historic Reformed confessions and reflects biblical principles about unity, justice, and reconciliation. A detailed report articulating the rationale of the IRC is contained in the *Agenda for Synod 2009*, pages 269-313, which is also accessible online at [www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org).

It is important to recognize that the Belhar Confession is also consistent with previous declarations by the synod of the CRC, especially the more recent declarations made in 1990 with reference to the constitution of the Reformed Ecumenical Council, and 1996 resolutions dealing with the report of *The Diverse and Unified Family of God*. The IRC report in the *Agenda for Synod 2009* documents these previous decisions.

The Reformed Church in America (RCA) is also considering the adoption of the Belhar Confession. Both the synod of the RCA and the synod of the CRC have expressed the desire that the two denominations act in unison concerning the adoption of the Belhar Confession.

The IRC is prepared to facilitate the discussion of the Belhar Confession within the CRC. For further information about such facilitation please contact Dr. Peter Borgdorff at [pborgdorff@crcna.org](mailto:pborgdorff@crcna.org).